

Discussion of research uptake and impact activities and reflections from our work on unsafe abortion in Zambia

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ESRC DFID Poverty Alleviation Conference
Tuesday 9 September 2014



A discussion-based workshop

- Brief introduction to **our study and impact activities**
- Divide into **small breakout groups** to reflect on and **discuss**:
 1. Getting the aim of our impact maximisation strategy straight
 2. Creating and capitalising on social networks
 3. Tracking impact

Presentation on-line at www.slideshare.net/ZambiaTOP

Group's discussions will be captured and circulated

Our research focus: unsafe abortion in Zambia

1

Research study (2012-14)

2

Impact maximisation project (2014-15)



Some key research findings

- Unsafe abortion **costs the Zambia public health system** US\$2.4 million a year
- Having an unsafe procedure that requires post-abortion care **costs individuals** US\$7 more than a safe abortion (3 day's wages)
- **Young women** are more likely to have an unsafe abortion than older women
- Trajectories to termination cannot be neatly categorized safe and unsafe: **safety is a continuum**



Impact and engagement: research study

Step one: design a study that's relevant to stakeholders

Step two: carry out a study with the stakeholders as co-investigators

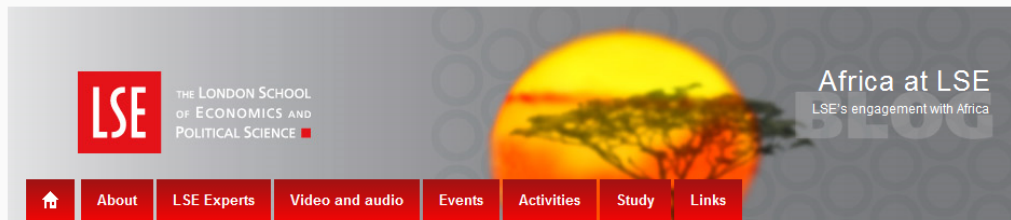
Step three: be generous with ideas and make research tools and materials available to stakeholders

Step four: talk about the research and findings (conferences, seminars, policy meetings, teaching)

Step five: be ready for policy windows by having information (not just findings!) available and well-indexed

Pregnancy termination trajectories in Zambia: the socio-economic costs

A collaborative study of the socio-economic causes and costs of abortion and post-abortion care for women, their households and the Zambian health system



Book Review: International Security, Conflict and Gender: African donors and Somali ownership: The elephant at 'HIV is another war' the #Somalia2013 Conference

When legalising abortion isn't enough

May 13 2013 Blog Editor

LSE's Ernestina Coast is the Principal Investigator on a new research [project](#) in Zambia that seeks to establish how investment in abortion services impacts the socio-economic conditions of women and their households.

Zambia's relatively liberal abortion laws make the country a rare case in [sub-Saharan Africa](#), a region where abortion is generally prohibited altogether or permitted only to save a woman's life. Yet many Zambian girls and women seeking pregnancy termination do not obtain a safe procedure. The new project, entitled [Pregnancy termination trajectories in Zambia: the socio-economic costs](#) and funded by [ESRC](#) and [DFID](#), seeks to explore the reasons for, and consequences of, unsafe abortion. Our research compares the social and economic costs of a safe abortion with those of an unsafe abortion, and to unpick the different pathways women take, whether clandestine or legal, once they have decided to terminate their pregnancy.



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34,000 women in Nigeria die from abortion-related complications every year. Academic research in the Nigerian news bit.ly/1pQfODS

Follow

Impact and engagement: **impact maximisation project**

Health professionals: presentations and informal networking

INGOs: focused liaison

Members of civil society and Parliament: tailored one-to-one briefing meetings

Academics: presentations, sharing resources, web-based facilities (e.g. www.Scoop.it)

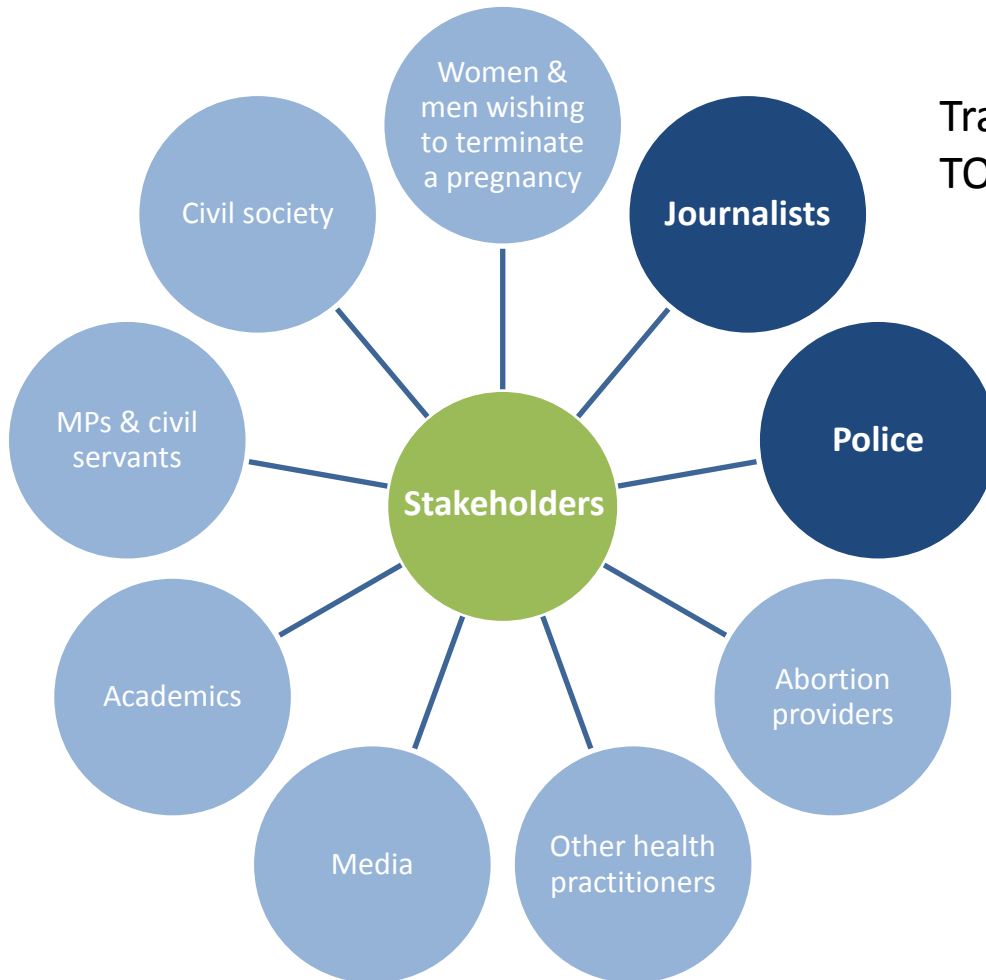
 **All of these:** Social Science Cafes to communicate research findings and facilitate uptake

Women seeking information about abortion: radio shows on “pregnancy crises”, web-based materials

More stakeholders



More stakeholders



Training journalists and getting positive TOP stories in the news

Learning from and supporting stakeholders (INGO and medical collaborators) currently reaching police

Impact and engagement: **impact maximisation project**

Where we are up to

- Presentation by Zambian collaborator at Zambian Media Association
- Presentations to different types of audience, including INGOs
- Interviews with media and media coverage
- Planning of radio programmes
- Joining with and supporting INGO to deliver their pre-planned journalist training

What are we trying to achieve though?

Use of the research findings in policy/ programming?

Instrumental outcomes

Substantive outcomes

Wider knowledge of the research findings?

Reduction in the level of mortality and morbidity from unsafe abortion in Zambia?

The aim of our research impact maximisation project

That research findings are used to support the efforts of those in a position to directly (e.g. providers, journalists) or indirectly (e.g. NGO lobbying government for non-legislative policy change) reduce unsafe abortions in Zambia

Small group discussion questions

- What are some instrumental outcomes in your work?
- What are some substantive outcomes in your work?
- How would you measure success?

Creating and capitalising on social networks

- Social networks are central to encouraging research uptake
- Not only who you know, but who *they* know, and what they know about those people and the kinds of messages they will be receptive to

eg Zambia's First Lady advised what messages to produce (economic-based)

eg INGO advised what messages we should drop to avoid harm

How?

- **Well-connected collaborators**
 - e.g. collaborators drawn from media and medicine
 - You don't need to know them already!
- **Be present**
 - In person: e.g. 3 days in Zambia in August: a list of 21 new important contacts, meetings with INGOs, 6 unplanned media (radio, print, TV) interviews (incl. non-English speaking), 6 features in newspapers across Africa
 - On line: Twitter links; 3 days in Zambia began as an email to INGO on journalist training

How?

- **Be timely**

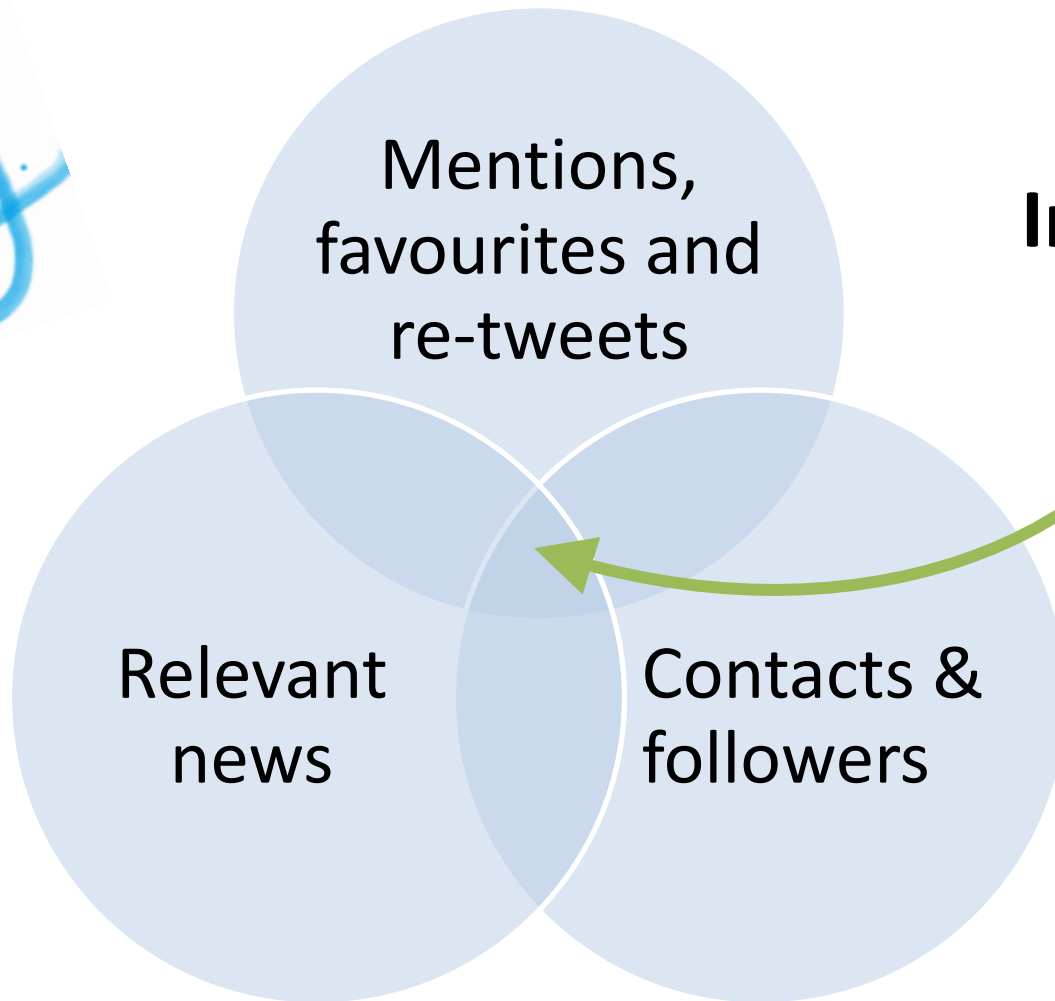
- Research that is current or very recent is more salient for those working in the topic area and the media
- Relationships need frequency of contact. Important in this study to capitalise on them quickly
- Runs against academic cycle of peer-review publication before dissemination and impact work

Small group discussion questions

- How important are personal connections in your research setting?
- How have you made those?
- How could you make them?

Tracking impact

eg.



Impact log



Challenges to tracking impact

- Reasons our stakeholders make good collaborators is part of the reason we had difficulty to get them to contribute to the log
- Some models are time consuming
- Keeping track of contacts and conversations doesn't demonstrate causality

Small group discussion questions

- How do you/will you track impact?
- How have you encouraged all team members to contribute to monitoring impact?
- How will your records of impact be used?

Good places for information on process of impact maximisation

A good resource on the process of developing a impact maximisation strategy

- ODI's guide to policy engagement and influence: <http://roma.odi.org/>

Good resources on individual elements of a strategy

- Resources from the Academy of Social Sciences International Advisory Group seminar 'Evidence and the policy process: international insights'
<http://acss.org.uk/international-advisory-group-iag-seminars/iag-seminar-series-report-seminar-5/>
- Notes from the ODI's short course 'Engaging your policy audiences' (and the course, if it runs again!)
<http://www.ids.ac.uk/files/dmfile/Engagingyourpolicyaudiences1daycoursepresentation.pdf>
- ESRC impact toolkit <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/impact-toolkit/>
- The numerous resources and guides of the LSE Impact of Social Sciences blog
<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/>
- Some articles and blogs we thought were interesting on our Scoop.it page
<http://www.scoop.it/t/social-science-impact>

Keeping in touch

- Let us know if you want to keep in touch and/or receive an overview of our discussions!
- You can contact us by any of the following:

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