Annette Boaz

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, there are a number of exciting initiatives that should help us make progress. For example, 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 Annette Boaz

Annette Boaz is Professor of Health and Social Care and Director of the NIHR Health and Social Care Workforce Research Unit at King's College London. She has more than 25 years of experience in supporting the use of research evidence across a range of policy domains. She was part of one of the largest UK investments in the evidence use landscape, the ESRC Centre for Evidence Based Policy and Practice and was a Founding Editor of the Journal Evidence & Policy. She has undertaken an international leadership role in promoting the use of evidence, publishing a book on evidence use, 'What Works Now' and co-leading Transforming Evidence with Kathryn Oliver.

Annette has a longstanding interest in implementation science. She is part of the Faculty for the Masterclass in Implementation Science led by King's College London and is a member of the National Institute for Health & Care Excellence Implementation Strategy Group. She has contributed to developing the Impres tools and is particularly interested in the relational work underpinning implementation. She is a fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences and the Higher Education Academy and is an NIHR Senior Investigator. She is a member of the NIHR Advanced Fellowship committee and UKRI Future Leaders Fellowships Peer Review College and advises several organisations on evidence use, including the WHO and the OECD.

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