

# Evidence-Informed Policymaking for Global Development

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The world has made remarkable progress in reducing extreme poverty, combatting childhood disease, and opening schools to more children. Yet many people in low- and middle-income countries still don't have adequate ways to make a living, access to good quality social services, or hold their government accountable. Some of these deficits are a product of resource shortages, limited capacity, or weak accountability between governments and their citizens. Others are because citizens and policymakers lack information and analysis of social and economic conditions, problems, and solutions. Even when evidence is available, there is no guarantee that policymakers can or want to find, understand, and use it.

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation's evidence-informed policymaking portfolio provides roughly \$15 million in grants each year to organizations helping to ensure that policymakers can access high-quality evidence and have the motivations and capacity to use it in their decisions. This includes building trust, collaboration, and capacity among those who generate, share, and use evidence.

## WHY A NEW APPROACH

The Hewlett Foundation's *Global Development and Population Program* has long-supported the generation of evidence – evaluation, data and research – and the organizations that produce and encourage people to use it. But even policymakers who are motivated to use evidence in their decisions often don't have access to it or the capacity to use it.

Suppose, for example, a policymaker wants to do something about youth unemployment. Thirteen of the 54 countries in Africa have no data on income trends after the year 2000, making it difficult to track the rise or fall of poverty and work. Still fewer data sources are available to help a policymaker assess the causes of youth employment, as little information exists about education quality or job markets. Nor would the policymaker be able to draw ideas from what has worked in other places. No more than a handful of studies exist on any given topic, and doing more or better studies is hampered by inadequate data on household wealth, income, and employment.

In Senegal, for example, employment data was not collected at the national level until 2015; in most countries, labor surveys only cover people over the age of 15, and two-thirds of countries do not disaggregate statistics by gender on informal employment or businesses ownership, making it difficult to design targeted programs. Even when evidence does exist, it can be hard to access or understand because those who generate, share, and use it interact infrequently. And policymakers don't always have necessary abilities or incentives to use evidence. The result is a system-wide failure that transcends any single field or type of information.

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## WHY NOW

The potential for data, evaluation and research to inform policy design and implementation in developing countries is greater than ever before. Global efforts to increase transparency and accountability have motivated policymakers and citizens to achieve and show better results. Impact evaluation investments in the last ten years have produced vastly more information about development outcomes. The Sustainable Development Goals, and accompanying monitoring framework, put global attention on countries' ability to make and measure progress. And countries are beginning to see the potential for new data sources to better understand and address development challenges.

Governments are responding with robust public sector capabilities to generate and use evidence, including through evidence and evaluation units, and organizations and funders around the world are turning their attention to how information is used to inform decisions. In short, there is a growing appetite and opportunity for evidence to inform policy decisions and implementation in developing countries.

## WHAT WE SUPPORT

Our grants support organizations that 1) create high quality evidence policymakers can access, understand and use; 2) build relationships, trust, and collaboration among those that generate, share and use evidence; and 3) ensure policymakers are motivated and able to use evidence, and evidence producers are motivated and able to respond to policy needs.

We will use our grants—as well as our staff and institutional assets—to:

### Harness the Data Revolution for Global Development

Use the “data revolution” to show how data can inform development policies and programs.

### Increase the Usefulness of Impact Evaluation

Ensure impact evaluations respond to policymakers' needs and that researchers from developing countries are able to conduct high quality, policy-relevant evaluations.

### Expand the Role of Southern Think Tanks in National, Regional and Global Policymaking

Help policy research organizations participate in and contribute to policy debates, build new partnerships, and link their research to specific policy contexts and opportunities.

### Strengthen the Emerging Field of Evidence-Informed Policymaking

Together with other funders and organizations, strengthen relationships, political incentives, and capacity to make evidence-informed policymaking the norm.

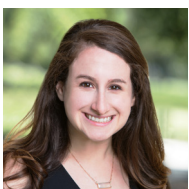
## LEARN MORE



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