Making systematic reviews work for international development research

Description

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ODI Discussion paper, January 2012 4 pages

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This briefing paper reflects upon the use of systematic reviews in international development research. It attempts to identify where a systematic review approach adds value to development research and where it becomes problematic.

The question of â??what worksâ?? in international development policy and practice is becoming ever more important against a backdrop of accountability and austerity. In order to answer this question, there has been a surge of interest in â??evidence-informed policy makingâ??.

Systematic reviews are a rigorous and transparent form of literature review, and are increasingly considered a key tool for evidence-informed policy making. Subsequently, a number of donors â?? most notably the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and AusAid â?? are focusing attention and resources on testing the appropriateness of systematic reviews in assessing the impacts of development and humanitarian interventions.

This briefing paper reflects upon the use of systematic reviews in international development research and argues:

- Using systematic review principles can help researchers improve the rigour and breadth of literature reviews
- Conducting a full systematic review is a resource intensive process and involves a number of practical challenges
- Systematic reviews should be viewed as a means to finding a robust and sensible answer to a focused research question

3ie have subsequently provided this Commentary

There has also been a discussion on ODI Blog Posts, 27 January 2012

See also the DFID Nov 2011 background page on â??Systematic Reviews in International Development : An Initiative to Strengthen Evidence-Informed Policy Making â?•

Category

1. Uncategorized

Tags

1. systematic reviews

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