Summary from the Early-Career Professionals Workshop: Research to Policy
14 October 2020

While global health efforts are largely led by countries and institutions in the Global North, a substantial burden of disease and poor health is experienced by populations in the Global South. Solutions and interventions for the Global South proposed by researchers and practitioners in the Global North often fail due to inappropriate consideration of local contexts. At the same time, health transcends borders and requires collective action and continual translation of the best evidence to inform policy solutions that promote and improve health, reduce health disparities, and protect against global threats.

As part of UNU-IIGH’s initiative to strengthen capacity around decision making and translate evidence into policy, UNU-IIGH is collaborating with Lancaster University on a series of workshops for early-career professionals. The first installment of the virtual workshop series was held on 14 October 2020 to provide insights into the stakeholder engagement process.

The main objectives of this workshop were:
1. To provide an overview of how to collaborate with stakeholders across sectors
2. To identify potential stakeholders and strategies for engagement

Workshop agenda
The workshop was structured as below:
1. Opening remarks
2. Introductory talk
3. 1st lightning talk
4. Break-out session
   Break
5. 2nd & 3rd lightning
6. Break-out session
7. Concluding remarks

Opening remarks
The opening remarks were delivered by Dr. Mike Penkunas and Dr. Emmanuel Tsekleves. Dr. Penkunas is a research fellow at UNU-IIGH. He leads the programme of work around strengthening capacity for local decision making. Dr. Tsekleves is the Associate Director of Global Health Design and convenor of the Design Research Institutes on Global Health at Lancaster University.

Participants
A total of 80 individuals registered for the workshop, of which 37 individuals participated. Participants joined from across the globe, including Malaysia, Australia, UK, India, Sri Lanka, and Nepal.
Break-out sessions
Participants were divided to seven groups and each facilitator led a group of 4-5 participants to analyze the following case study.

Case study:
You are an advisor to the mayor of a certain secondary city. Your task is to recommend a plan of action to guide the mayor in implementing a program around housing and health. The plan must include the following:

1. A multidisciplinary team of key stakeholders (Break-out 1)
2. Opportunities and rational for engaging these stakeholders (Break-out 2)

Break-out 1
Activity 1: Participants to brainstorm potential stakeholders across sectors and their connections

| Research | • Research groups from the Ministry of Health
  | • Research groups from universities eg. Epidemiology Teams
| Governance | • Policy makers from local and federal governments
  | • State/local health department/authorities
  | • Urban planning division
  | • Ministry of Finance
  | • Ministry of Housing & Infrastructure
  | • Ministry of Transport
| Community | • Local community (neighbourhood) groups for children, women, those with disabilities
  | • Key opinion leaders (eg. religious leaders, community leaders)
  | • Civil society organizations
| Implementers | • Urban planners
  | • Civil engineers & architects
| Health professionals | • Public health professionals
  | • Epidemiologists
  | • Healthcare providers, doctors, nurses
  | • Hospitals
| Welfare/Human rights | • Residential welfare associations
  | • Tenant’s unions
  | • Environmental risk assessment groups
  | • NGOs
  | • Youth representatives
| Private sectors | • Banks, insurance providers
  | • Housing developers/builders
  | • Service providers (eg. sanitation)

Break-out 2
Activity 2: Participants mapped the stakeholders in an influence vs interest engagement spectrum

Below is an example of stakeholders mapped onto the engagement spectrum:

*Note: Each group identified different stakeholders mapped in the engagement spectrum.

Recurring themes from the influence vs interest exercise:

Inform: To provide balanced and objective information in a timely manner
Stakeholders Identified: architects, engineers, district medical officers

Consult: To obtain feedback on analysis, issues, alternatives, and decisions
Stakeholders Identified: tenant’s unions, university researchers, Ministry of Transport, housing developers, community groups, builders, youth representative, NGOs, civil society organizations, women’s groups

Engage: To partner with stakeholders to understand concerns and aspirations and to share decision making
Stakeholders Identified: private sector actors (banks, funding agencies), community members, healthcare providers, Department of Housing & Infrastructure, key opinion leaders, federal government, urban planning division, utilities department, city council

*Note: Each group may have different stakeholders in different engagement spectrum

Activity 3: Participants were asked to select one group from the Inform, Consult, Engage categories and brainstorm engagement strategies

Examples:
Who to Inform? local community
How? Dialogue, communication tools eg. pamphlets, social media, newsletters

Who to Consult? Healthcare providers
How? Interviews, focus groups

Who to Engage? Policy makers/council members
How? Policy briefs, roundtable discussions