Programme

Institute of Development Studies, Brighton, UK

Given that 'the politics of evidence' has not been scrutinised systematically in much depth, the conference seeks to provide that platform. Central in all discussions will be the implications for transformational development. The conference is structured around four questions for which robust insights will be generated by working through participants' cases. Hence, the core input mainly around participants' experiences[1] of the pros and cons of dealing with the politics of evidence and the results agenda. Participants have been accepted based on the experiences that they would bring to discussions. The conference form will be framed by several plenary presentations that will lead into focused group discussions, during which participants' cases will get ample space for discussion.

Focusing Questions for the Big Push Forward Conference

1. What do we mean by 'the politics of evidence' – factors, actors, artefacts? And why is it important?
2. What are the effects on transformative intentions and impacts of potentially useful approaches on evidence of and for change, such as Theory of Change or Value for Money?
3. Under what conditions do these practices retain their utility rather than undermine transformational development efforts? What factors and relationships drive the less useful practices and protocols?
4. How are people engaging with problematic practices and protocols? What are they accepting and doing, what are they resisting and how? What alternatives have they found to create spaces for approaches more aligned with transformational development?

Collectively, participants will generate:
1. *Conceptual clarity* about 'the politics of evidence' and the 'political space' for debates and practices around development results
2. *Mapping* of the consequences for all levels (from people and communities that development agencies seek to benefit to senior managers and policy makers) of current focus on evidence and results
3. *Tried and tested strategies* and new ideas for organisations and individuals to deal with the concepts and demands related to everyday politics surrounding results-oriented measurement
4. *Generate ideas for collaborative efforts* to explore revised and alternative approaches to addressing the drivers as well as the consequences of the current 'politics of evidence'.

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[1] As some examples may be sensitive, we will be working with Chatham House rules and participants may wish to make their experiences anonymous.

Day 1. Framing and Connecting Experiences

Time	Session	Content
08.15	Coffee served	Registration
09.00	Opening	Welcome by Lawrence Haddad, IDS Director; Convenors present origins and aims of the event; programme and participants.
09.30	*Different perspectives on 'the politics of evidence'*	Plenary panel led by Duncan Green with Maliha Khan (Oxfam USA); Iqbal Dhaliwal (J-Pal) and Ola Abu Alghaib (Stars of Hope,Palestine)
10.45	Break	
11.15	*'Nothing as practical as a good theory'* – framing lecture	Plenary presentation by Rosalind Eyben: Origins of 'the results and evidence discourses', historical perspectives, theoretical ideas, relevance for transformational development
12.15	Explain afternoon session	
12.45	Lunch	
14.00	*Mapping the 'politics of evidence' and its effects*	Breakout sessions in which participants share their cases, focusing on **questions 1 and 2**: what are 'the politics of evidence' in participants' cases and what are the effects on the transformative development we are seeking?
15.30	Break	
16.00	*Plenary pooling of findings from cases*	Core artefacts and main effects (positive and negative) - areas of convergence and difference.
17.30	Close	
18.00	Book Launch & Drinks	Book Launch with Practical Action: *Who Counts?: The Power of Participatory Statistics* (Jeremy Holland).

Day 2. Everyday Practice and Creating Space for Choice

Time	Session	Content
09.00	*Opening*	Programme for the day, secret box feedback
09.15	*Everyday practice – voices from the field*	Plenary presentation by Brendan Whitty: What does 'the field' report? Results of crowd-sourcing survey.
10.15	*Two Cases*	Two short cases to introduce the group discussion focus
10.30	Break	
11.00	*Under what conditions do protocols & practices retain their utility rather than undermine transformational development efforts?*	Group breakout session 2, with cases discussed in relation to **question 3**. Conducive conditions for a useful & hindering practice. Particularly good examples and ideas will be highlighted.
12.45	Lunch	
14.00	*Dealing with the consequences – tactics and strategies*	Groups reconvene, focusing on **question 4.** What works for whom and at what level, in relation to which protocols and practices?
15.15	Break	
15.45	*Tactics and strategies that (could) work*	Synthesising plenary session
17.15	Conference closes	