ENABLERS AND BARRIERS IN IMPLEMENTING EVIDENCE-INFORMED POLICIES IN HEALTH

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«Es funktioniert hinten und vorne nichts»

Die Fallzahlen steigen, die Corona-App funktioniert nicht. Der Epidemiologe Marcel Salathé sagt, es müsse Schluss sein mit der Beamtenmentalität. Dann könnten wir auch Fussballspiele wieder zulassen.

Arthur Rutishauser
Publiziert heute um 05:48 Uhr

Rudolf Neff
vor 10 Stunden

[Online comment]

Für Marcel Salathé ist Covid das Wichtigste was es gibt. Für viele anderen eben nicht

Bund online, 28.8.2020

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"Evidence […] enters into an existing soup of values, beliefs, preferences, and needs" (Henry, 2000, p.92)

> **„Facts alone cannot win political debates. Facts do not conquer hearts."**

[Fakten alleine können aber keine politischen Debatten gewinnen. Fakten erobern keine Herzen.]

— Interviewzitat Ingrid Brodnig, Autorin von «Hass im Netz», Bund online, 09.05.2018

> Backing arguments (*logos*) by evidence increases their trustworthiness (*ethos*) but not their emotional appeal (*pathos*). (Stucki/Sager 2018)

Whom to talk to?

> **Politicians?**

   → call for scientific evidence but do not use it.

> **The political and media public?**

   → hardly seeks nor uses evidence to form opinions

> **Public Administration/Government Agencies**

   → is/are the most important user/s of evidence

Sager, Fritz, Thomas Widmer und Andreas Balthasar (Hg.) (2017). *Evaluation im politischen System der Schweiz – Entwicklung, Bedeutung und Wechselwirkungen.* Zürich: NZZ Verlag, Reihe „Politik und Gesellschaft in der Schweiz".

How does the Public Administration use evidence?

> *Truth test:*

  Own experience serves as measure of plausibility

> *Utility test:*

  Is it useful? Can it realistically be implemented?

> **The administration employs policy logic when examining evidence**

  → **what is policy logic?**

Weiss, C. H., & Bucuvalas, M. J. (1980). Truth tests and utility tests: Decision-maker's frames of reference for social science research. *American Sociological Review*, 45(2), 302–313. https://doi.org/10.2307/2095127

Policy failure versus implementation failure

> Policy success depends on **two necessary conditions**:

> **Is the causal model sound? (~truth test)**
  — Is it evidence-based?
  — Can we expect an effect?
  — If no: Policy failure

> **Is it well implemented? (~utility test)**
  — Does the policy produce all planned services?
  — Do they reach their targets?
  — If no: Implementation failure

> Both are necessary:
  — a good policy fails if it is badly implemented and a bad policy fails even when well implemented

Linder, S. H., & Peters, B. G. (1987). A Design Perspective on Policy Implementation: The Fallacies of Misplaced Prescription. *Policy Studies Review*, *6*(3), 459-475.

Science should speak the language of policy to get through to its best user

> Administration is the best and most sensible recipient of evidence

> Policy advice for the public administration should employ policy logic

> Recommendations should pass the **truth and utility tests**.

> **But how?**

How to speak to administrative users: A checklist for policy advice (1)

1. State the problem to be solved by policy and corroborate it with solid evidence

2. Define the part of the problem that can be addressed with policy and justify its priority

3. State the causes of the problem and identify the problem causers as policy target group(s). Provide empirical evidence for the problem causes.

4. Identify policy proposals that may change the target groups' behavior in a manner that they no longer cause the problem. Provide evidence for the intervention's effectiveness.

How to speak to administrative users:
A checklist for policy advice (2)

5. Assess the political feasibility of the policy proposal:

— How strong are the opponents, do they have access to decision making?

— Does the proposal break with established policy or does it fit?

— How can the political salience of the proposal be reduced in case of polarization?

— Can the policy proposal be framed as a win-win solution (in the short and/or long term) to increase its political acceptance?

How to speak to administrative users:
A checklist for policy advice (3)

6. Assess the implementability of the solution:

— Are there organizational barriers to implementation?

— How likely is compliance or resistance by the target group(s), how strong will it be?

— How likely is compliance or resistance by the implementing bodies?

— How can resistances be neutralized?

— What resources and authoritative allies are needed to guarantee successful implementation?