CGAP Blog: How Do You Get Policy Researchers and Practitioners to Communicate Better? Ask a 12-Year-Old.

Our friends over at CGAP are starting a series of posts addressing policy research from the practitioner's point of view. In an ideal world policy researchers and practitioners would work closely - researchers want their insights used and practitioners want to do the most effective work they can - but the reality is that too often their orbits don't overlap enough. Groups like IPA are trying to help by getting researchers, policy makers, and practitioners talking at events like our Impact and Policy Conference held in Bangkok.

Betty Wilkinson, of conference partner Asian Development Bank, has a post about how researchers can communicate with policymakers better. As she points out:

> Researchers are doing brilliant work in impact evaluation, and using methods that create what they call "proof of concept." In layman's terms that means whether an idea works. They use an arcane language to discuss this, including terms such as "counterfactual" (what would be the case if you didn't try the new idea). And that language gets in the way of policymakers and practitioners understanding and using the results in sensible ways.

She has tips for researchers to help make sure policy makers get the take home message from their findings, and they all revolve around one point – (spoiler alert) KEEP IT SIMPLE. The best research isn't useable if it's not presented in a way the audience can digest.

One rule of thumb she offers – make sure a 12-year-old can understand it (we're sure she's not making any analogies to policymakers here). See that and her other simple suggestions for researchers in her full post here.

Following in the same spirit, after the conference we asked some of the researchers to write plain-language summaries of their presentations – you can judge how well they did for yourself here or better yet, ask a 12-year-old.

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