



ATAF/ATRN RESEARCH METHODS WORKSHOP

Writing Policy Brief and Dissemination of Research

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Outline

- Writing a Policy Brief
- Dissemination of Research Findings



Writing a Policy Brief

- A policy brief is a concise summary of a particular issue, the policy options to deal with it, and some recommendations on the best option
- It presents the findings and recommendations of a research project to a non-technical audience
- Are a valuable tool for communicating the essential information in a research report, and help to bridge the divide between research and policy
- A policy brief should be :
 - A stand alone document
 - Focused on a single topic
 - No more than 2-4 pages (1,500 words)



Writing a Policy Brief...

Targeting the audience: Aim at wide dissemination of the policy research findings

- Who am I writing this brief for?
- How knowledgeable are they about the topic?
- How open are they to the message?
- What questions need answers?
- What are their interests, concerns?
- What does it take to reach specific readers such as media, decision-makers?



Writing a Policy Brief...

Influencing Uptake:

- A policy brief need uptake and utilization of its insights for it to be useful
- Use the power of persuasion
 - ✓ Answer the question “What value does this have for me?”
 - ✓ Describe the urgency of the situation
 - ✓ Speak in terms of benefits and advantages



Writing a Policy Brief...

- Policy Brief is prepared for non-specialists, with a view of highlighting issues for policy recommendation – do not use technical language (econometric models etc)
- No specific structure, but preferable it should be able to:
 - ✓ Provide brief background to the situation
 - ✓ Explain why it is important to address the situation
 - ✓ Provide some analysis to the situation
 - ✓ Present conclusion from the analysis
 - ✓ Give policy recommendations based on evidence



Structure of a Policy Brief

- **Policy briefs includes:**
 - ❑ **Title:** A good title quickly communicates the contents of the brief in a memorable way.
 - ❑ **Executive Summary:** This section is often one to two paragraphs long; it includes an overview of the problem and the proposed policy action.
 - ❑ **Policy Issue (Context or Scope of Problem):** This section communicates the magnitude and significance of the problem and aims to convince the reader of the necessity of policy action to correct the situation
 - ❑ **Policy Options:** This section discusses the current policy approach and explains proposed options. It should be fair and accurate while convincing the reader why the policy action proposed in the brief is the most desirable.
 - ❑ **Policy Recommendations:** This section contains the most detailed explanation of the concrete steps to be taken to address the policy issue.



Dissemination of Research Findings



Dissemination of Research – Considerations

- What is the purpose of disseminating?
- Who is your target audience? – language to use
- How clear and coherent are the ideas?
- Which dissemination outlets?
- How the report should be organized? (Format)
- Do thorough editing
- Design and layout – use tables and figures (for easy grasp)



Dissemination of Research

Ways of disseminating research findings:

1. Research reports - for internal use by your organization (disseminated at internal seminars or management meetings. Can also be for external audience/other stakeholders
2. Publications in academic :
 - i. Journals
 - ii. books,
 - iii. conference proceedings,
 - iv. discussion paper series,
 - v. working paper series,
 - vi. Policy briefs
3. Media - TV, Newspapers, Radio, blogs, webpages



References

- IDRC – International Development Research Centre. How to Write a Policy Brief. <https://www.idrc.ca/sites/default/files/idrcpolicybrieftoolkit.pdf>
- University of North Carolina. Policy Brief. <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/policy-briefs/>