

# T02P26 / Bridging the Gap between Research and Action: Making Research Accessible to Civil Society and Policymakers

**Topic :** T02 / Comparative Public Policy sponsored by Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis

**Chair :** Nicholas Perry (WORLD Policy Analysis Center)

**Second Chair :** Mushtaque Chowdhury (BRAC)

## GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

The proposed panel seeks to focus attention on three objectives:

- Explore the type of data that is most useful to those actively working to bring about transformational change;
- Understand what data formats (e.g. visualizations, briefs, and infographics) are most accessible to civil society and policymakers; and
- Highlight the ways in which research has been translated into action at the regional, national, or sub-regional levels to advance sustainable development outcomes.

Researchers have a critical role to play in producing actionable data that can be used by civil society and policymakers to enable evidence-based decision-making. It is critical to get the data produced by research institutes and universities worldwide in the hands of those that it is of most value. The challenge is to: a) identify what type of data is most useful to those pushing for positive change, b) understand in what format the research community should disseminate this information, and c) highlight promising policies in producing evidence-based research that is actionable and accessible. Creating a dialogue and open relationship with civil society groups is critical to ensuring that research priorities address the needs of civil society and policymakers so it can be actionable.

The data revolution has supported the creation of new global tools that can be used by policymakers and civil society to advance sustainable development. By understanding what approaches have been feasible and effective for improving health, increasing education, and reducing poverty in other economically and socially similar countries, decision-makers have a tool they can use to move developmental outcomes. Transparency on national action also gives civil society information on concrete steps to advocate for and the power to hold their leaders accountable.

Through looking at regional, national, and sub-national case studies, we can gain a better understanding of how and when civil society and policymakers use evidence-based research. These case studies can also highlight what works in creating strong mutually beneficial relationships between the research community and civil society groups. This understanding is important to the scientific community seeking to produce research that is not only theoretically sound and rigorous but that is also constructive to those actively working to bring about transformational change.

This session will be chaired by the WORLD Policy Analysis Center (WORLD) and BRAC. WORLD works to strengthen equal rights and opportunities worldwide by: identifying effective policy approaches for improving individual wellbeing and enabling countries to thrive, improving the quantity and quality of globally comparative data, and working in partnerships to support evidence-based improvements in communities and countries worldwide. BRAC is the world's largest development organization, operating in 11 countries to empower people and communities in situations of poverty, illiteracy, disease and social injustice. BRAC works at the nexus of research evidence, civil society, and service provision and is internationally recognized as a pioneering social enterprise.

This panel invites researchers to reflect on how to best ensure that research findings are accessible and relevant to civil society and policymakers and create meaningful dialogue between researchers and groups working on the ground for change.

## CALL FOR PAPERS

Improving the lives of the most vulnerable relies on everyone playing a role, from government to the private sector, from organized civil society to individuals and communities. Core to the involvement of these diverse

groups is empowering them with information. Citizens should know what steps their country has taken and how their government's actions align with other economically or socially similar countries. While NGOs and civil society organizations can be critical engines of innovation, policymakers are often uniquely positioned to operate educational, health, and social services at a national scale with universal provision.

Building bridges for open communication between researchers, civil society, and policymakers is a crucial first step to producing research that has impact. Ensuring that research evidence on what works to improve lives makes it into the hands of those who can use it to make a difference will be critical to making progress. Reflecting on the process through which information empowers civil society and policymakers can help the research community focus on producing accessible and impactful knowledge products.

This panel invites researchers to explore how communication between researchers and civil society can inform research priorities and how actionable research can be made accessible to civil society and policymakers. Questions of particular interest are: What types of data are most useful for civil society groups and policy makers? How can this data then be presented to ensure that they are accessible to the general public? Where do we have strong examples of adopting evidence-based reform to advance sustainable development outcomes? What are some promising practices in collaborating with civil society to produce knowledge products? How can the research community focus efforts to produce actionable and accessible data? Submitted papers should preferably be supported by empirical examples and be grounded in a strong theory of change.

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## Session 1

Thursday, June 29th 13:30 to 15:30 (Block B 4 - 2)

### **Using Global Policy Data to Accelerate Effective Action on the SDGs**

Aleta Sprague (WORLD Policy Analysis Center, UCLA Fielding School of Public Health)

Jody Heymann (Fielding School of Public Health; WORLD Policy Analysis Center - University of California, Los Angeles)

### **Research of, for and by citizens: citizen science as a grand platform for nuclear energy policymaking and governance**

Shoko Tanaka (Japan Forum on International Relations)

### **Participatory science : a new way of producing actionable data.**

martine legris (Lille 2 university)