

EVIDENCE BASED YOUTH POLICY

Should we go this way?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?



- ◉ Informed by rigorously established objective evidence. i.e. using scientific studies and practices capable of improving policy-relevant outcomes. In other words using randomised controlled trials.
- ◉ an extension of the idea of evidence based medicine.

STEPS IN FORMING EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY

What

- Methodology - Analytical approach allowing for proper consideration of the problems
- Capacity - Research skills are sufficient to undertake the analysis

When

- Time – Enough to harvest data, gather new data and test the analysis

How

- Transparency - Open debate and discussion to test and educate the public
- Independence - Incentives to deliver advice in the public interest

A receptive policy environment

- Willingness to test policy options and the structures and resources to do so

THEREFORE.....



- › Good quality data,
- › Analytical skills
- › Political support.

...are the important elements.

'YOUTH'

- The concept of 'youth' was included within the "scope of EU policies" only following the Treaty of Maastricht in 1993 (ECROYS, 2011, p.2)

AT THIS POINT WE WERE FLYING BLIND



AGENDA 2020 (2008) AND INVESTING AND EMPOWERING (2009)

- ◉ Highlight the importance of a “greater understanding and knowledge of youth to promote and strengthen evidence-based youth policy” (Chisholm et al., 2011, p. 40).

FACILITATING THIS EVIDENCE BASE

- ◉ Youth Policy Dashboard of 40 Indicators
- ◉ The EU Youth Reports
- ◉ The Structured Dialogue
- ◉ Peer Learning Groups
- ◉ The European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy (EKCYP)
- ◉ The Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR).
- ◉ Youth Policy Reviews
- ◉ Youth Wiki

WHAT EVIDENCE IS AVAILABLE?

- ◉ ***The EU Youth Reports (2009, 2012).***

The Eurostat database which contains data on young people from the EU Labour Force Survey and the Survey on Income and Living Conditions.

- ◉ **EUROFoundation Surveys**
- ◉ **Public opinion surveys**, like Youth Participation in Democratic Life, Youth participation and volunteering.....
- ◉ **Structured Dialogue Reports**
- ◉ **Knowledge Publications by the Partnership,**
- ◉ **Other Studies by the Executive Agency.**

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Evidence-based policy making is a means of gathering and sharing better evidence and understanding of young people's living conditions, values and attitudes to share with other relevant policy fields.

- BUT is this really the meaning of evidence based youth policy?



MAKING POLICY THAT IS BASED ON EVIDENCE SEEMS OBVIOUS. PUTTING THE PRINCIPLE INTO PRACTICE, HOWEVER, IS ANOTHER MATTER.





- ◉ In the real world, policy is developed in a fluid environment,
- ◉ is subject to competing vested and political interests
- ◉ Many times is driven by pressure to act quickly to solve headline-grabbing problems.

CHALLENGES



- ◉ Can the youth field do randomised controlled trials?
- ◉ Should we better talk about knowledge based youth policy? And if so...
- ◉ Are the methods and instruments that are considered critical for the collection of relevant evidence appropriate?
- ◉ Do policy makers have the right skills to discriminate between evidence which is reliable and useful, and that which is not?

CHALLENGES



- What are these deficiencies causing?
 - Inhibiting knowledge based analysis.
 - Also leading to reliance on 'quick and inappropriate' surveys,
 - Overseas studies resorted to and inappropriately used as a substitute for domestic studies.*

CHALLENGES

- Is evidence open to rigorous public and professional debate?



Transparency helps governments to gauge community reaction to ideas before they are formed and thus anticipate the politics of pursuing different courses of action.

But it takes time and effort,

CHALLENGES



- How frank and fearless is the advice that we give?
Robust advice that:
 - does not second-guess the politics or the politicians.
 - does not mean being a loose cannon, or acting contrary to a Government's broad objectives.

CHALLENGES

What opportunities do we find to provide knowledge-based advice?

AND.....

How do we deliver that advice, even if it is against the current, or not confined to a Minister's or a Government's favoured position?



Do we need systems that are informed by evidence at each stage of policy development, from when an issue is first identified, to the development of the most appropriate response, and subsequent evaluation of its effectiveness?
BECAUSE
this is what evidence based policy is all about!