

**1ST
BIENNIAL
WEST-AFRICAN
POLICY
DIALOGUE ON
PANDEMIC
PREPAREDNESS**

**1st & 2nd December 2022
Accra, Ghana (GMT)**

THEME:

**CAPABILITIES FOR
BETTER DATA,
BETTER ANALYTICS,
BETTER DECISIONS**

**Better decisions – facilitators
and barriers for evidence
informed decision-making in the
context of pandemics**

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Collaborative surveillance

Strengthened national integrated disease, threat and vulnerability **surveillance**

Increased **laboratory** capacity for pathogen and genomic surveillance

Collaborative approaches for risk assessment, event detection and response monitoring



Access to countermeasures

Fast track **R&D** with pre-negotiated benefit sharing agreements

Scalable **manufacturing platforms** and agreements for technology transfer

Coordinated procurement and **emergency supply chains** to ensure equitable access



Community protection

Proactive **risk communication and infodemic management** to inform communities and build trust

Community engagement to co-create mass **population and environmental interventions** based on local contexts and customs

Multi-sectoral action to address community concerns such as social welfare and livelihood protection

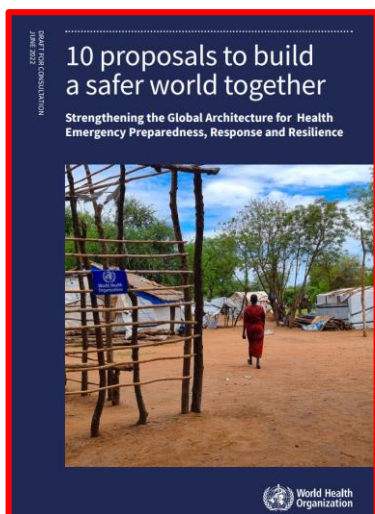


Clinical care

Safe and scalable **emergency care**

Protecting health workers and patients

Health systems that can **maintain essential health services** during emergencies



Emergency coordination

Strengthened **health emergency alert and response teams** that are interoperable and rapidly deployable

Coherent **national action plans** for preparedness, prevention, risk reduction and operational readiness

Scalable health **emergency response coordination** through standardized and commonly applied Emergency Response Framework

Dr. Chikwe Ihekweazu pointed to WHO proposals; from an “**evidence-based health policy**” point of view: **what is the evidence for them?**

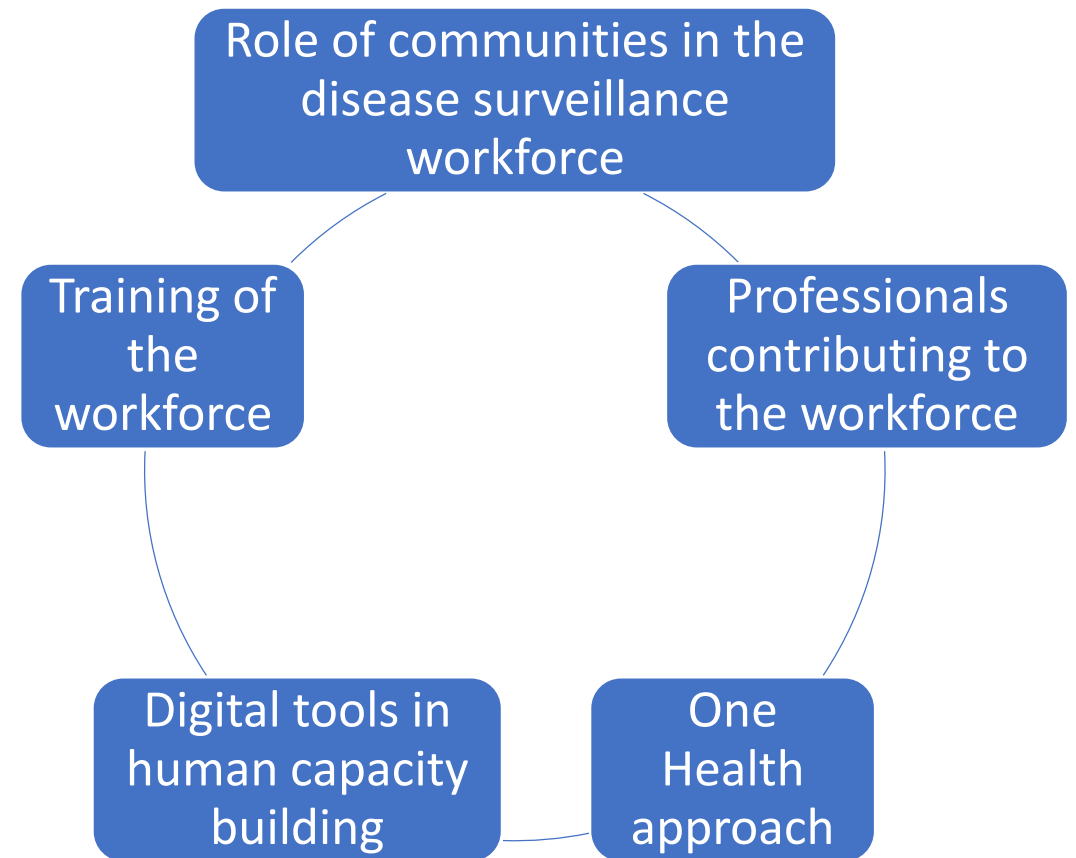
Rational

- Human capacity development is one of the strategic objectives of the WHO Pandemic Hub

Aim

- Identification of scientific evidence as well as review documents on challenges and opportunities for human capacity development in epidemic and pandemic intelligence

When “evidence health policy” specialists speak of “evidence”, they typically mean something like this ...





Survey populations and health risks

System of regular population-based surveys

Surveillance of public health threats

Regular population census

Looking forward: policy implications



Count births, deaths and causes of death

Full birth and death registration

Certification and reporting of causes of death

Looking forward: policy implications



Optimize health service data

Routine facility reporting system with patient monitoring

Regular system to monitor service availability, quality and effectiveness

Health service resources: health financing and health workforce

Looking forward: policy implications



Review progress and performance

Regular analytical reviews of progress and performance, with equity

Institutional capacity for analysis and learning

Looking forward: policy implications



Enable data use for policy and action

Data and evidence drive policy and planning

Data access and sharing

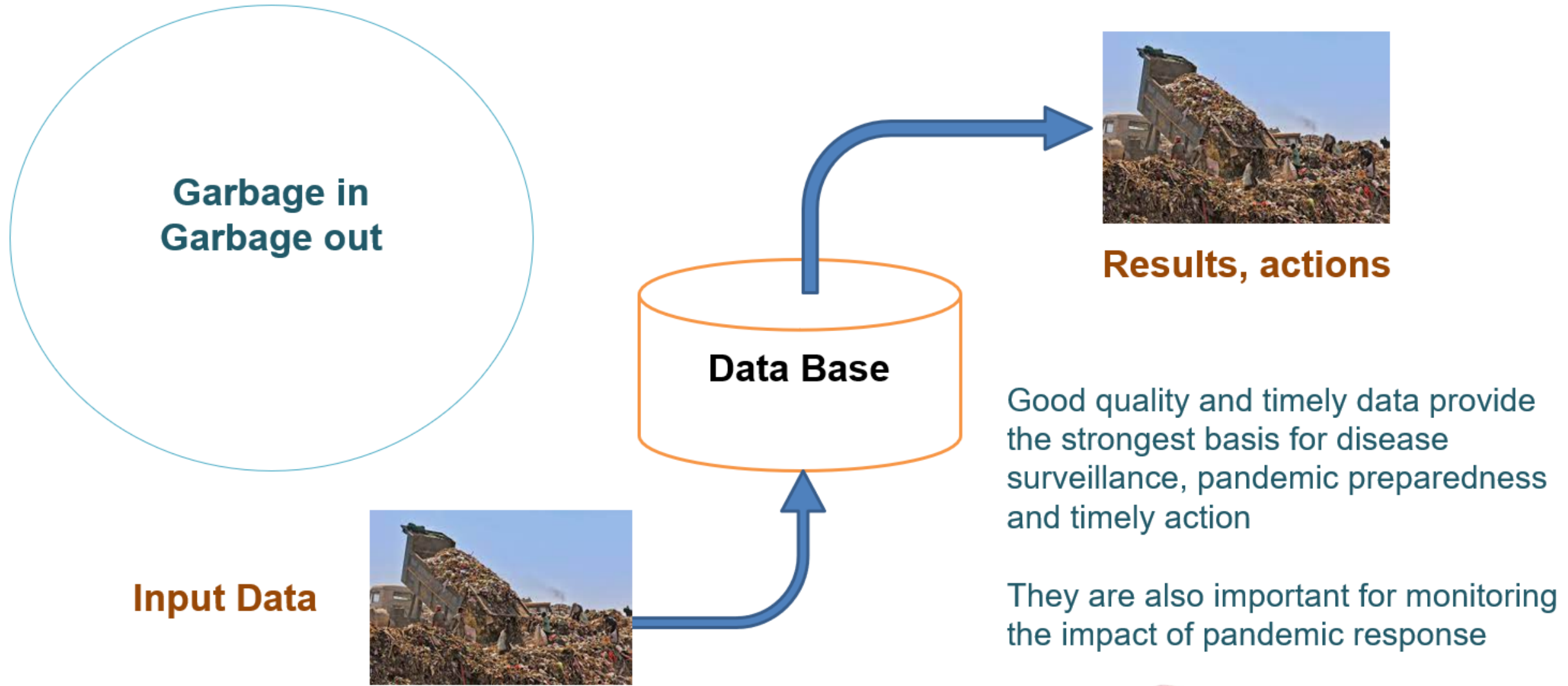
Strong country-led governance of data

Looking forward: policy implications

Dr. Benson Droti made us aware that there are very different kinds of data as another source of “evidence” – with **even the most basic data often not available ...**

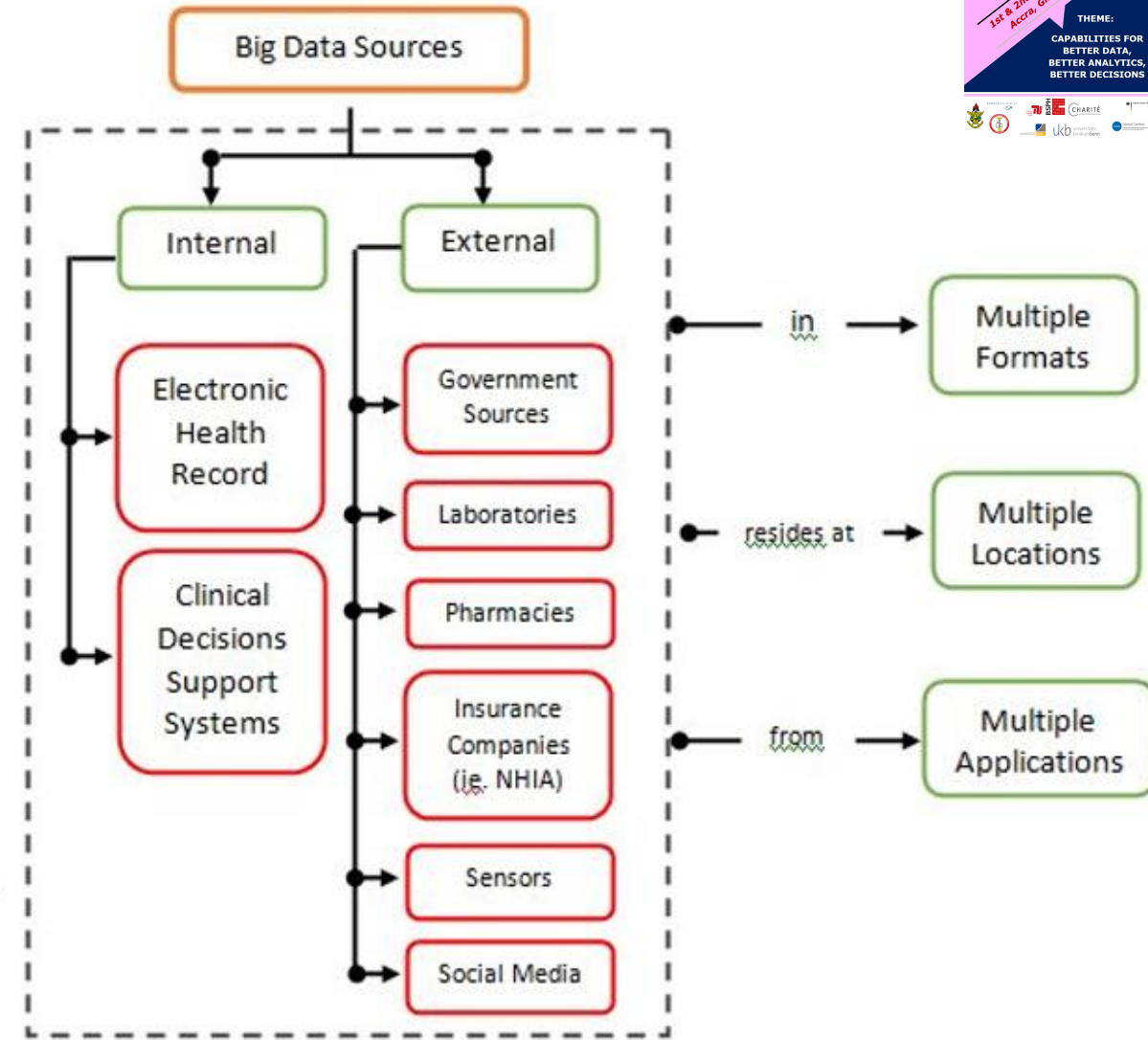
Why is it important to have reliable data for disease surveillance and pandemic preparedness

... which is clearly worrying



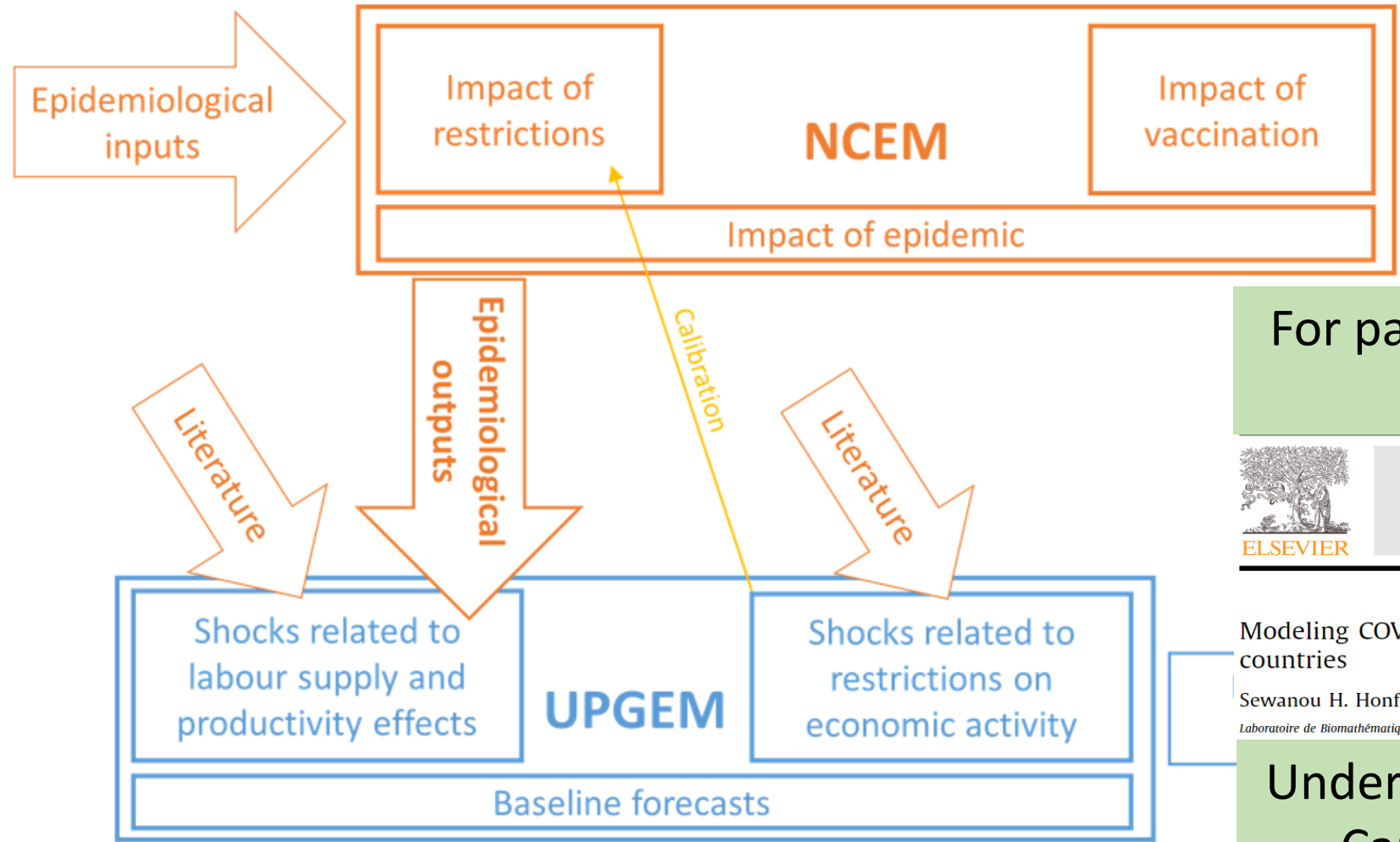
Big data for healthcare delivery in Ghana

1. Data is only useful if it is analysed and utilised to drive optimal decision making.
2. Healthcare system generate significant amounts of data due to strict adherence to regulatory protocols.
3. Big data deployment in the healthcare industry is at a nascent stage.
4. Benefits
 - Predictive models information (e.g., COVID-19)
 - Analysing disease patterns and tracking disease outbreaks (e.g. COVID-19)
 - Turning large data into actionable information (e.g. COVID-19)



Source: Adjei, E., Gyamfi, N. K., & Otoo-Arthur, D. (2018). Towards a Big Data Architectural Framework for Healthcare in Ghana. Communications, 7, 1-6.

Jointly modelling the epi and macro-economic impact of COVID-19: The Tekanelo Model



For pandemic preparedness, we need both – combined in models!



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Modeling COVID-19 dynamics in the sixteen West African countries

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Understandable and useful for policy?
Capacity needed in every country?

What is knowledge translation?

the exchange, synthesis and effective communication
of reliable and relevant research results.

The focus is on promoting interaction
among the producers and users of research,
removing the barriers to research use, and tailoring
information to different target audiences
so that effective interventions are used more widely

What do results from a systematic review with 145 included studies tell us regarding barriers and facilitators?

Table 1 Most frequently reported barriers and facilitators of the use of evidence (n = # studies in which factor reported)

Top 5 barriers to use of evidence

- Availability and access to research/improved dissemination (n = 63)
- Clarity/relevance/reliability of research findings (n = 54)
- Timing/opportunity (n = 42)
- Policymaker research skills (n = 26)
- Costs (n = 25)

Top 5 facilitators of evidence use

- Availability and access to research/improved dissemination (n = 65)
- Collaboration (n = 49)
- Clarity/relevance/reliability of research findings (n = 46)
- Relationship with policymakers (n = 39)
- Relationship with researchers/info staff (n = 37)

Oliver et al. (2014) A systematic review of barriers to and facilitators of the use of evidence by policymakers. *BMC Health Services Research* 14:2

That is echoed by policy- makers from 15 West African countries

1. To understand how to deal with barriers and facilitators that influence evidence to policy process
2. To understand how to acquire, access, adapt, and apply available research evidence in policy-making
3. To understand how to deal with contextual issues and broad range of evidence that will help diagnose, develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate policies
4. To understand how to bridge the gap between research producers and research users within the evidence ecosystem
5. To understand how to use knowledge translation and its application to policy-making
6. To understand how to apply systems thinking perspectives in policy-making
7. To understand how to combine colloquial evidence with research evidence in decision-making
8. To understand the politics of policy-making and how to manage it to achieve political acceptability of policy
9. To understand how to engage parliamentarians and policy legislators to promote policy development and implementation



Packaging the evidence

- **What it covers:** Does it cover a topical/relevant issue and address any features of the issue based on the best available context/ system information?
- **What it includes:** Does it include knowledge from synthesized, assessed context/ system information and from the tacit knowledge, views and experiences of policy-makers and stakeholders?
- **For whom it's targeted:** Does it explicitly target policy-makers and stakeholders and engage them in reviewing the product for relevance and clarity?
- **How it's presented:** Is it organized to highlight decision-relevant information, written in understandable language, and prepared in a format that makes the information easy to absorb?
- **How its use is supported:** Is it supported through knowledge-sharing mechanisms that contextualize the information and bring new information to the attention of policy audiences?

Creating knowledge-sharing mechanisms

- **online discussion forum**: offers policy-makers and stakeholders an opportunity to interact (but not in real time) with researchers and knowledge brokers;
- **online briefing or webinar**: involves a web-based presentation by a researcher or knowledge broker where policy-makers and stakeholders can interact in real time about issues raised in the presentation;
- **training workshop**: aims to help policy-makers and stakeholders enhance their skills in finding and using evidence;
- **personalized briefing**: provides policy-makers and stakeholders with a formal in-person presentation and discussion of evidence on an issue that they have prioritized and framed; and
- **policy dialogue**: convenes policy-makers, stakeholders and researchers to deliberate about a policy issue, and is ideally informed by a policy brief and organized to allow for a full airing of participants' tacit knowledge and real-world views and experiences

These recommendations are also echoed by policy-makers from 15 West African countries



Table 2 Recommended strategies for the EBPM Guidance to promote the use of evidence in policymaking for West Africa

1. Properly define/refine the policy problem, state policy questions
2. Identify and review existing similar policies
3. Review contextual issues (contextualization)
4. Initiate policy priority setting
5. Consider political acceptability of the policy
6. Access, retrieve, assess, and synthesis evidence
7. Commission research/engage researchers/ co-produce evidence and policy/ use rapid response services
8. Perform stakeholders' analysis & Convene stakeholders' engagement event
9. Use of policy advisory/technical/steering committees
10. Develop policy briefs and undertake policy dialogue
11. Draft the policy document
12. Subject the policy document to internal and external review
13. Ensure official endorsement of the policy by government
14. Institute monitoring, evaluation and review mechanism for the policy

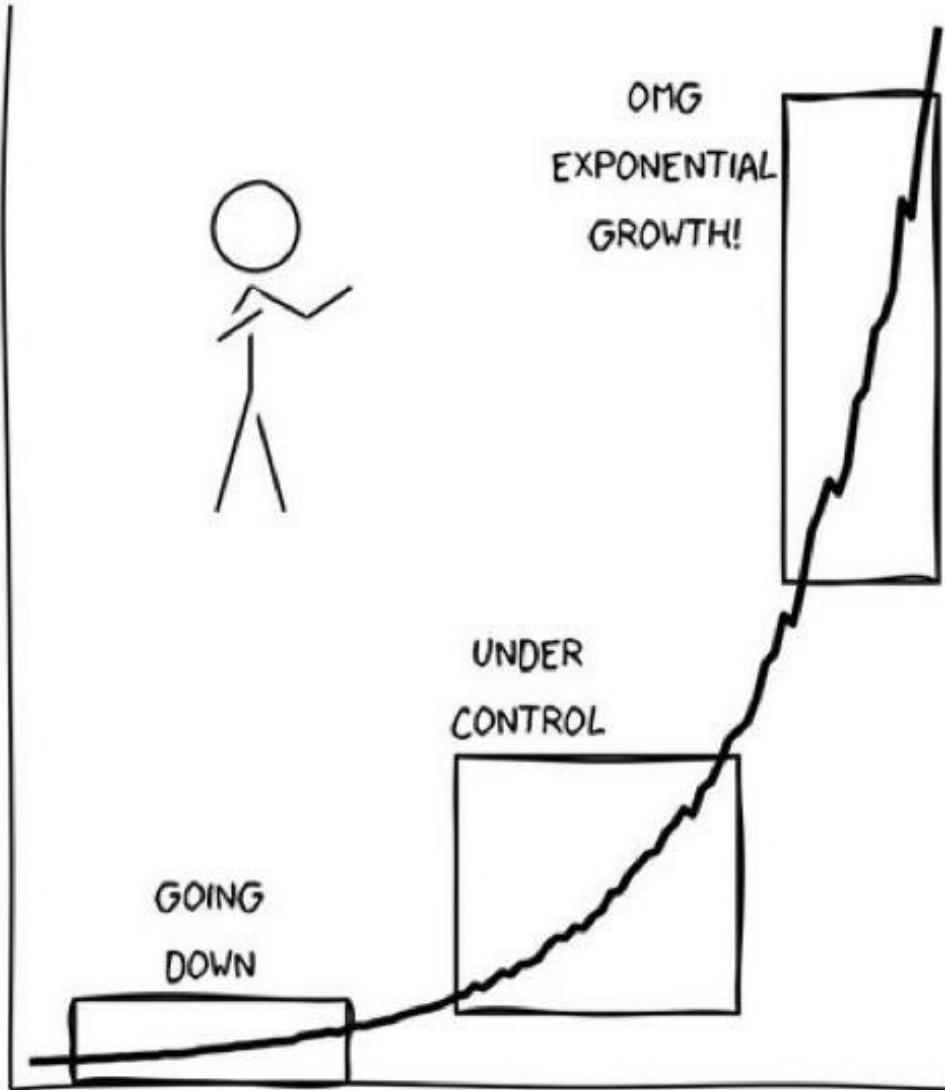
In short:
a need to strengthen the “evidence ecosystem”



i.e. the ‘system reflecting the formal and informal linkages and interactions between different actors and their capacities and resources involved in the production, translation and use of evidence’

Stewart R, Dayal H, Langer L. The evidence ecosystem in South Africa: growing resilience and institutionalisation of evidence use. *Palgrave Commun* 2019:90

POLITICIANS



SCIENTISTS

