

# Translating research in practice- LCEDN's role

## Practical Action



# Knowledge approach

*“The gift of materials goods make people dependent, but the gift of knowledge makes them free.”*

*Small is Beautiful, E.F.Schumacher*



- Start with the **change** we want to **create**
- Focus on **uptake** and practical implications
- Stakeholder **communication** preferences
- Use and update **existing** understanding
- Dissemination to encourage **uptake**
- Systems thinking - we will not create **impact** at scale alone

# Recognised challenges

- Defining **specific** gaps is challenging. It is common that broad areas of unknown are discussed- reaching the granular level is difficult
- Common **definitions** across geographies are rare: “knowledge”, “research”, “academia”
- An obsession with **new** research
- Difficult to track, and value **incremental** impact
- Possibility of a **confirmation bias** – how do we validate needs?
- Dissemination is a luxury
- Multi stakeholder approaches are not necessarily the most appropriate- how do we best identify user groups?

# Reflections

- It is essential to recognise the importance of **brokering skills**
- It is critical to **define** key terms earlier in assignments
- It is essential to strike a balance between **consultation** and **informing** AND being **listening** and **responding**
- It is important to recognise, and mitigate the **power dynamics** in **decision-making**
- **Lack of access** to research is still an issue



# Working in partnership



*“There is need for an agency like Practical Action to link the academia and County Governments”*

*Kisii Country Government Official, Kenya*

- **How can organisations and institutions complement one another?**
- **How can organisations and institutions work together effectively?**
- **Why is there a need? What is currently missing?**

# What role can LCEDN play?



# Key recommendations:

- Research should be **demand-led**
- **Early** stakeholder engagement is a key activity to order to map demands, and call for new research.
- Engaging with users, **across sectors**, is an excellent way of bringing multiple views and perspectives to the table.
- Verify chosen issues/demands **beyond** academia, and seek collaborations with NGO or private sector practitioners on the ground, and situate needs within specific contexts and reality.
- Have a **broker partner** tasked and resourced to contextualise knowledge
- Use **existing** knowledge from outside of academia, establish core relationships beyond academia to tease this out.
- Plan for **uptake** in as much detail as possible at the start

# On an individual level:

- **Advocate** for early stakeholder engagement across the network, and the wider community (especially funders).
- Work with **brokers**- what role can NGOs like Practical Action play?
- Actively share **successful** engagement activities, and the methodologies used.
- Document, and demonstrate what works and what doesn't work.
- Actively document **evidence of success** and **uptake**
- Be sensitive to **information overload**, support practitioners to access research and navigate through libraries and repositories
- Be challenging and creative



# As a collective:

- Use **existing** and planned LCEDN activities to explore identified research needs.
- Use these events to explore **knowledge gaps** which have not been chosen for new research, capture the outcomes and share with the network
- LCEDN **can gather evidence** and success cases to influence donors to **fund** this type of work
- LCEDN to advocate for **dissemination** and uptake activities and to make it a priority criteria in proposals.
- As a body continue to be a model of **good practice**
- Gather evidence of uptake

# A way forwards ...

- What role should LCEDN play in order to bridge the gap between research and practice?
- How can a global network be utilised to contextualise knowledge and understand different demands?
- How can research match the needs of end-users?
- Opportunity vs pipe dream ??

