

# NORFACE SEMINAR SERIES ON EVIDENCE AND POLICY

Challenges of Providing Evidence for  
Policy Making

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# Definitions

## Policy Making

The act or process of setting and directing the course of action to be pursued by a government, business, organization or an individual

# Definitions

## Scientific Evidence

Any proof to determine or demonstrate the truth of an assertion

Generally, it is assumed that RCTs generate least biased primary research estimates when it comes to measuring impact of policy interventions

All scientific knowledge referring to causal relationships are estimations

# Definitions

## To Provide

To supply, deliver, make accessible

# Challenge # 1

## Enforcing a Cultural Shift

(among policy makers and in society more generally)

- The extent of demand for new ideas by decision makers
- The extent of openness among decision makers
- The extent of contestation among decision makers

# Challenge # 2

## Inflation in Definitions of Scientific Evidence

- Undisciplined use of “scientific evidence” on what works is a challenge!
- Then, anything goes!
- Establishing consensus on evidence scales is helpful

# Challenge # 3

## State of the Art

- What is the state of the evidence in public policy areas?
- What is a reasonable evidence level to rely on, given the state of the evidence?
- What research capacity is need to generate policy pertinent evidence?

# Example

*Guide to Community Preventive Services*  
provides guidance on population-based  
public health interventions

# Challenge # 4

## Worth and Merit of Diverse Research Designs

RCTs

(and, High Quality Systematic Reviews)

And beyond RCTs

How to deal With Uncertainties?

# Challenge # 5

## Systematic Research Reviews

- Very slow
- Underfunded
- Importantly, lacks ownership

# Challenge # 6

## The Evidence Lacks Fallacy

“We don’t Know” has become a jargon!

But, there is much sound evidence out there!

# Challenge # 7

## External Validity

Massive need for implementing and translating interventions to diverse contexts, and need for carefully studying the results

Massive need for knowing what models of translation and implementation work, in what contexts

# Challenge # 8

Scarcity of Cost Effectiveness Evidence

# Challenge # 9

## Limits of Academic Knowledge Production and Strengthening Mode 2 Knowledge production

- Production in the context of application
- Transdisciplinarity
- Organizational diversity
- Social accountability
- Quality control