

Impact Lessons: Engaging Marginalised Communities in National Policy Formation



Figure 1: Visualisation of online discussion on Engaging Marginalised Communities in National Policy Formation, June 2020.
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THE IMPACT INITIATIVE PROGRAMME

The Impact Initiative programme, funded by the UK's Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), aims to increase the uptake and impact of two major ESRC-FCDO international development research programmes: the Joint Fund for Poverty Alleviation Research and the Raising Learning Outcomes in Education Systems Research Programme. As part of its commitment to share learning and increase understanding of how good knowledge influences development, in 2020 the Impact Initiative led a series of online discussions.

BACKGROUND

The 'Engaging Marginalised Communities in National Policy Formation' virtual event aimed to understand how researchers can engage marginalised groups in national policy processes. It intended to explore the different strategies for engaging with policy and practice that are employed in a range of research programmes. The event was attended by over 60 researchers, campaigners, donors, and policy actors, around half of whom were based in the global South. They shared experiences of engaging marginalised groups, mainly with a focus on working with

children and youth, and identified lessons for other researchers considering this approach. Research programmes involving young people, including women and girls, people with disabilities, and youth definitions of marginalisation, and examining issues including sexuality, intergenerational relationships, and migration provided research examples that formed the basis of the event.

The virtual event was chaired by Vicky Johnson, University of the Highlands and Islands, who opened the proceedings with a presentation about the

'YOUR World Research National Youth Seminar' on uncertainty, violence, poverty, and rights, which was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in March 2019. The seminar was held towards the end of the three-year [Youth Uncertainty Rights \(YOUR\) World Research project](#) (see below), which led the seminar in partnership with the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth (MOWCY) and the Organisation for Child Development and Transformation (CHADET) with input from disability colleagues from UCL and Leonard Cheshire, and support from the Impact Initiative and Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) funding through the University of Brighton. At the seminar, 50 young people in Ethiopia shared with government officials and senior policymakers their experiences and perceptions of seeking ways out of poverty. This not only affirmed the importance of listening to young people's priorities, but also contributed to key elements in the review of the national youth policy. A similar set of youth seminars were held at provincial and national levels in Nepal.

Following the presentation, a panel of Ethiopian child rights practitioners, researchers, and policymakers shared learning around engaging lived experiences of marginalised youth in the context of Ethiopia's national youth policy. See box for the keynote speakers. Participants then split into three expert groups to discuss the benefits and challenges of engaging marginalised groups from their own experiences, including how to raise demand from governments for this type of evidence.

Youth Uncertainty Rights (YOUR) World Research

[YOUR World Research](#), funded by the ESRC-FCDO Joint Fund for Poverty Alleviation Research, operated in Ethiopia and Nepal 2016-19, and was a partnership between Goldsmiths - University of London, University of Brighton, ActionAid Nepal, Tribhuvan University, ChildHope UK, Addis Ababa University, and CHADET. The research aimed to generate new knowledge about the ways that marginalised young people are affected by uncertainty, and how this may affect their rights and pathways out of poverty.

Using a creative, participatory approach, researchers worked with over 1,000 young people, 320 adults, and 80 key stakeholders, collecting 250 in-depth case studies from young people aged 15-24 in Ethiopia and Nepal. Analysis of this evidence shows how thinking and strategies differ between genders and generations, as well as intersecting aspects including ethnicity, caste, religion, disability, education, and socioeconomic status.

National teams were based in well-established national non-governmental organisations (NGOs) - CHADET in Ethiopia and ActionAid Nepal - with local offices or partners who had long-standing, trusted relationships in communities and access to marginalised youth. Teams counteracted bias by not assuming all participants were the most marginalised and worked to snowball out to the most marginalised youth through understanding young people's own definitions of marginalisation. Partnerships with Southern universities - Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia



and Tribhuvan University in Nepal - proved important in following up YOUR World Research and placing youth and uncertainty in national academic and policy discourses. Team leaders, Melese Getu in Ethiopia and Sumon Kamel Tuladhar in Nepal, and partners in each country built relationships for productive collaboration with government bodies at local, regional/provincial, and national levels. In Ethiopia, the team gathered large-scale qualitative data on the lives of some of the most marginalised youth in widespread geographic locations and communities, with different cultural and religious contexts. The accumulated

attitudes and perspectives of marginalised youth has influenced policy and practice, ranging from local services to regional and national policies, including the national youth policy and vocational training. In Ethiopia, the aforementioned National Youth Seminar was held. In Nepal, the new devolution to provincial and local government meant that youth seminars in research sites, with the attendance of municipality officials and mayors, were particularly important, in addition to the national youth seminar held with Youth Advocacy Nepal.

Keynote speakers at the National Youth Seminar held in Addis Ababa, March 2019

Vicky Johnson is Director of the Centre for Remote and Sustainable Communities, Inverness College, University of the Highlands and Islands, Principal Investigator for YOUR World Research, and an IDS Honorary Associate.

Anannia Admassu, Director of CHADET, an NGO working with children and young people in urban and rural settings across Ethiopia, including those who are on the move.

Amid Ahmed is a researcher on the Ethiopia team of YOUR World Research and a doctoral student and researcher at the Institute of African Studies at Addis Ababa University.

Firehiwot Siyum Tadese is a youth disability advocate who draws attention to the way disability intersects with being a young Ethiopian woman. Firehiwot joined the expert group discussing how perspectives of youth with disabilities could inform the national youth policy review process.

Matiyas Assefa Chefa, Director-General for Youth Participation in the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth (MOWCY), interacts with and listens to marginalised youth, academics, and civil society organisations in Ethiopia in order to inform the processes and review of the National Youth Policy that is being coordinated by the MOWCY. Matiyas said at the National Youth Seminar: 'We strongly believe that the outcome of this research will help a lot, especially in the policy design process of the National Youth Policy.'

THE BENEFITS OF ENGAGING MARGINALISED GROUPS

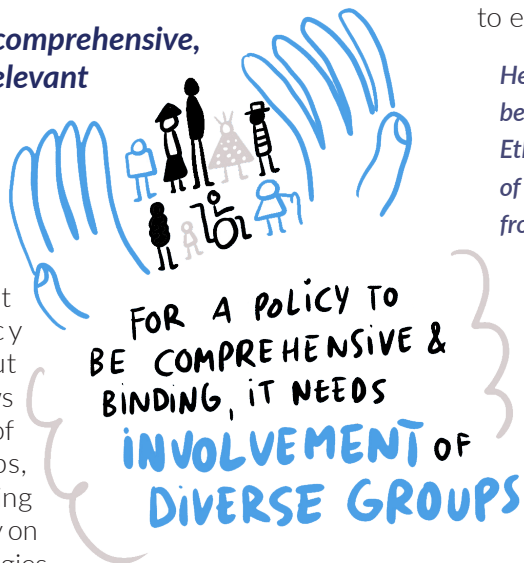
Six key benefits of involving marginalised groups in national policy formation have emerged from participants' discussions, summarised here.

1. Leads to more comprehensive, responsive, and relevant policies

Poverty, inclusion, and inequality are multifaceted and complex challenges. Policy development risks irrelevancy and unrest without inclusion of the views and circumstances of marginalised groups, and an understanding of the effect of policy on their lives and strategies.

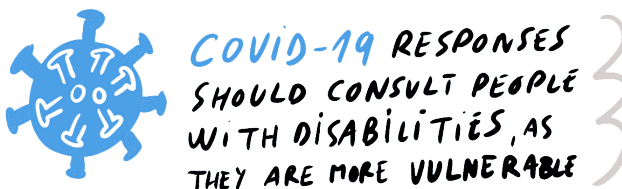
Provision of political space facilitates inclusion of the marginalised in policymaking, in turn leading to incorporation of diverse interests. Amid Ahmed, University of Addis Ababa, commented:

For a policy to be comprehensive and binding, it needs the involvement of these diverse groups.



2. Promotes inclusive development

Marginalised groups – such as children and youth, people with disabilities, older people, and women and girls – are in fact large, diverse communities, with a huge variety of subgroups reflecting different perspectives. A better understanding of this diversity by policymakers will lead to more effective policy development, implementation, and evaluation. Matiyas Assefa Chefa argued that keeping marginalised people at the centre of policymaking will ensure that no one is left behind in development outcomes.



Mekbib Alema, from Addis Ababa University, pointed out that engaging marginalised people in policymaking is but a start, and it is important to maintain engagement in practice to ensure policies are implemented:

Hearing the voice of the marginalised, I think... should not be limited to influencing policy because, for example, here in Ethiopia, as in most... sub-Saharan countries, we have got lots of beautiful and very strong policies imported from everywhere from the globe, but they are not put... [into] practice. So, unless the voices of all who are/would be affected by the policy are heard, it cannot be translated into practice, there is no impact.

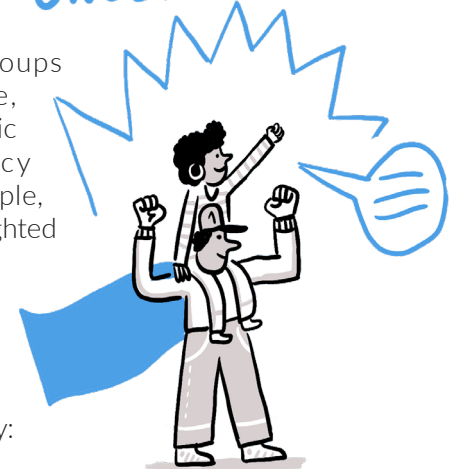
3. Brings positive, creative solutions to complex policy challenges

The daily experiences of marginalised groups make them 'experts' on a variety of separate and interconnected issues that might affect their lives.

Policymakers, on the other hand, often have very little time and are looking for 'simple messages that are easy to implement', pointed out Alula Pankhurst, director of Young Lives in Ethiopia.

Participants offered numerous examples of marginalised groups providing valuable, practical, and realistic solutions to policy problems. For example, Vicky Johnson highlighted the extraordinary creativity with which young people involved in YOUR World Research confronted uncertainty:

WE UNDERSTAND HOW POSITIVELY YOUNG PEOPLE CAN NAVIGATE UNCERTAINTY



Now we understand how positively young people can navigate, negotiate uncertainty, while trying to meet adult expectations, and with extraordinary creativity.... There are briefing papers, and we engaged with local stakeholders to make sure that young people's perspectives were taken into account locally, provincially, and nationally. Young people in Nepal had the idea of getting policymakers to sign their declarations so that they could come back and say, 'but you made a commitment to us'.

People in policy have problems, and they want solutions to those problems. If youth can explain how they're going to contribute to those solutions, then that's a good starting point.

James Georgalakis, Director of Communications and Impact, Institute of Development Studies



IF YOU DON'T INVOLVE MARGINALISED PEOPLE THE RISK IS IRRELEVANT POLICIES

4. Decreases marginalisation and resentment

Inherent in the experience and difficulties of marginalisation, and in the attitudes of others, is a lack of engagement on various social, economic, and political levels. A number of participants echoed the principle 'Nothing About Us, Without Us'. Including those who are marginalised increases both contact with neglected communities and ownership of subsequent relevant policies on all sides. A lack of participation at the grass roots may contribute to feelings of marginalisation and resentment. Amid Ahmed said:

Some of those involved with our research relate marginalisation to not being listened to or consulted, while decisions that affect their life are made and implemented... It's really vital to open a meaningful dialogue with [marginalised groups] on the questions that affect their lives.

5. Builds young people's skills and confidence

The use of creative and innovative methods to engage marginalised groups also builds skills and confidence, along with familiarity, which enhances communication with policymakers and provides a base on which to build further. As could be seen from the National Youth Seminar, providing a space for marginalised groups to interact and dialogue with policymakers helped them develop the confidence, know-how, and motivation



WE'VE ENGAGED YOUNG PEOPLE USING CREATIVE METHODS I.E. FILM-MAKING

CREATIVITY is KEY



to approach policymakers concerning their rights, in spite of unbalanced power relationships and within a rapidly changing political environment.

Matiyas Assefa Chefa explained that young people can build skills and enhance their own personal development through policy engagement. Commenting on the National Youth Seminar,

Mark Erickson, Reader in Sociology at the University of Brighton, reflected on the way that marginalised youth interacted with policymakers when given the space:

It was fantastic to see marginalised young people showing their resilience and the skills gained from the project to engage directly with policymakers at a regional and national level.

Creating a platform for the involvement of different stakeholders is part of demonstrating political will to address the needs of the most marginalised. Amid Ahmed suggested that engaging marginalised groups in policymaking is a 'craft' and went on to say:

Involving marginalised youth in policymaking can be a sort of empowerment as we are allowing them space to know their rights, productivity, and power in the community.

Jill Healey, Executive Director of ChildHope UK, discussed the impact of the FCDO-funded 'Girls Education Challenge' project in Ethiopia, which is delivered through its local partner, CHADET. Since 2013, the project has worked with over 17,000 girls in schools to increase girls' active participation and performance in school. As a result, many girls became more confident to discuss issues with their brothers, who then became allies in confronting parents on serious issues such as child marriage and withdrawal from education. This enabled some girls to stay on at secondary school and access vital learning opportunities. Support around sexual and reproductive health, including access to sanitary products, also helped the girls to stay in school. Jill explained:

When we have visitors to the girls in the schools, they say... 'my God, these girls are confident!'

6. Promotes wider understanding

Real-life experiences and stories provide information about marginalised people's lives and circumstances that can promote public and policy knowledge to complement traditional messaging such as data, reports, and briefings. Firehiwot Siyum Tadese described the experience of young people with disabilities presenting to policymakers at the YOUR World National Youth Seminar in Ethiopia:



It was powerful... They were very confident, they were very creative. They used art, illustration, and infographics... to present their solutions.

WE'VE ENGAGED LOCALLY TO MAKE SURE YOUNG PEOPLE'S PERSPECTIVES WERE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

Participatory and co-constructed research methodologies, as seen in YOUR World Research, can help to include the perspectives of marginalised youth and other marginalised groups in policymaking processes. One of the ways it did this was to create a rapport with marginalised youth so that they feel confident and safe enough to put forward their values, interests, and experiences.

BARRIERS TO ENGAGING MARGINALISED GROUPS

Participants identified a range of challenges in engaging marginalised groups in policy processes. These include:

1. Social or cultural norms that discredit the voices of marginalised groups

Marginalised groups are often not seen as credible agents of change, perhaps due to cultural factors or inaccurate stereotypes, as Vicky Johnson explained:

There are a lot of assumptions that adults and policymakers know what children do, want, think, and need. There are social norms towards children and young people in global contexts – across all our countries in the global North and South – that we need to confront.

2. Failure to understand the complexity and diversity of marginalised groups

Policymakers often perceive marginalised groups as homogenous, not understanding their diversity. Alula Pankhurst explained that in Ethiopia youth policy typically focuses on more enterprising youth, aiming to harness their energies. He said that 'it's quite difficult to get across a nuanced and complex message about the capacities of more vulnerable and marginalised youth'. Firehiwot Siyum Tadesse argued that some policymakers did not take account of intersectionality; for example, often the voices of young women with disabilities are not heard. Amid Ahmed further suggested:

During the co-construction of the research methodology with marginalised youth, we realised that youth consist of very diverse groups, including taking into account their physical capacities, disabilities, and gender. The involvement of diverse groups is necessary for policies to be comprehensive and to promote inclusive development.

3. Fear of marginalised groups, uprisings, and unrest

Partly associated with a lack of contact, knowledge, and understanding, some policymakers fear that empowering marginalised groups would threaten governance systems, leading to discontent, instability, or conflict. Participants argued that some governments lack incentives to engage with particular marginalised groups. Jo Boyden, Director Young Lives said:

In fact, in many contexts, young people are considered more of a threat than a resource... because they're often disenfranchised and often their modes of expressing themselves present difficulties for governments.

This calls for reflection on the consequences of not engaging young marginalised people in the development of policies. Amid Ahmed added:

Rather than creating uprising and unrest, programmes and activities that involve marginalised youth may have a greater chance of compliance and success.

4. Lack of organised policy-influencing mechanisms

Many countries lack policy engagement processes, such as public consultations or steering groups, that could provide official platforms for marginalised groups to share their perspectives. Anannia Admassu explained that in Ethiopia, civil society organisations have been prohibited from engaging in advocacy and lobbying activities since 2009. Despite this, CHADET has been able to conduct action-oriented research about young people's lives, and not only used this to improve their own services to young people but also to present evidence to policymakers. Anannia emphasised how creating a platform for policymakers to listen to the perspectives of marginalised youth would enable an understanding of young people's aspirations and allow flexibility in formulating policies, as well as bring about transformational changes in the longer term. Developing mechanisms on how such consultations could be nurtured at layered levels, i.e. local, regional/provincial, and national levels, could encourage the commitment of policymakers to understand how these voices can feed into policies.

5. Lack of engagement throughout policy life cycle

Sometimes marginalised groups are engaged with initial policy development, but not with its implementation, evaluation, or review. Several participants identified a need for action research to understand the actual impact of policies on people's lives.

Sumon Kamal Tuladhar pointed out that despite the existence of policy in Nepal, 'Young women are complaining that they [still] don't have access to education'. She suggested that follow-up engagement in practice is needed:

We really need to take it into action research involving the youth themselves, [such that] we would be able to really make impact in their life.

She added that through the national youth seminar held in Nepal, key policymakers – including those from the Ministry for Youth and Sports and the Speaker of the House of Representatives – interacted with marginalised youth, and their perspectives are now included in discussions about policy and budgets at national level.

6. Constraints of research study design

The design and methodology of some research projects makes it difficult to identify and engage with some individuals or groups. In addition, ensuring policymakers hear complex and nuanced perspectives from research participants that cover a large geographic area or multiple sites can be practically very challenging.

One of the expert groups discussed how some large-scale observational studies, such as those part of Young Lives, maintain anonymity of participants so under such circumstances, it is hard to bring young people together with policymakers. In YOUR World Research there were strategies to mix the marginalised with the less marginalised and to ensure that any data presented were anonymised. The more marginalised often chose others to represent their views to policymakers, and all stakeholders were clear that the youth presenting were doing so in agreement between more and less marginalised groups.

ENGAGEMENT IMPACT LESSONS

The discussions highlighted a number of lessons for researchers working with marginalised groups to improve policy impact, which also respond to barriers.

1. Establish long-term, two-way dialogue and partnerships

Policy engagement will be most effective as part of an ongoing discussion, rather than a one-off event at the end of a research programme. Participants highlighted the importance of developing strong relationships with relevant government agencies at the start of a research project, not just at the dissemination phase. Amid Ahmed argued that an ongoing policy dialogue – continuous communication between all groups – helps sustain policy engagement efforts over the long term:

The issue of involving the marginalised group goes beyond listening to their view on the proposed policy. Rather, finding ways of sustaining marginalised groups' interest and involving them over time is vital.

Researchers should use established connections to build credibility over time, and open doors for them to undertake research. For example, YOUR World Research worked in partnership with CHADET, which has a wealth of experience implementing projects on the ground. The long-standing relationships that CHADET maintains with local-level policymakers provided a very good opportunity for the research team to consult authorities and to approach them for implementing research findings.

Alongside planned engagement, researchers should identify and respond to opportunities as they arise. Covid-19 has exemplarily demonstrated how global and national policy environments can rapidly change. Researchers should be flexible to adapt their approach. As Jo Boyden pointed out:

Sometimes, something quite incidental will happen. And that gives you your moment to capture imagination and engage people.

2. Recognise diversity and engage marginalised communities as part of a package of policy influencing, at multiple levels, from the outset

Working with marginalised groups must engage their views and ideas (such as defining marginalisation) from the outset. It must then go hand in hand with other policy-influencing methods, such as publishing briefings and providing data.

One of the things that YOUR World Research showed was that numbers are important. And mapping and knowing where things are happening is important. But actually, that getting voices heard is at least as important.

Dr Mark Carew, Leonard Cheshire

Marginalised groups should be encouraged to engage with policymakers at all levels of government. Vicky Johnson explained that YOUR World Research engaged marginalised groups at different levels – locally, provincially, and nationally

– in order to make sure that young people's perspectives were taken into account.

Sumon Kamal Tuladhar described how YOUR World Research invited local government officials to seminars and the way this helped to acquire longer-term benefits:

... in Nepal recently more emphasis was placed on provincial government than on federal government. They are more powerful and they are more active these days. So they make their own plan. And they can also do the budgeting of themselves. We [had] already engaged them. And it's really interesting to see in education policy as well as in their local policies, how government has included the voices of youth.

She also pointed to the financial benefits of engaging policymakers with marginalised young people through research seminars:

Also in the budget... that's the budget this year, we can see a lot of youth activities and especially focused on marginalised young people.

The national youth seminar in Nepal enabled the Speaker of the House of Representatives to engage with marginalised youth, although Sumon suggested that follow-up is needed to understand what this means in practice and the impact it has made on the lives of youth.

3. Recognise and demonstrate the value of communities in identifying solutions

While all the participants saw huge value in engaging marginalised groups in policymaking, there was consensus that policymakers may be apprehensive of this approach. It is important to frame lived experiences in a way that includes some kind of policy offer. Nyambura Gichuki, from Arigatou International, a global NGO, argued that government ministries would be more receptive to young people's messages if they could clearly articulate the value they are adding. This involves proposing solutions, not just presenting problems. Solutions identified by marginalised groups may be articulated at different levels, and their benefits for local, provincial, and national governments need to be clearly articulated. Amid Ahmed argued that during the National Youth Seminar, the youth declaration developed during the seminar with marginalised youth demonstrated that they wanted to be involved and take forward solutions for the problems they highlight. The experience also demonstrated to policymakers and officials how youth can contribute to new and innovative solutions.

4. Actively mainstream marginalised issues within broader government objectives

Participants agreed that many research projects seek to influence the parts of government that are most receptive, but which often have little resources to effect change. Understanding the internal mechanics of government will ensure marginalised groups engage in the right places, with the right people. This involves considering where the power and funding lies within governments – often the Ministry

of Finance – rather than speaking only to the policymakers who are already on board.

Firehiwot Siyum Tadese explained that mainstreaming issues of disability into existing policies and practice, across departments such as employment, education, health, etc., can help increase government demand for evidence from marginalised groups. Mobilising donors can help with mainstreaming, as some may have the power to ensure that gender, disability, or other marginalised issues are included in broader objectives.

Also on disability, Jean-Francois Trani from the Brown School at Washington University in St Louis shared his experience of working with disabled people's organisations in Afghanistan. Throughout the project, researchers introduced the specific needs and views of people with disabilities across different government ministries. This included conducting a national disability survey, which gathered information on livelihoods, expectations, aspirations, and disability prevalence. By providing this evidence across different ministries, government officials were supported in making political decisions about where to invest resources.

5. Be creative with communication platforms and tools

Participants shared numerous examples of creative, innovative forums and spaces (from events to blogs, videos to theatre) that they had used to bring marginalised groups and policymakers together and to support marginalised communities in sharing their perspectives. The Covid-19 pandemic has prompted researchers to think more innovatively about choosing platforms.

Thandie Keromamang Hlabana, lecturer at the National University of Lesotho, recounted her experience of research on young people and cash transfers. The project team organised participatory workshops with young people in the villages, which were very successful. They then decided to take policymakers directly to the rural community involved in the study, asking young people to convey their views in the form of their choice. They presented a play and a song to convey their messages, ideas, and solutions, a very powerful means of communicating. Thandie reflected:

We realised that it's important as researchers that we do not just document what these young people are saying. But we also try and bring on board the policymakers to come and hear what these young people are saying.

CONCLUDING MESSAGE

Matiyas Assefa Chefa, MOWCY, speaking about the impact of research and the National Youth Seminar on developing youth policy in the Ethiopian government, emphasised the importance of supporting youth groups and associations. Researchers should seek to build capacity of organisations that represent marginalised groups to engage in policy processes, he said, and others agreed that working together helps give a stronger, united voice:

Young people can come together and speak about their views and aspirations... in this case [the National Youth

Francisca Mujawase, Manager of Research and Evaluation at Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace and Security in Kigali, described her experiences of working with young people. Rwanda's decentralised governance system means that there is a monthly open forum for youth to engage with policymakers, during which they identify problems and are given responsibility to find solutions. These forums have proved very effective. In Ethiopia, CHADET brought vulnerable young people from various locations to an event in Addis Ababa, where they could speak directly to high-level policymakers.

Researchers should be open to trying different communication and advocacy approaches, and to adjusting plans if required. Alula Pankhurst shared his experience with the Child Research Practice Forum in Ethiopia: originally based at UNICEF's offices but with very little engagement from policymakers, the team moved it to within the MOWCY where policymakers were much more meaningfully involved. CHADET and the YOUR World Research team in Ethiopia also found this forum invaluable for interacting with policymakers and feeding research evidence to directly influence policymakers in government.

There are practical challenges in organising these kinds of engagement. It is not always possible to bring diverse groups from a large geographical area into one space, or to take policymakers to visit multiple locations. Researchers should think creatively in evaluating whether selected platforms and tools are effective.

6. Build capacity of representative organisations

A relevant local organisation that has community links and credibility can support researchers to initiate engagement of marginalised groups with policymakers. Small, local organisations and user groups may need capacity building to enhance skills to work with government policymakers and support communication, particularly with departments that are unfamiliar. Matiyas Assefa Chefa spoke about the need to increase demand in government for evidence from and engagement with marginalised groups:

The first thing we can do is we can support the youth groups and the youth associations who are mandated to engage young people to enhance their capability and foster partnerships.

Seminar] young people have shared their experience in areas of enhancing their personal development and their skills development. It enabled social as well as political issues to be main-staged in programmes and policy development... [it demonstrated] their commitment to development issues in the country... development that leaves no one behind. Risks of not including young people and their concerns may create conflict, misunderstanding or uprising... so it is important not to ignore basic concerns and issues of young people and neglected segments of the population.

When identifying potential partners to work with, it is crucial that researchers understand each organisation's agenda and funding arrangements, in order to be clear exactly who they are representing. The YOUR World Research presentation at this virtual event, along with the discussions, highlighted the importance of engaging marginalised groups with policy actors at different levels. Discussions confirmed how this engagement can lead to various types of impact, including informing national and provincial/local policy and practice of the otherwise often missing or ignored perspectives of marginalised groups.

ESRC-FCDO RESEARCH EVIDENCE FOR POLICYMAKERS AND PRACTITIONERS

This virtual gathering built on previous events and outputs by bringing together available evidence and policy gaps.

- [ESRC-FCDO Research on Children and Youth in Africa](#) presents research evidence from the ESRC-FCDO Strategic Partnership and provides a map and glossary of 30 projects in 24 countries focused on children and young people enabled by the [Raising Learning Outcomes in Education Systems Programme](#).
- A key issue guide highlights ESRC-FCDO research from the Joint Fund for Poverty Alleviation Research that has directly engaged young people or looked at the factors that enable (or inhibit) their ability to influence what happens in their lives: '[Research with Children and Young People: How Children's Choices Influence their Wellbeing and How Research can Help](#)'.
- An [Evidence Synthesis Research Award \(ESRA\) report](#) (and [summary](#)) explores the specific achievements and contributions of research on children and young people from the ESRC-FCDO Joint Fund for Poverty Alleviation Research: '[New Knowledge on Children and Young People: A Synthesis of Evidence](#)'.
- An analysis of partnership dynamics in research-policy collaborations and the literature on development partnerships provide a framework for effective partnership: '[The Power of Partnerships: How to Maximise the Impact for Research for Development](#)'. See also '[Layered and Linking Research Partnerships: Learning from YOUR World Research in Ethiopia and Nepal](#)' in *IDS Bulletin 50.1* written by partners from YOUR World Research in the UK, Ethiopia, and Nepal.
- [Blog: Power of Partnerships and Pathways Out of Poverty](#).
- International, national, and site-level policy briefings from YOUR World Research, accessed through the [University of Brighton website](#), include thematic briefings on street connection, disability, and migration produced for the national youth seminars.
- A list of participants at the Impact Initiative's 'Engaging Marginalised Communities in National Policy Formation' virtual event held on 25 June 2020 can be accessed from the [event page](#).
- A book is due to be published in 2021 by Practical Action Publishing: Johnson, V. and West, A. with Church, A.; Getu, M.; Tuladhar, S.; Getachew, M.; Shrestha, S.M.; Ahmed, A.; Neupane, S.; Admassu, A.; Mathema, S. and Gosmann, S. (forthcoming), 'Youth and Positive Uncertainty: Negotiating Life in Post Conflict and Fragile Environments.'

It was a great honour to deliver a speech on such a dynamic audience. The webinar was insightful and informative with a lot to learn. Although the issue under discussion is complex and one cannot exhaust the aspects in such a short session, this kind of consultation between stakeholders is vital in paving ways for making the voice of marginalised groups included in national policy making.

Amid Ahmed (PhD Student, Addis Ababa University and member of YOUR World Research)

Credits

This Working Paper was written by Vicky Johnson, Director of the Centre for Remote and Sustainable Communities at the University of the Highlands and Islands; Kelly Shephard, Head of Knowledge, Impact and Policy at IDS; and Andy West, co-researcher on YOUR World Research and Community University Partnership Programme (CUPP) Fellow at the University of Brighton. Further editorial support was provided by Sarah Nelson, Anannia Admassu (CHADET) and Amid Ahmed (Researcher, YOUR World Research/Institute of African Studies at Addis Ababa University).

The Ethiopia team of YOUR World Research was led by **Melese Getu** from Addis Ababa University with **Amid Ahmed**, a researcher from the Institute of African Studies at Addis Ababa University, and **Milki Getachew**, a researcher and doctoral student at Goldsmiths - University of London.

YOUR World Research was funded by ESRC-FCDO's Joint Poverty Alleviation Research Fund grant number: ES/NO14391/1 NS ES/NO14391/2

Direct quotes included throughout this paper are sourced from the webinar recording and transcription notes - these are included with kind permission from the individuals concerned. In some cases, poor internet connections meant that sound was compromised and we have indicated this in the quotes.




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The Impact Initiative seeks to connect policymakers and practitioners with world-class social science research supported by the ESRC-FCDO (formerly DFID) Strategic Partnership, maximising the uptake and impact of research from: (i) the Joint Fund for Poverty Alleviation Research, and (ii) the Raising Learning Outcomes in Education Systems Programme.

The Impact Initiative endeavours to identify synergies between these programmes and their grant holders, support them to exploit influencing and engagement opportunities, and facilitate mutual learning. The Impact Initiative is a collaboration between IDS and the University of Cambridge's Research for Equitable Access and Learning (REAL) Centre.

This is a product of the Impact Initiative. The material has been funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and UK aid from the UK Government. However, the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the UK Government or ESRC.

The Impact Initiative programme is funded by the UK's Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the former UK Department for International Development (DFID), which merged with the Foreign & Commonwealth Office on 2 September 2020 to become the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO).

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ISBN 978-1-78118-710-4

DOI [10.35648/20.500.12413/11781/ii356](https://doi.org/10.35648/20.500.12413/11781/ii356)



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