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Towards Smarter Policy: Setting a Global Research Agenda for Knowledge Translation

In a world where misinformation often outpaces facts, evidence-informed policy-making provides a critical anchor to strengthen public trust and deliver outcomes that are not only impactful today, but equitable and sustainable for generations to come.

While significant progress has been made in advancing knowledge translation —the process of making research findings accessible, understandable, and actionable for policymakers and practitioners—critical challenges remain. Institutional capacities to support systematic evidence use are often underdeveloped, with many organisations lacking the structures, resources, and incentives needed to integrate evidence into policy processes consistently. Research efforts, meanwhile, remain fragmented across disciplines, sectors, and regions, hindering the development of cohesive, cross-cutting solutions to complex policy challenges. Furthermore, there is limited consensus within the global community on the most effective mechanisms, models, and strategies for promoting the uptake of research evidence in policy-making.

In response to these gaps, the World Health Organization (WHO) and its partners have launched the Global Research Agenda (GRA) on evidence-informed policy-making. The GRA seeks to consolidate knowledge, prioritise research, and foster greater coordination across sectors and regions. It provides a shared framework to guide future investments, address underexplored areas, and strengthen the science of using evidence for decision-making. By advancing a collective vision and strengthening institutional capacities, the GRA aims to accelerate progress toward more resilient and responsive policy systems, ensuring that evidence meaningfully informs the policies shaping societies worldwide.

About Tanja Kuchenmüller

Tanja Kuchenmüller leads the Evidence to Policy and Impact unit in the Research for Health Department/ Science Division at WHO. The unit has the dual mandate of (1) strengthening country capacity in generating, translating, and using the best available research evidence in policies and practice, and (2) providing leadership on policies in research to ensure access and scale-up. Previously, she led the knowledge translation work at the WHO Regional Office for Europe and coordinated a related unit on Knowledge Management, Evidence and Research for Policy-Making. In the past, Tanja also worked on public health-related initiatives with the United Nations Development Programme and the German Development Service.

Read more about the WHO Global Research Agenda on Knowledge Translation and evidence-informed policymaking here: https://www.who.int/initiatives/evidence-informed-policy-network/the-evipnet-approach/global-research-agenda

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