Report

Evaluation: Peer-to-peer learning trajectory and evaluation: GRIPP

Submitted to: ITM, Antwerp

January 2025

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INTRODUCTION

This evaluation is of a facilitated peer-to-peer learning trajectory for partners from the five-year (2022-26) Belgium government funded, Connecting the Dots – Higher Education and Science for a Healthier World programme (FA5) who expressed interest to participate in identifying the enablers and barriers to getting research into policy and practice. This is not a mid-term evaluation of the whole programme but of a specific element of the programme – the peer-to-peer trajectory.

The evaluators were both responsible for facilitating the peer-to-peer learning as well as evaluating the effect of the process on the knowledge and behaviours of the participants. This was therefore an active evaluation that sought to evaluate the learning and uptake of the Getting Research into Policy and Practice (GRIPP) mechanisms and techniques over the period of the facilitated peer-to-peer learning (December 2022-2024).

OVERVIEW OF THE LEARNING TRAJECTORY

This section outlines the events within the learning trajectory, participants, and the methods used.

Purpose

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess whether the use of innovative methods of peer-to-peer learning actually leads to learning, dissemination and application of GRIPP mechanisms and techniques which often does not happen with traditional forms of evaluation. This evaluation relied on active engagement, collaboration and exchange between the partners, ITM and the evaluators in order to co-create knowledge, fresh ideas, inspiration and, where possible, synergies. Accountability is also an important secondary purpose through objective monitoring processes throughout the evaluation.

Participants

The participating project partners were:

- Benin, Centre de Recherche en Reproduction Humaine et en Démographie, Cotonou (CERRHUD)
- Ethiopia, The Armauer Hansen Research Institute, Addis Ababa (AHRI)
- Ethiopia, Jimma University, Jimma
- South Africa, Department of Veterinary Tropical Diseases (DVTD), University of Pretoria
- South Africa, School of Public Health (SOPH), University of Western Cape
- Guinea, Centre d'Excellence Africain pour la Prévention et le Contrôle des Maladies Transmissibles (CEA-PCMT), Universite Gamal Abdel Nasser de Conakry
- Peru, Instituto de Medicina Tropical "Alexander von Humboldt" (IMTAvh)
- Cambodia, National Institute of Public Health (NIPH)

Annex 1 shows the list of individual participants for each of the face-to-face learning events. The number of participants from the project partner institutes was 8 for learning event one, 15 for learning event two, and 12 for learning event three. Out of a total of 18 different individuals who attended at least one event, five individuals attended all three events (see figure 1). Most participants attended at least two events (67%). Many of the participants who only attended one event did so as they were able to attend in their own country with minimal associated costs for the host countries.

Figure 1 Number of events attended by individual partner participants (n=18)

Number of events attended by individual partner participants (n = 18)
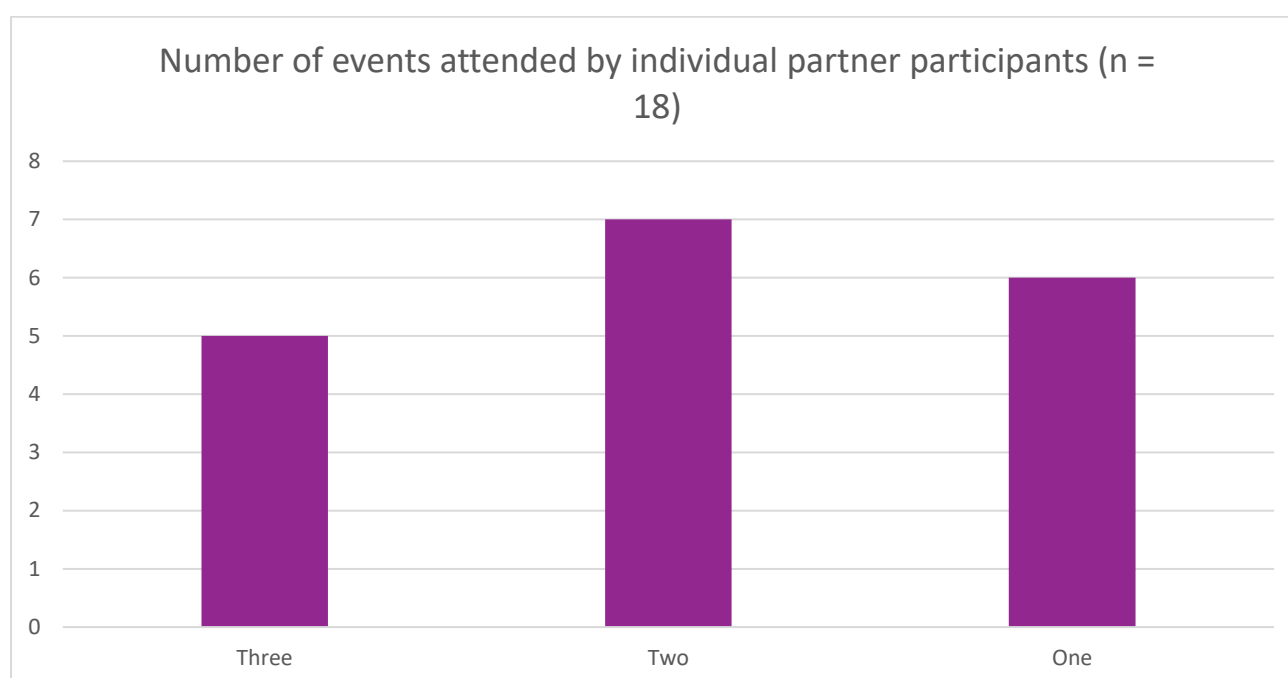
Process

An initial inception period included a kick off meeting and a needs assessment. This formed the basis of the inception report which outlined the learning objectives for the three learning events and the evaluation methodology, co-developed and agreed by the project steering group made up of all the partners.

Three learning events and two webinars were conducted during the trajectory (Table 1). In addition, the steering committee met virtually after each learning event to feedback on each report. Links to the programmes, learning objectives, and learning materials for each of the learning events is provided in Annex 2. Prior to each learning event between one and three think pieces were circulated to participants. These short documents aimed at condensing interesting academic thinking relating to the themes of the upcoming events. They were not designed to be comprehensive outlines of the academic literature but rather to be thought provoking or to outline useful concepts or frameworks (See Annex 3 for links to the think pieces).

Event	Focus	Date	Location
Webinar	Rapid literature review (Mina) and introduction to theory of change	Sep 2023	Virtual
One	Understanding the policy environment and importance of context	Oct/Nov 2023	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Webinar	(Re) Introduction to theory of change	May 24	Virtual
Two	Designing and implementing research for GRIPP – Bridging the research to policy gap	June 24	Cape Town, South Africa
Three	Using research results to influence practice: Bridging the research to practice and policy to practice gaps	Oct 24	Antwerp, Belgium

Learning event reports were disseminated after each of the face-to-face sessions, see Annex 3 for links to the learning event reports.

A Teams site was set up by ITM for the GRIPP Trajectory and all materials were saved on this platform. Most partners were able to access the Teams site but there was at least one partner for whom access was more difficult.

Participants were asked to complete sections of a theory of change template that had been derived from the literature and was used to compare experiences across a range of contexts and research. A link to the full theory of change template and the completed theories of change is provided in Annex 3. During the learning events participants presented and discussed their theories of change with their peers and added actions for when they returned to their institutions. They were also given the opportunity to further refine their theories of change post session. After learning session three, the facilitators provided feedback on the theories of change.

In addition, participants were invited to submit materials for feedback from the facilitators which included:

- GRIPP plans (n=2)
- Policy briefs (n= 3)
- Theory of change (n=11 by 12 people)

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Needs Assessment

The needs assessment survey, conducted after the inception report was accepted, asked partners to rank the importance of the proposed themes of the three events as well as current perceived capacity in those themes. Items were ranked either high, medium, or low. A total of ten people completed the needs assessment survey. Full results of the needs assessment are included in Annex 4.

Importance of GRIPP themes within professional role

For all themes the majority of partners ranked them either high or medium in terms of importance within their professional roles. The themes with the the largest number of people ranking them high were:

- The research to policy gap (n=8)
- Creating an issue or policy brief (n=7)
- The roles of researchers, technocrats and other stakeholders in translating policy to practice (n=8)
- Mechanisms to spread innovations and improvements within different contexts (n=8)

Self-rated capacity in GRIPP themes

The majority of respondents ranked their capacity as either low or medium in all themes. There were only seven themes out of twenty-four where between one and two people ranked themselves as having a high capacity.

Based on the needs assessment, the planned themes were accepted as being of importance to the participants professional roles and having the potential of increasing their capacity in GRIPP.

Learning Event Focus

Learning objectives for the face-to-face events were derived from the needs assessment and agreed during the inception period but were revised according to feedback from the participants during the trajectory.

At the kick off meeting, participating partners were asked whether the trajectory should focus more on the academic or the practical. Whilst there was appetite for theory there was also a very clear steer that practical aspects were most important to the partners. Staff from ITM, however, were more focussed on the academic and theory-based understanding of GRIPP. In the development of the content, the facilitators tried to keep a balance between theory, real examples, and practical activities.

Event 1: Understanding the policy environment and the importance of context
- To critically reflect on what is meant by GRIPP and associated terminology (including knowledge, results, practice, policies)
- To appraise the policy making environment
- To conceptualise the research to policy gap and policy to practice gap
- To critically reflect on the information and evidence needs of policy makers and its implications for researchers
- To analyse how context and political economic factors contribute to policy making processes
- To critically reflect on the role of the researcher within policy engagement, advocacy and lobbying
- To critically reflect on the risks and opportunities of being engaged in political processes
- To critically reflect on the role of strategic partnerships in GRIPP
- To discuss the value of taking advantage of policy influence 'moments'
- Develop Skills: How to plan GRIPP for a specific research programme/project
- Develop Skills: Stakeholder mapping

Event 2: Designing and Implementing Research for GRIPP – Bridging the Research-Policy Gap

- To critically reflect on what is meant by GRIPP, hierarchy of evidence, and associated terminology
- To appraise the research continuum, analyse where different types of research happen on that continuum and how that relates to policy readiness
- To critically reflect on the pros and cons of doing 'outside' and 'inside' research with policy makers and what is meant by meaningful co-production
- To differentiate between a research programme/project GRIPP plan and an institutional or departmental GRIPP plan
- To appraise the pros and cons of using different communication channels/media to effectively communicate results including social media and blogging/vlogging
- To identify ways of advocating or lobbying for change including forming strategic partnerships
- Develop skills: communicating research results for different audiences
- Develop skills: creating an issue or policy brief

Event 3: Using research results to influence practice: Bridging the research/policy to practice gap
- To differentiate between research on effectiveness and implementation at scale
- To analyse the different evidence needs of implementation research
- To breakdown how changes to practice occur at international, national, regional and local levels
- To critique the roles of researchers, technocrats and other players in translating policy to practice
- To critically reflect on mechanisms to spread innovations and improvements within different national systems and contexts
- To analyse the role of pilot projects and localised improvements in practice
- Develop Skills: Budgeting for GRIPP
- Develop Skills: Monitoring and evaluating GRIPP

Learning Methods

The programme included a range of different learning methods including; participatory discussions, didactic sessions, video presentations, practical skills sessions, individual reflection, experiential sharing, case studies, and panel discussions. Some sessions were designed and run by participants. Panel discussions utilised external panellists representing policy stakeholders, community activists, and researchers who were identified by the host partner (see Annex 2 for a list of panellists).

Workshop Outputs: Overview

Workshop outputs were of two types:

1. The Theories of Change prepared by each participant and updated at and subsequently to the event.
2. Workshop report including a synthesis and full transcript of all workshop outputs

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

This evaluation aims to provide evidence on the nature, development and changes to knowledge, attitudes, and practices in relation to GRIPP as individuals and institutions through engagement with the learning trajectory and the wider capacity strengthening within FA5 and other related activities.

This was done through analysis of three products of the learning trajectory:

1. comparison of the surveys on extended needs and expertise conducted at baseline and then prior to and post each face-to-face session.
2. analysis of the completed theories of change which contain planned areas for improvement and changes made or planned in relation to GRIPP and
3. analysis of the workshop outputs.

In particular, the workshop outputs relating to feedback on the learning trajectory content and process, collected at the end of each learning event and in the post-event surveys was analysed. This was combined with the facilitator debriefing analysis of what was working and what was not working so well.

It was decided that there would be no monitoring by participants of their GRIPP work or outputs other than those elements provided above.

The focus of the evaluation is on transferable learning for beneficiaries, funders, programme managers, and research institutions/researchers. This was almost entirely self-reported by the participants.

The number of people completing the pre and post surveys for each of the face-to-face sessions is given in Table x. Please note that participants who only attended the one session in their home country and were not part of the overall trajectory were less likely to complete the post-session survey. In addition, some people completed the pre-session surveys who then did not attend the learning event.

Survey	Number completed
Needs assessment	10 people
Pre Session One	8 / 8 participants
Post Session One	7 / 8 participants

Pre Session Two	18 / 15 participants NB some people completed the pre session survey who then did not attend
Post Session Two	10 / 15 participants
Pre Session Three	12 / 12 participants
Post Session Three	11 /12 participants

The survey focused on the importance of the themes of the learning event to their professional role and their perceptions of their own capacity and how that had changed after the relevant learning event.

A total of 11 theories of change were either completely or partially completed by 12 core members of the trajectory.

We follow the UK Research Integrity Office's Code of Practice for Research[1] within all our evaluation and consultancy work.

Limitations

1. All changes in knowledge and behaviours are self-reported by the participants.
2. CDI were both the designers and facilitators of the learning trajectory content and the evaluators.
3. Post event surveys were conducted at least a couple of months after the learning events to allow some time for the learning to bed in and actions to be taken, however, this also meant that they were not necessarily prioritised ,and it took time to collect responses.
4. Initially the post-event survey asked people to state whether their capacity in each of the themes was high, medium or low. However, people found it difficult to remember how they rated themselves initially and the scale had too little nuance to show changes. Hence the scale was changed to ask whether capacity had either increased or decreased either significantly or somewhat or there was no change.

EVALUATION RESULTS

The evaluation results are presented firstly regarding the feedback from participants and facilitators on the design and content of the learning trajectory, then exploring self-assessed changes in knowledge, then exploring changes in behaviour both in terms of participants spreading learning gained in the trajectory and changing their GRIPP practices within their institutions.

Design and Content of the Learning Trajectory

This section of the report draws on the rapid evaluations that were conducted at the end of each learning event (see learning event reports Annex 2), the facilitators debriefing, feedback given in the surveys, and additional reflection by the facilitators.

Participation

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[1] https://ukrio.org/ukrio-resources/publications/code-of-practice-for-research/

It was difficult to ensure continuity of participation with the majority of participants either attending one or two of the face-to-face events and only five people attending all three. Reasons included personal circumstances, budget considerations, and logistical issues.

After learning event one it was agreed to widen participation through allowing more than one individual from each partner institution and by inviting more individuals from the host country. This was to gain better value for money in terms of the numbers being trained within the budget but also to ensure that individuals had additional support for initiating GRIPP activities in their institutions.

It can be difficult for a lone individual to make substantive changes in how research is conducted within their institution, department or research unit particularly if they are not in a leadership position. It is much easier to create change if part of a team who are all aligned in their ideas of what needs to change and why. Hence in future, if aiming at creating institutional changes it is important to consider how many people from each partner institution should be involved and who they are within the institution. Ideally it should always be more than one. Feedback received in the rapid post event evaluations at events one and three highlighted the importance of having more individuals from each institution involved.

Peer to peer learning

Participants appreciated the peer-to-peer learning element of the trajectory – this was both in presentations and case studies provided by peers but also in the peer-to-peer discussions and contextualisation. They also particularly valued having peer facilitators design and deliver sessions. Five sessions were designed and delivered by participants and four case studies were designed and presented by participants.

Whilst there was inconsistent participation across the events, there was evidence of the beginnings of the formation of a peer group during the events, however, this was difficult to sustain between events.

The peer design and delivery of sessions was of significant value both to the group and the individuals who delivered the sessions, however it required additional work from the facilitators – identifying people who were willing to deliver sessions, providing information materials, providing an outline of the learning objectives and potential content to ensure coherence of the programme as a whole, discussing content in one or two calls, and providing feedback before the event. If this approach is used in future trajectories, it is advised that additional time and resources are required to coordinate.

Adaptation

Feedback from the participants and facilitators led to several changes to the design and content of the subsequent learning events. These included:

- Inviting more than one participant to learning events (changed post learning event one)
- Extending the time for learning events where possible (changed in learning event two)
- Adding additional topics eg Writing GRIPP in proposals (changed in learning event three)
- Improvements in communication on logistics (changed post learning event one)

Initially, there were multiple aims for this trajectory:

1. Facilitating peer-to-peer learning
2. Providing a grounding in GRIPP concepts and practical skills
3. Evaluation

4. Collation of learning across contexts

This proved challenging for the facilitators, and it was agreed to focus on the first three and not the latter.

Of the 14 recommendations made in the post-event reports, 12 of them were implemented in subsequent sessions (see Annex 5).

As this was an experimental design, the ability to adapt and to meet the evolving needs of the participants was central to the delivery of the trajectory.

Content and methods

This section draws on the evaluation exercises conducted at the end of each learning event as well as survey responses.

Participants appreciated the diverse activities and modes of teaching. They also felt that the topics built on each other and have a logical flow. They valued practical insights, participatory activities and real-world exercises.

Survey results (Annex 7) consistently showed that it was the discussions and presentations within the learning events that the majority of participants felt were most useful. Panel discussion, protected time with peers, and pre-event summary readings were also valued. Mixed responses were received for the post event task and feedback, and the videos. The majority of respondents found the webinars somewhat useful. Verbal feedback in the evaluations, highlighted that some participants highly valued the videos.

"The experience sharing I got during the panel discussion was exceptionally important." Participant Post Session Three

"I found the panel discussion a good way to highlight perspectives of different players in the GRIPP continuum." Participant Post Session Three

In session three, the facilitators expanded the elements which were based on case studies and group exercises. In all sessions, time was provided for participants to reflect on any changes that they might want to make on return to their workplaces.

Areas that participants felt could be improved related to time management, with some sessions feeling rushed. In general participants wanted the sessions to be longer, which was taken on board for learning event two but not possible for learning event three. Participants also wanted more real-life examples and case studies. Whilst participants wanted the preparatory work to be more spread out before the events, this proved difficult in practice as the finalisation of participants and host country often precluded a long run up.

Overall, , the feedback was very positive for all learning events.

"An excellent session all round with very practical application." Participant Post Session Three

Theory of Change

The original purpose of the ToC was to discuss and compare differences between contexts and to capture changes made by people within their context. In practice, the ToC facilitated experiential sharing and allowed individual reflection on their GRIPP approach, but it was not as successful in providing comparative insights between countries. This was due to the length and complexity of the theory of change template,

wide variation in research type, experience, research stage, and relevance of the themes under exploration to the partner. In addition, not all theories of change were completed prior to each workshop.

In the inception period, the focus was on having an evidence-based comprehensive theory of change. On reflection, a simplified version, with between four and six questions would have been more useful for focused discussion.

Delivery

Participants valued the dynamic facilitation of the peer-to-peer learning events.

Learning between face-to-face sessions

During the sessions there was appetite for additional learning, but it was difficult to gain momentum between the events. Whilst a WhatsApp group was used to facilitate communication during the events, this was not utilised between sessions. Participants identified that being able to use skills in a practical way would embed the learning more. However, there was minimal take up of the offer to review plans and documents between events. Two GRIPP plans and three policy briefs were submitted for feedback.

In addition, the possibility of a GRIPP community of practice was discussed by ITM with the participants and in general was met with positive response. However, in light of the difficulties in motivating engagement between events we would recommend linking activities to face-to-face partner meetings and concrete tasks for collaboration. In addition, there could be merit in having an online journal club utilising webinars and platforms that people already use such as WhatsApp or Teams. Either of these activities would require a dedicated coordination role to encourage engagement.

Outputs

During the inception phase, participants and facilitators discussed whether an output of the learning trajectory could be a product outlining the impact of context on GRIPP processes. One of the striking findings from conversations between participants, was there were more similarities across contexts than differences. During the process of the learning trajectory it was clear that the focus of the group was much more on learning than on production of new insights which would have also been complicated due to the heterogeneity of the group and the types of research they produce.

Recommendations from participants

Survey respondents were asked for feedback on the entire trajectory in the post session three survey. Their responses were:

- To continue with the collaboration;
- That these skills should be taught to post-graduate students;
- That a similar peer-to-peer approach could be used to foster learning and collaboration on other cross-cutting themes;
- To include more time for discussion and reflection in any future learning trajectory;
- To broaden and strengthen the programme to reach more beneficiaries;
- Appreciated the open and inclusive approach to learning from the outside consultants and ITM;
- More panel discussions and experience sharing on reasons why evidence was taken up or not;
- More focus on community empowerment, ownership and involvement; and
- Have a future event on how to write a grant proposal.

Discussion

ITM should be congratulated on embracing an innovative approach to peer-to-peer learning and evaluation. Key to the success, given its experimental nature was their willingness to adapt to feedback from the participants. Peer-to-peer learning was highly valued by the participants, but there was a disconnect between the original conception of the trajectory as being primarily drawing lessons across peer experiences and the need and preference amongst the participants for capacity strengthening in GRIPP. There were significant differences in the degree of experience and knowledge of GRIPP within the group which made knowledge generation challenging. Instead the focus was more on sharing knowledge. In this context, peer-to-peer learning brings its own challenges in ensuring that learning is comprehensive and coherent.

It is difficult to ensure continuity of participation across several events, so having multiple people from one institution helps both in terms of increased agency for change in their institutions but also for continuity.

The minimal take up of the opportunity to work on products and receive feedback, results in a key recommendation for any future peer-to-peer learning trajectory to link it more clearly to set tasks within a workplan that are supported by the wider programme to allow for more experiential learning.

This type of cross-cutting learning trajectory as part of the wider programme was something that was valued by the participants and there is obviously appetite for additional similar trajectories in the future.

It is always difficult to manage the balance between trying to cover a topic comprehensively and leave sufficient time in the programme for discussion and reflection. In general 3-4 days is probably better for this type of trajectory rather than 2 days. The panel discussions and having videos of researchers talk about real world examples of GRIPP really enriched the experience for participants and this approach is recommended for future learning trajectories.

Recommendations
Future Peer to Peer Events
1. Consider how many people should participate and their role if the aim is to encourage institutional/departmental/research unit change. Always include more than one participant from each partner.
2. If using a theory of change template to facilitate discussion, keep it simple to limit preparation time.
3. Ensure that the learning trajectory is linked to key practical tasks in programme workplans to facilitate experiential learning.
4. Provide greater emphasis on case studies and in-depth discussion.
5. Be careful about over complexity by having too many aims for such a trajectory.
6. Cost the coordination of peer-to-peer learning if using a similar model in future trajectories.
7. The experience and knowledge of the cohort should dictate whether it is more appropriate for the peer-to-peer trajectory to generate learning or share learning.
8. Incorporate real world examples through panel discussions, case studies, and video interviews.

Changes in Capacity

Participants completing the final survey (n=12) were asked how much they felt their knowledge of GRIPP had developed overall as a result of participation in the survey (figure 2). All participants felt it had increased with 75% stating it had increased significantly. Of the participants who stated it had somewhat increased two out of three had attended two out of the three sessions and the third attended all three sessions.

Figure 2 Survey results: Change in knowledge post all three sessions

How much do you think your knowledge of GRIPP has developed overall as a result of participating in this trajectory?

12 responses

- ● Significantly increased
- ● Somewhat increased
- ● It has not changed
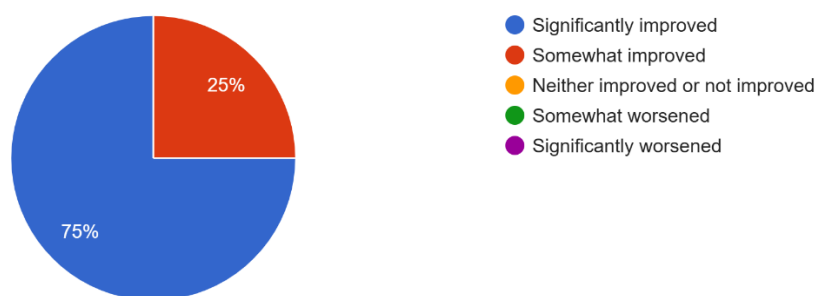- ● Somewhat decreased
- ● Significantly decreased
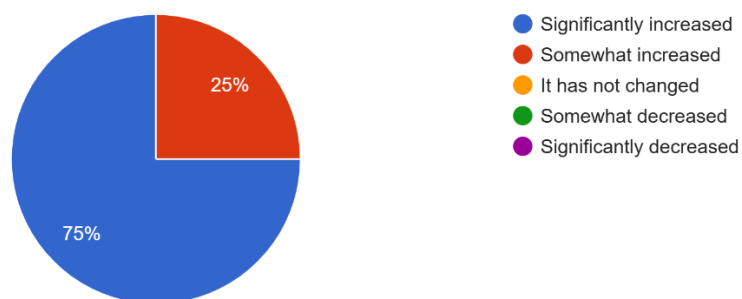
Survey respondents were also asked the degree to which the knowledge gained within this trajectory effect their ability to do and support research (figure 3). These results mirrored those for the change in knowledge with 75% stating that the trajectory had significantly improved their ability to do and support research.

Figure 3 Survey results: Extent to which knowledge gained with effect ability to do and support research

To what extent has/will the GRIPP knowledge gained within this trajectory effect your ability to do and support research?

12 responses

- ● Significantly improved
- ● Somewhat improved
- ● Neither improved or not improved
- ● Somewhat worsened
- ● Significantly worsened

One respondent identified that they thought that the impact of the trajectory would be greater for researchers whose work was aimed at improving population health. Although no reason was given this may be as there is a perception that public or population health research is closer to policy and practice.

Initially we asked people to rate their capacity as either high, medium or low for each of the themes of the sessions both pre and post session but this proved to provide data was hard to analyse so the question was

changed to assess whether they assessed that their capacity in each of the themes had significantly increased, increased somewhat, not changed, significantly decreased or significantly increased. The table below shows the results across the three sessions and the full results are shown in Annex 6.

Capacity	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Total
Significantly increased	32 (46%)	36 (45%)	49 (56%)	117 (49%)
Increased somewhat	33 (47%)	40 (32%)	38 (43%)	103 (43%)
No change	5 (7%)	12 (15%)	1 (1%)	18 (8%)
Decreased somewhat	0	0	0	0
Significantly decreased	0	0	0	0
Denominator	7 people x 10 themes = 70	10 people x 8 themes = 80	11 people x 8 themes = 88	= (70+80+88)

For session one the themes which scored a significant increase in capacity for the highest number of people were:

- developing a GRIPP plan for a research project (n = 6) and
- what is meant by GRIPP and its associated terminology (n= 6).

For session two the themes which scored a significant increase in capacity for the highest number of people were

- the research continuum and how it relates to policy readiness (n=7),
- communicating research to different audiences (n=6), and
- pros and cons of research independence versus co-production with stakeholders (n=6).

For session three the themes which scored a significant increase in capacity for the highest number of people were

- Role of researcher in translating policy to practice (n=9)
- Budgeting for and writing GRIPP in proposals (n=9)
- M&E for GRIPP (n=8)

For session one, most themes were ranked equally in terms of importance pre- and post-event. However, some participants either ranked some themes less important or more important. In particular, the information and evidence needs of policy makers was ranked as of high importance by all participants post-event but only by half of participants pre-event. For session two the only notable change between ranking of importance of the themes pre- and post-session was between one and three people ranked five of the themes as low importance in their professional role pre-session whereas no themes were ranked as low importance post-session. For session three there was little change in the ranking of themes in terms of importance pre and post event although five themes were ranked as low importance prior to the session by one person but none were ranked as low importance post session.

Participants were asked in the final survey after session three whether they had done any additional learning or self-reflection on the GRIPP themes covered in the trajectory. Over half stated that they had done further reading, and 75% reported discussions with peers or mentors (figure 4).

Figure 4 Survey results: Additional learning or self reflection

During the trajectory have you done any additional learning or self reflection on the GRIPP themes covered?

12 responses
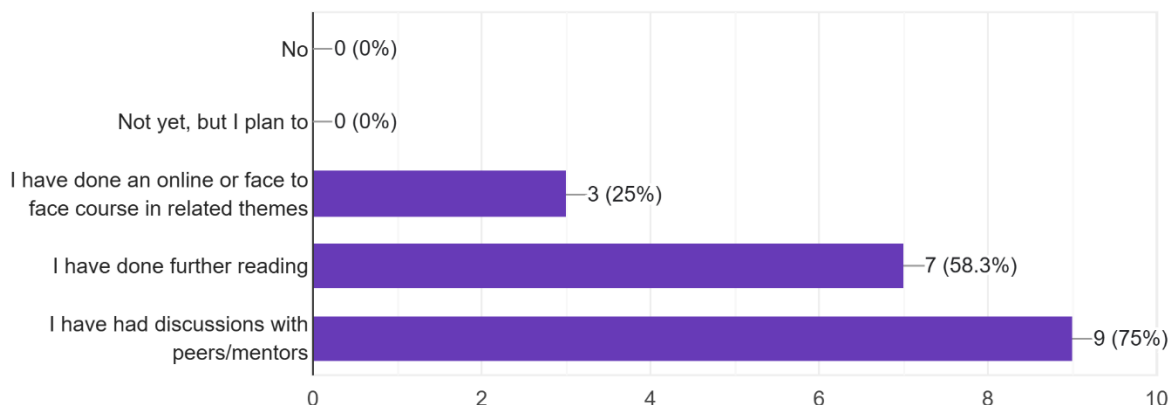
The facilitators could identify there were changes in attitudes and knowledge reflected in the discussions that occurred between the first and last events. Some participants found some of the content quite challenging in terms of their role as researchers and how involved they could or should be within a more political process of policy engagement and influence. This was much more noticeable in the first event than the last event, where there appeared to be more acceptance that researchers potentially had more of a role beyond providing evidence.

There was no evidence of the learning trajectory having an impact on participants formal roles, however, participants did identify that they had become more involved in GRIPP activities in the following ways:

- being a reference person - providing advice to colleagues on briefs or other GRIPP materials;
- doing presentations on GRIPP to audiences within and outside their institution;
- assisting emerging researchers to include GRIPP in their research; and
- raising GRIPP within project meetings.

In the final survey 50% of respondents said they were more involved in GRIPP activities in their institution since being involved in this trajectory with a further 33% saying that they planned to be more involved (figure 5).

Figure 5 Survey Results: Involvement in GRIPP activities

Have you become more involved in GRIPP activities in your institution since starting on this trajectory?
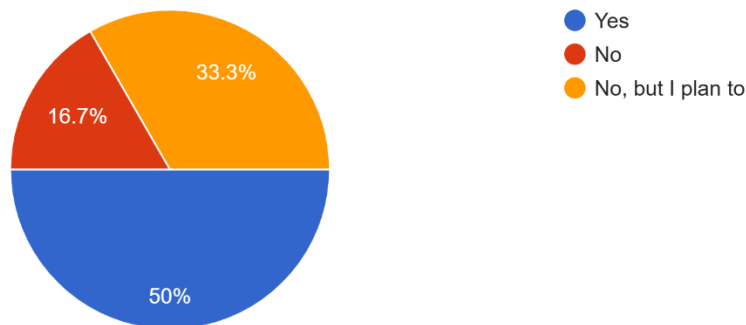
12 responses

Respondents to the final survey were asked about the impact of the learning trajectory on their work and career. Responses included

- Increased confidence to engage in GRIPP activities and share knowledge on GRIPP;
- Potentially leading teaching on new modules in GRIPP; and
- New projects and collaborations.

Discussion

Self-assessment of capacity can be complicated with the degree to which capacity increases dependent on the individual's initial capacity, the individual's understanding of the breadth and depth of a subject, and opportunity to apply new knowledge or skills. Whilst there were opportunities for people to practice some skills and gain feedback this was often only taken up by a minority of participants. Despite this caveat, all participants identified an increase in capacity and knowledge through their involvement in the trajectory.

To have 75% of participants state that their participation in the trajectory will significantly improve their ability to do and support research is a very positive outcome for cross-cutting training where not all the themes will be as relevant to all the participants depending on the nature of research that they undertake.

The percentage of themes ranked by participants as resulting in a significantly increased capacity was higher than average within session three. This session had a greater focus on group exercises and case studies but also benefited from the foundational work done in sessions one and two. Whilst it is difficult to attribute the slightly higher rate of significant increase in capacity to this technique, such teaching techniques are good practice, and fit well with peer-to-peer learning.

Over half the group did additional reading on GRIPP which evidences an increased interest in GRIPP within the cohort of researchers. A similar percentage are now more involved in GRIPP activities within their institutions which shows that the trajectory has created GRIPP champions. The impact of this is not evident now but could be revisited later on to strengthen the case for similar learning trajectories in the future.

Recommendations
Future Peer-to-Peer Events
> Where appropriate use case studies and group exercises as teaching methods for peer-to-peer learning.

Recommendations
Further work on GRIPP

> 1. Follow up with participants in terms of their impact on GRIPP activities within their research and institutions at the end of the programme.

Behaviour: Sharing learning

Many of the participants talked about sharing learning with colleagues through informal discussions within their teams. Formal presentations utilising materials from the sessions included circulating reports post-session and conducting debriefing discussions within technical meetings.

A question about sharing learning was included in the ToC template that was completed by twelve of the core members of the learning trajectory resulting in eleven ToC as one was a joint effort. The activities that they listed in the ToC are listed below.

Actions	Planned	Started / Actioned	Total
Conducting training on GRIPP	3	1	4 (36%)
Conducting training on communication	1	1	2 (18%)
Sharing information from the workshops	1	5	6 (55%)
Sharing information beyond the institution		1	1 (9%)
Building a critical mass on GRIPP	1		1 (9%)
Integration of methods from workshop into routine ways of working	2	1	3 (27%)

These results align with the feedback given in the surveys. In the final survey (which was some time after the completion of the ToC) 8 participants out of 12 had had informal discussions on the content within their institutions and 5 out of 12 had done one or more formal sessions sharing the learning within their institution. The majority of the sharing had been within participants immediate teams or department/research unit. But information was also shared outside the institution, with knowledge management teams, and with partners within research projects.

Representatives from the University of Western Cape shared insights from events one and two during a regional gathering of partners collaborating on gender-transformative interventions across seven projects within Africa. Videos and slides from the learning trajectory were used to provoke dialogue and reflection.

One institution arranged experience sharing sessions where experiences of researchers of GRIPP successes and failures were compared to the learning from the events.

In at least one case, materials were used to update training materials used in formal teaching – for example updating the session on policy briefs on an MPH elective course. In an other case, in house experts were planned to be utilised to deliver session on GRIPP to educate others within the institution.

A few participants talked about setting up networks or groups focussed on GRIPP within their institution. One participant identified that they were planning a blog based on GRIPP themes.

Discussion

It is clear that the learning materials have been utilised to spread learning within participants institutional settings. This is clear added value to the learning trajectory. It might be worth considering in future learning trajectories how to facilitate this sharing for participants by providing them with materials that summarise the key learning points from each session and can be used for both formal and informal sharing.

> **Recommendations**
> **Future Peer-to-Peer Events**
>   1. Consider including a summary document and presentation with all the key learning points to facilitate institutional sharing of learning.

Behaviour: GRIPP activities

In the final survey participants (n=12) were asked whether they had made any changes in their research work or within their department/institution as a result of this GRIPP trajectory. Whilst 7 out of 12 still planned to make changes only 4 reported having actually made changes (figure 6).

Figure 6 Survey Results: Changes made

In your research work and/or your department/institution are there any changes that you have made as a result of this GRIPP learning trajectory?
12 responses
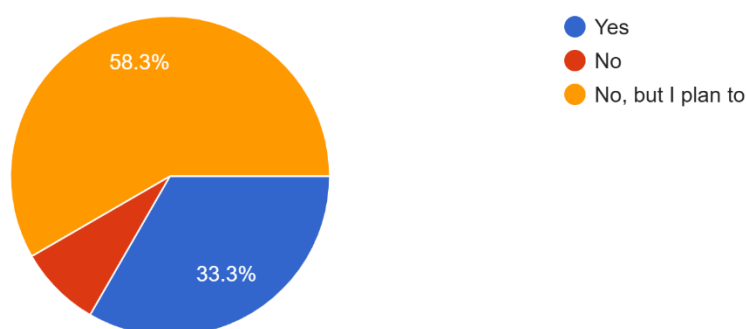
Prior to and within each session participants were asked to update their theory of change. This included their approach to GRIPP within a particular project but also to communicate any planned or completed

changes to their GRIPP approach made within their research practice or within their department/institution. In total eleven individuals completed or partially completed these theory of change documents. These eleven participants attended at least two sessions and were the core group for the learning trajectory. The planned and actioned activities were analysed under seven headings and are discussed below. The majority of actions were planned rather than started or actioned.

Strategy

Actions	Planned	Started / Actioned	Total
Develop/improve institutional GRIPP plan	6	1	7 (64%)
Better understand policy change/environment/actors	4	0	4 (36%)
More consideration of windows of opportunity	1	0	1 (9%)
Submitted PhD or research applications relating to GRIPP	0	1	1 (9%)
Strategic emphasis on change rather than discovery	1	0	1 (9%)

There were a large number of participants interested in promoting or facilitating the development of an institutional or departmental GRIPP plan. An institutional or departmental GRIPP plan looks at the type of research being done within the institution or department and lists key stakeholders and best forms of communication or platforms for reaching them. From here capacity and resources needed can be planned. These type of plans can be time consuming to develop and usually should be done as part of a participatory process with senior management buy in.

In Peru, the participants are working on an institutional GRIPP plan and working with the communication office to design templates for briefs and other communication materials. They also have requested the GRIPP concepts are included in the Master's course on Science Communication. Wider programme funds were also used to organise a workshop on writing briefs which was attended by researchers from across Peru and neighbouring countries. Working with partners in Ecuador and Colombia they are planning on creating a GRIPP network to share GRIPP concepts and look for funding to support further activities.

One participant identified that they had been successful in receiving seed funding for a project on community engagement and actor dynamics in implementation research.

Staffing and capacity building

Actions	Planned	Started / Actioned	Total
Engage young researchers in GRIPP / communication	2	0	2 (18%)
Recruit GRIPP expert / Establish a GRIPP unit	2	0	2 (18%)
Increase involvement of knowledge management / communication / PR teams	1	0	1 (9%)
Build capacity in advocacy/lobbying	1	0	1 (9%)

In addition to these actions, formal and informal sharing of the information from the workshops has already been discussed in the previous section. In terms of recruitment of staff or setting up GRIPP units, the actions listed in the survey related to lobbying for these to be resourced.

Planning

Actions	Planned	Started / Actioned	Total
Include GRIPP in proposals	8	1	9 (82%)
Systematic approach to GRIPP on future projects / GRIPP plan for projects	3	0	3 (27%)
Advising on GRIPP content in peer and student proposals	1	1	2 (18%)
Developing GRIPP templates	1	1	2 (18%)

The action listed by the highest number of participants across all the themes was including GRIPP in proposals. This linked to a practical session included in Session three but was also spoken about across all three sessions. This is an extremely important first step ensuring that there is sufficient budget and staff time available to undertake meaningful stakeholder engagement and production of communication materials.

"It is an opportunity to introduce [GRIPP] to my colleagues when we develop a proposal in group."
Participant Post Session Three

One participant identified how within their institution they have now developed a GRIPP plan for a specific project, included GRIPP within several proposals, utilised social media more to communicate about projects, presented information about GRIPP in stakeholder engagement meetings and developed a terms of reference for a GRIPP workshop to take place in early 2025.

M&E

Actions	Planned	Started / Actioned	Total
Develop M&E for GRIPP	4	0	4 (36%)

In the survey one participant talked about the importance of evaluating research projects on the basis of their contribution to GRIPP outcomes and not just number of publications or patients treated.

Methods

Actions	Planned	Started / Actioned	Total
Promote co-creation when appropriate/ Deepen meaningful co-creation	3	0	3 (27%)
Include health economics / cost effectiveness in future projects	1	0	1 (9%)

In the surveys some participants also identified that they would use a more systematic approach either to GRIPP as a whole or to the development of briefs. In the surveys, another participant talked about providing stakeholder mapping tools for researchers in their team.

Engagement

Actions	Planned	Started / Actioned	Total
More frequent / start formal stakeholder engagement / relationship building	5	2	7 (64%)
Regular review of GRIPP plan / relationship building	1	0	1 (9%)
Link with other networks / agencies / strategic partnerships	6	0	6 (55%)
Engagement in other regions to prepare for scale up	1	0	1 (9%)
Develop innovative platforms for engagement	1	0	1 (9%)
Strengthen involvement and participation in existing platforms/formalise relationships	3	0	3 (27%)
More community engagement	1	0	1 (9%)

The importance of engagement with a wide range of stakeholders was a key theme throughout the sessions and was identified as a priority action for the majority of participants.

Some changes were internal rather than institutional for example individual prioritisation of relationship building with stakeholders.

"It has made me more aware of involving stakeholders, and for most operational/implementation research that we do I have more contacts with decision makers and program implementors than before." Participant Post Session One

Communication

Actions	Planned	Started / Actioned	Total
Development of a communication plan or strategy for GRIPP	2	1	3 (27%)
Use different communication methods/increase use of social media or blogs	4	0	4 (36%)
Develop, review and/or finalise briefs	1	2	3 (27%)
Write in lay language for appropriate audiences / clear and concise writing	1	0	1 (9%)

One participant also identified that their institution was now planning an annual forum for dissemination of research outputs.

Process of change

Some survey respondents identified the need to create a culture change through awareness building and training before more concrete changes to how GRIPP is done within institutions.

"Since the GRIPP is really new to the staff, it was just sort of creating awareness to the staff. It was just an eye-opener and difficult to see the changes."   Participant Post Session One

"GRIPP is a relatively new concept for most staff, particularly junior team members. Some have not recognised it as part of their responsibilities – with some even stating 'It is not my role' "
Participant Post Session Three

Other barriers to creating change within institutions listed by participants in the survey were financial, conflicting schedules when arranging stakeholder engagement, lack of staff knowledge/motivation, lack of time to invest in development of GRIPP, lack of an institutional strategy or approach to GRIPP, lack of staff with a specific remit in developing GRIPP approaches, out-dated guidelines, and resistance from staff.

Another barrier cited was the wide range of research being undertaken within the institution making institution wide activities more difficult.

Enablers included motivation within the team, working groups, and collaborative engagement.

Discussion

The participants are planning an impressive range of actions that directly relate to the learning that was facilitated and shared through the session. In addition, many of the planned actions are at a high-level involving strategy or planning or templates that have the potential to transform approaches to GRIPP. It is, however, unknown how many of the actions will be completed but the range of actions planned indicates that the participants were able to relate the learning to their own contexts and identify gaps that needed to be addressed. This is a very positive outcome of the trajectory.

If there is an opportunity to build some of these actions into the more general workplan that is supported under the wider programme this would be extremely beneficial. In addition, providing opportunities to follow up on these activities and ask participants to report on them at partner meetings would be a potential impetus for them to move forward.

It should also be noted, however, that some of the actions require additional resourcing or buy in/prioritisation from the wider institution and so may be difficult to move forward despite the motivation of the participants given the constraints that institutions face.

Recommendations
Further work on GRIPP
1. Share ToC and/or extracted plans for GRIPP from the ToC with the teams working within and with each of the partners and identify actions that can be supported within the wider programme.
2. Ask participants to report on their progress in relation to the actions identified in their ToC at future partner meetings.

Community of Practice

In the final survey respondents (n=12) were also asked about their thoughts about a community of practice to continue after the end of the trajectory. Whilst 11 out of 12 respondents identified that they are interested in participating in a community of practice, 3 of those were worried they would not have the time.

Survey respondents were asked about the type of activities they would be interested in participating in. The highest response was for sessions at partner meetings, followed by webinars and email group/list (figure 7).

Figure 7 Survey Results: Community of Practice Activities

There have been some suggestions about how a community of practice might work. Please indicate how interested you would be in participating in the following possible activities.
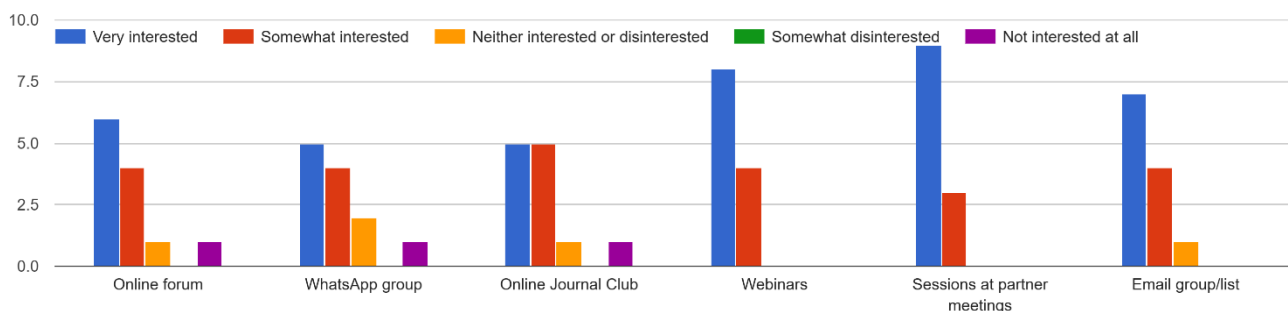
Additional feedback from respondents was:

- Clarity is needed on the membership of the community – would it only be people from this trajectory or other events as well
- Useful for the community to follow up on planned activities amongst the members
- Useful to share success stories/models
- Useful to have periodical webinars coupled with sessions at the partner meetings;
- The community could help partners set a work framework with objectives, activities, timeframes and discuss the support needed and roles of people within the framework.

Discussion

There is appetite for a community of practice and webinars, email and sessions at partner meetings were the preferred methods of convening the community. Realistically if a community of practice is to move forward it will need someone to be responsible for coordinating it both logistically and in content. A format based on case studies and journal article review might be appropriate. Given the more limited engagement between sessions in the trajectory and lack of enthusiasm for webinars as a method of teaching it may be that the initial focus could be on having sessions at partner meetings with the occasional sharing of information via email – perhaps as a quarterly digest.

> **Recommendations**
> **Further work on GRIPP**
> 1. Include specific GRIPP sessions for a community of practice at partner meetings.
> 2. Share information via an email list quarterly.

CONCLUSION

The provision of protected time for a group of researchers to think about and discuss GRIPP within a group of peers has resulted in researchers with increased capacity but perhaps even more importantly a passion for the importance of GRIPP within their work. They are planning or have actioned a wide range of activities to improve the way in which GRIPP is done within their institutions and own research. They have also actively spread learning within their own teams, departments, institutions and in a few cases beyond their institution. Whilst it is hard to measure the impact of this, the learning trajectory obviously met its objectives of sharing knowledge that was of use to the cohort and spread beyond the cohort. As has been discussed earlier the objective of generating knowledge was given lower priority during the trajectory.

Bringing together a diverse group allowed interesting conversations about the importance of context and the diversity of approaches utilised in relation to GRIPP. It was also clear that the face-to-face time was valued much more by the participants than online sessions. However, it was difficult without set tasks to create momentum and opportunities for more practical learning between the sessions. This is an area that should be given more thought in any future learning trajectories to enable embedding of skills and knowledge gained in face-to-face sessions.

Whilst most of the impact of this trajectory is yet to be realised it has the potential that the actions of the participants will increase the likelihood of research being used within policy and practice and therefore having a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of underserved populations in the countries in which the participants work.

The recommendations made in this report are repeated here in a single list.

Recommendations

Future Peer-to-Peer Events

1. Consider how many people should participate and their role if the aim is to encourage institutional/departmental/research unit change. Always include more than one participant from each partner.
2. If using a theory of change template to facilitate discussion, keep it simple to limit preparation time.
3. Ensure that the learning trajectory is linked to key practical tasks in programme workplans to facilitate experiential learning.
4. Provide greater emphasis on case studies and in-depth discussion.
5. Be careful about over complexity by having too many aims for such a trajectory.
6. Cost the coordination of peer-to-peer learning if using a similar model in future trajectories.
7. The experience and knowledge of the cohort should dictate whether it is more appropriate for the peer-to-peer trajectory to generate learning or share learning.
8. Incorporate real world examples through panel discussions, case studies, and video interviews.

9. Consider including a summary document and presentation with all the key learning points to facilitate institutional sharing of learning.

Further work on GRIPP

1. Follow up with participants in terms of their impact on GRIPP activities within their research and institutions at the end of the programme.
2. Share ToC and/or extracted plans for GRIPP from the ToC with the teams working within and with each of the partners and identify actions that can be supported within the wider programme.
3. Ask participants to report on their progress in relation to the actions identified in their ToC at future partner meetings.
4. Include specific GRIPP sessions for a community of practice at partner meetings.

Share information via an email list quarterly.

ANNEX 1: PARTICIPANTS AND FACILITATORS IN FACE-TO-FACE LEARNING EVENTS

Participants from partners

			Event One	Event Two	Event Three
Ma Sokvy	NIPH	Cambodia	✓		✓
Endalamaw Gadisa Belachew	AHRI	Ethiopia	✓	✓	✓
Woldekidan Amde	UWC	South Africa	✓	✓	✓
Christian Agossou	CERRHUD	Benin	✓	✓	✓
Mezgebu Silamsaw Asres	Country PI	Ethiopia	✓	✓	✓
Adugna Abera	EPHI	Ethiopia	✓		
Tamba Mina Millimouno	Maferinyah	Guinea	✓	✓	✓
Carlos Zamudio	UPCH	Peru	✓	✓	
Zeleke Mekonnen Kurmane	Jimma University	Ethiopia		✓	✓
Kassahun Ebba Tadesse	Jimma University	Ethiopia		✓	✓
Hazel Bradley	UWC	South Africa		✓	✓
Karen Keddy	UWC	South Africa		✓	✓
Nenene Oekwana	UWC	South Africa		✓	
Onyinye Akunne	UWC	South Africa		✓	
Renier Coetzee	UWC	South Africa		✓	
K Mena Agbodjavou	CERRHUD	Benin		✓	✓
Maribel Riveros	UPCH	Peru		✓	
Theresa Ochoa	UPCH	Peru			✓
Total Participants			8	15	12

Participants from ITM

In addition, representatives from ITM also attended either whole events or in the case of Antwerp individual sessions of the trajectory. The following list shows attendees for whole events only.

			Event One	Event Two	Event Three
Myrthe Pareyn	ITM	Belgium	✓	✓	
Willem Van de Put	ITM	Belgium		✓	
John De Maesschalk	ITM	Belgium		✓	

Facilitators

			Event One	Event Two	Event Three
Ema Kelly	CDI	UK	✓	✓	✓
Vicki Doyle	CDI	UK		✓	✓
Bram Riems	ITM	Belgium	✓		
Heleen Annemans	ITM	Belgium		✓	✓

ANNEX 2: PANELLISTS

Learning Event One

- Teshome Gebre, Regional Director for Africa, International Trachoma Initiative (ITI), a program of The Task Force for Global Health (TFGH)
- Nigus Manaye Mihret, National Professional Officer NTD, WHO
- Henock Bekele, Focal point Case Management NTDs, WHO
- Alan Pereira, Medical Coordinator, MSF- Holland
- Kaldikan Begashaw, the End Fund

Learning Event Two

- Megan Lessing, Sisonke Project
- Damaris Kiewiets , Community Liaison Officer, University of Western Cape
- Helen Schneider , University of Western Cape and Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research
- Tamryn Frank, University of Western Cape
- Louis Reynolds, retired paediatrician and media campaigner
- Chair: Liz Kelly, London Metropolitan University, U.K.

Learning Event Three

- Tim Roosen, ITM, Senior Health Policy Advisor
- David Van Laeken, MSF, Advisor Vaccine Preventable Diseases
- Wim Van Bortel, ITM, Senior researcher, Medical Entomologist

ANNEX 3: LINKS TO OUTPUTS

Inception Report

GRIPP Peer-to-Peer Learning and Evaluation Inception Report v03 CLEAN.docx

Theory of Change

Completed ToC with Feedback

Webinar One

Rapid literature review on GRIPP by MIna.

Webinar Two

Webinar 2 slides.pptx

Learning Event One

Final Programme - facilitators copy.pdf

1. Presentations and materials

Learning Event One Think Piece

Report: GRIPP Peer-to-Peer Learning Event 1 FINAL.pdf

Learning Event Two

GRIPP Event Programme.docx

Learning materials

Learning Event Two Think Piece

Report: GRIPP Peer-to-Peer Learning Event 2.pdf

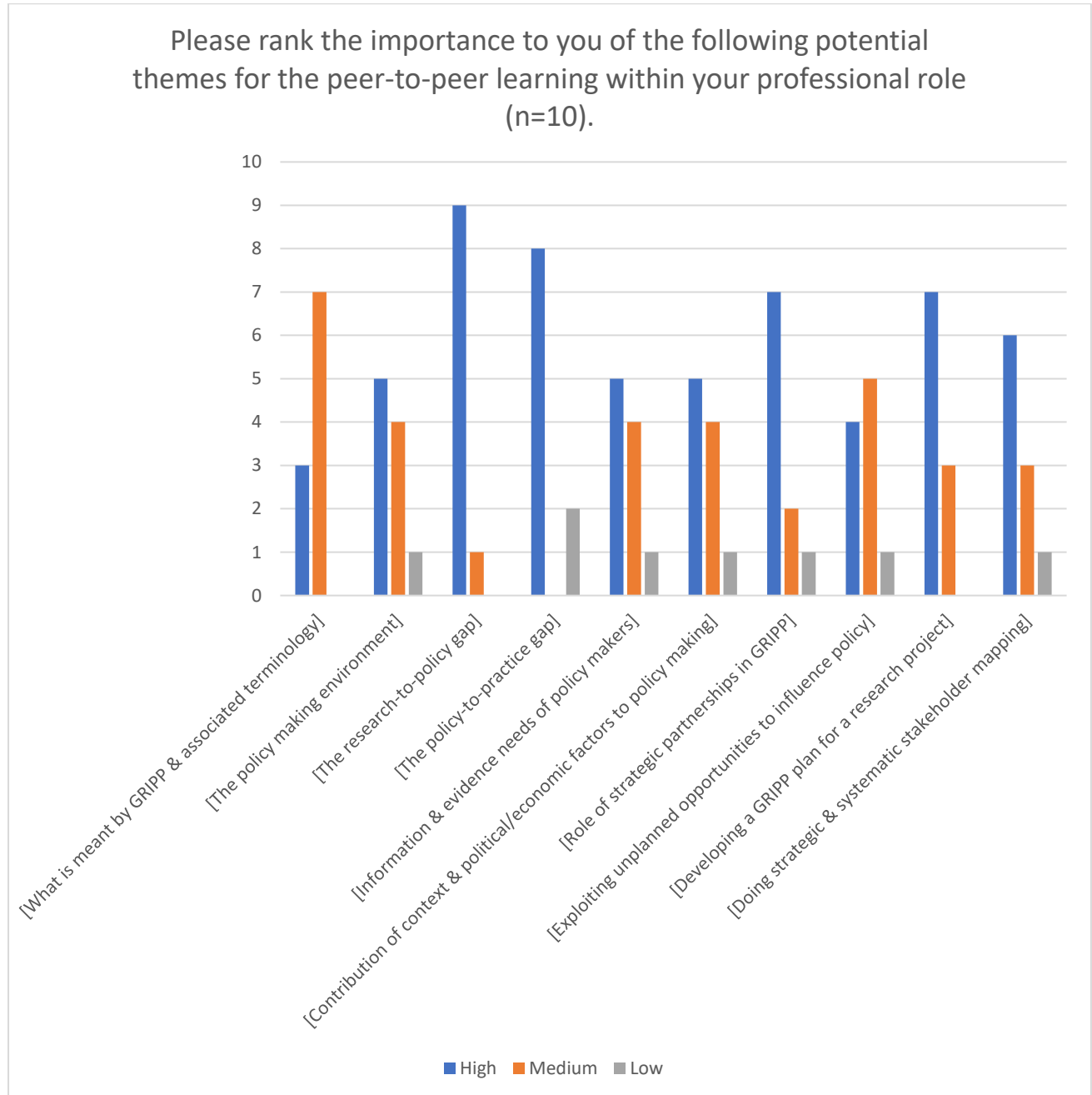### Learning Event Three

Draft Programme Antwerp.pdf

Workshop Materials

Learning Event Three Think Piece

Photostory Presentation Event 3.pptx

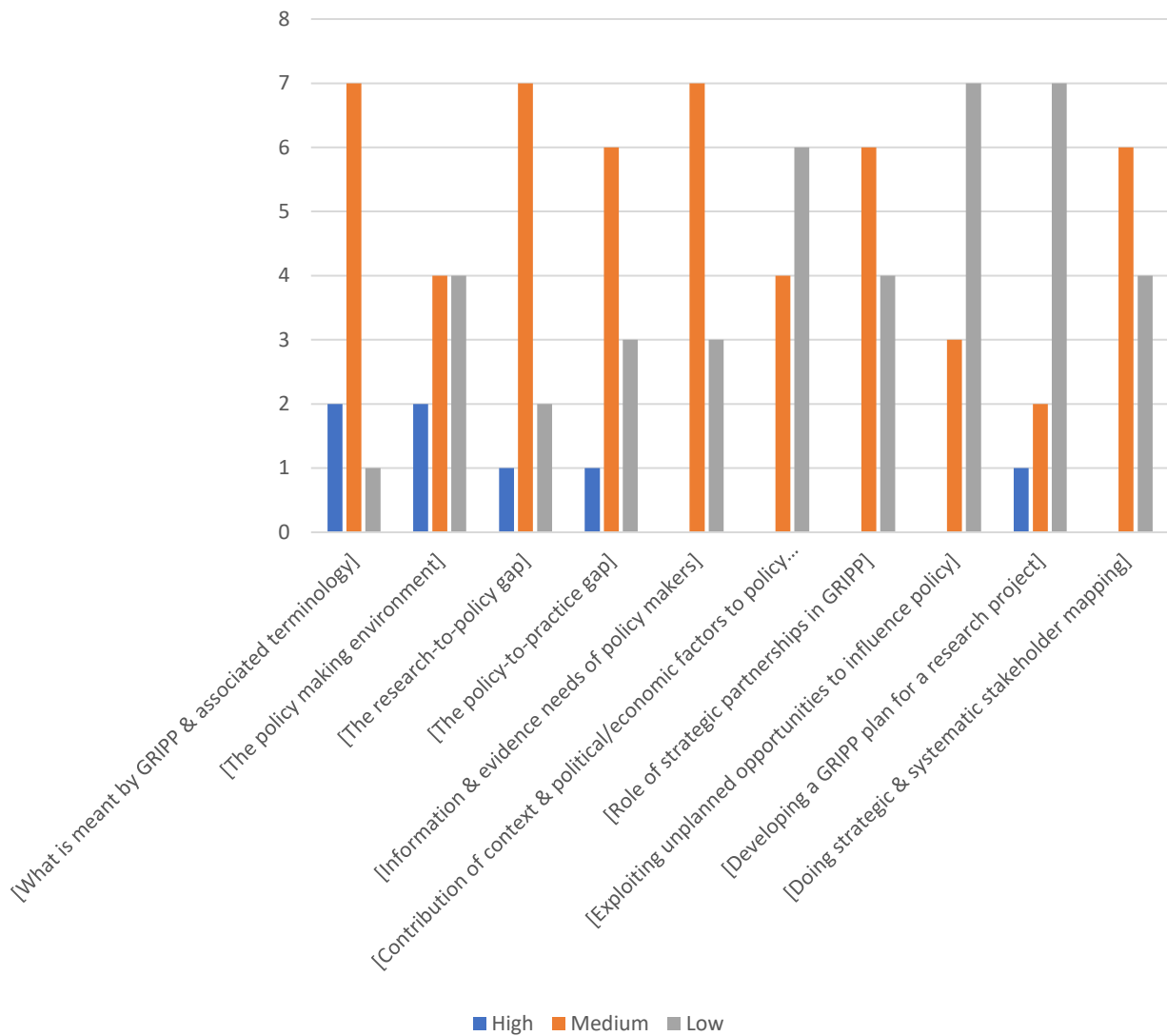Report: GRIPP Peer-to-Peer Learning Event 3.pdf

ANNEX 4: NEEDS ASSESSMENT RESULTS

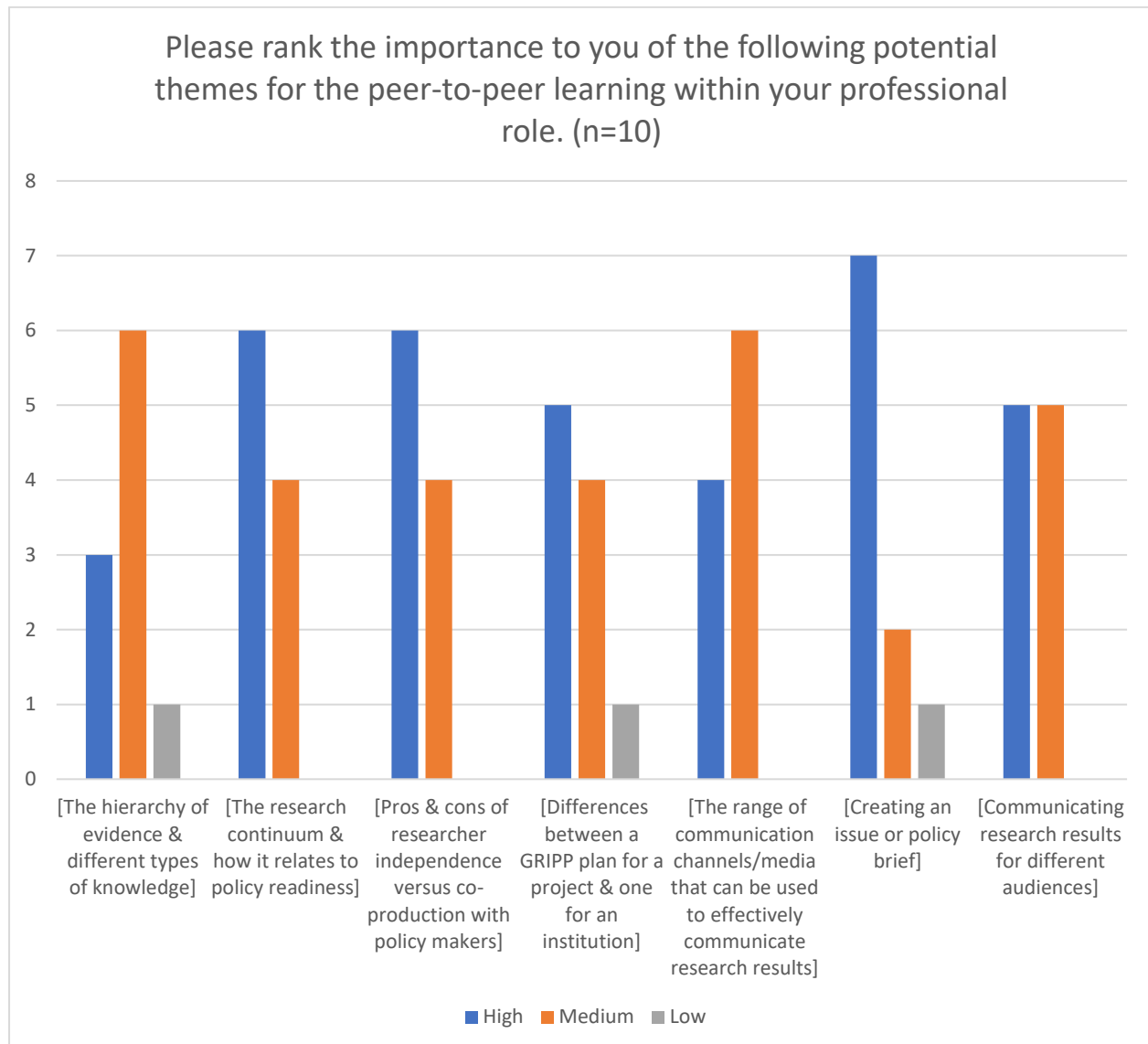Learning Event One Themes

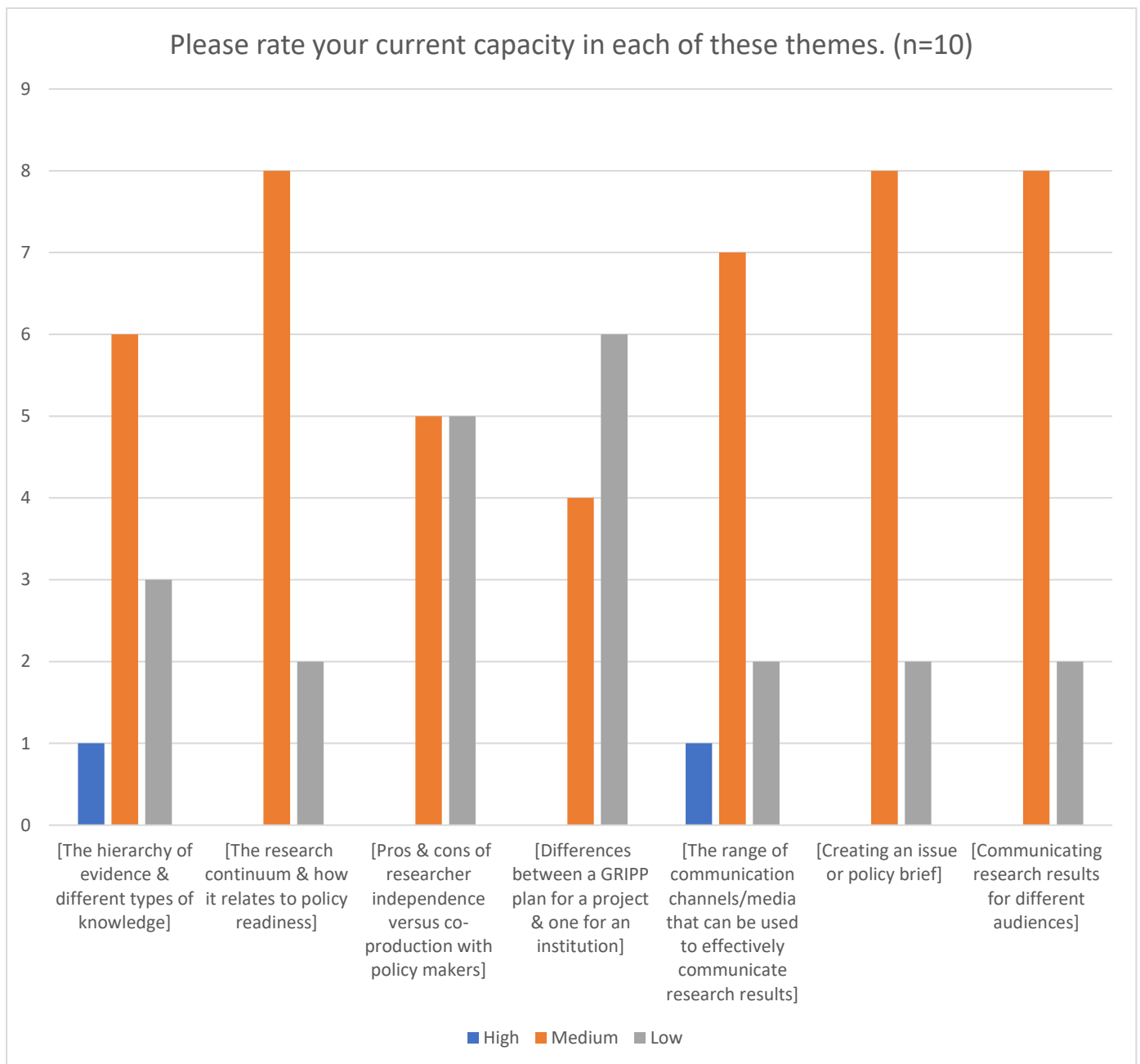Please rank the importance to you of the following potential themes for the peer-to-peer learning within your professional role (n=10).

Please rate your current capacity in each of these themes. (n=10)

Legend: High (blue), Medium (orange), Low (grey)

Categories:
- [What is meant by GRIPP & associated terminology]
- [The policy making environment]
- [The research-to-policy gap]
- [The policy-to-practice gap]
- [Information & evidence needs of policy makers]
- [Contribution of context & political/economic factors to policy…]
- [Role of strategic partnerships in GRIPP]
- [Exploiting unplanned opportunities to influence policy]
- [Developing a GRIPP plan for a research project]
- [Doing strategic & systematic stakeholder mapping]

Learning Event Two Themes

Please rank the importance to you of the following potential themes for the peer-to-peer learning within your professional role. (n=10)

Please rate your current capacity in each of these themes. (n=10)

Legend: High (blue), Medium (orange), Low (gray)

Categories:
- [The hierarchy of evidence & different types of knowledge]
- [The research continuum & how it relates to policy readiness]
- [Pros & cons of researcher independence versus co-production with policy makers]
- [Differences between a GRIPP plan for a project & one for an institution]
- [The range of communication channels/media that can be used to effectively communicate research results]
- [Creating an issue or policy brief]
- [Communicating research results for different audiences]

Learning Event Three Themes

Please rank the importance to you of the following potential themes for the peer-to-peer learning within your professional role. (n=10)

Please rate your current capacity in each of these themes. (n=10)

ANNEX 5: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM WORKSHOP REPORTS

Actioned

1. If there is opportunity to invite more participants to future events (if within the budget) this would be beneficial.
2. Have practical tasks and feedback between sessions starting with GRIPP plan
3. Extend the teaching time across the three days (taking into consideration travel) – this was done for workshop two but could not be done for workshop three as it was in the same week as the partner meeting
4. Work on logistical information sent before event
5. Set up WhatsApp group prior to arrival for easy communication of any changed plans
6. Facilitators take notes during all sessions
7. Change the ToC layout (already implemented) and extend discussion time during events
8. Ensure the budgeting and writing about GRIPP in proposals is included in future events
9. Have the panel discussion as the last event before lunch on the final day to facilitate networking
10. Focus on training as an objective rather than collation of learning across contexts – these two objectives were not always in alignment and created an added complexity particularly to the Theory of Change piece that did not always work well.
11. More emphasis on case studies and in-depth discussion.
12. Feedback from facilitators on ToC at the end of the trajectory.

Not actioned/unclear if actioned

13. Ensure that ToC's and specific learning requirements are shared with ITM counterparts to facilitate work between the learning events
14. Longer time before sessions to do preparatory work and prepare peer sessions (this relies on a number of moving parts: agreement of location, identification of participants, agreement of date)

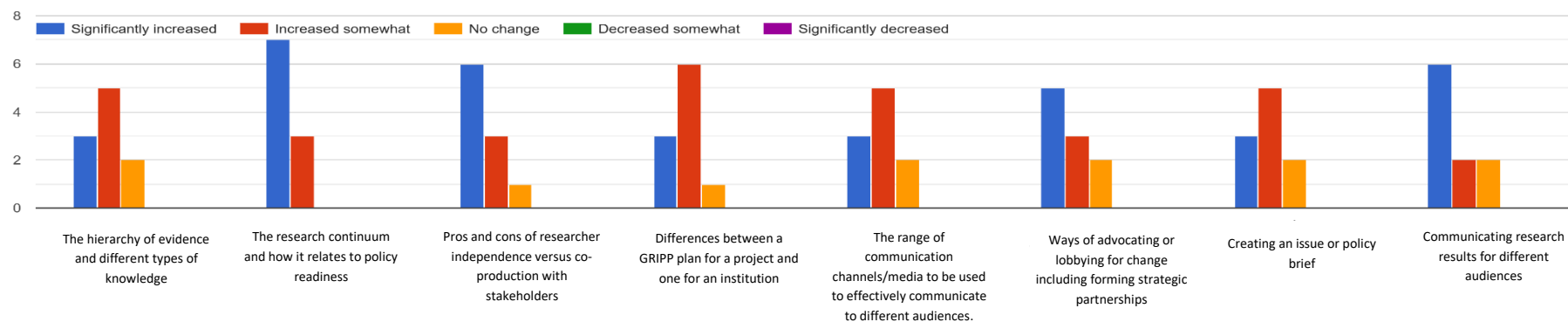## ANNEX 6: SURVEY RESULTS CHANGES IN CAPACITY

Session one: post-session self-assessment in change in capacity

What change to your capacity do you think has occurred due to attending the peer to peer learning event in Ethiopia and any subsequent learning you have undertaken. Has your capacity
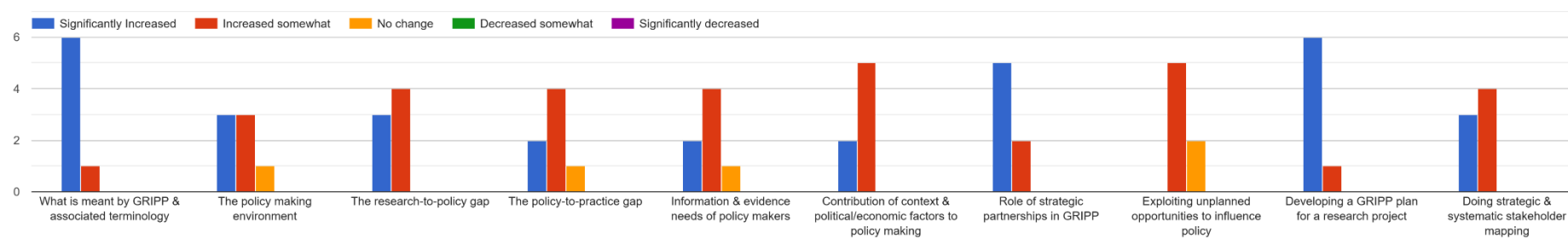
Session two: post-session self -assessment in change in capacity

Please rate how your capacity in each of these themes has changed as a result of the peer-to-peer learning event in South Africa and other associated activities (literature summaries, webinars, feedback, learning materials)

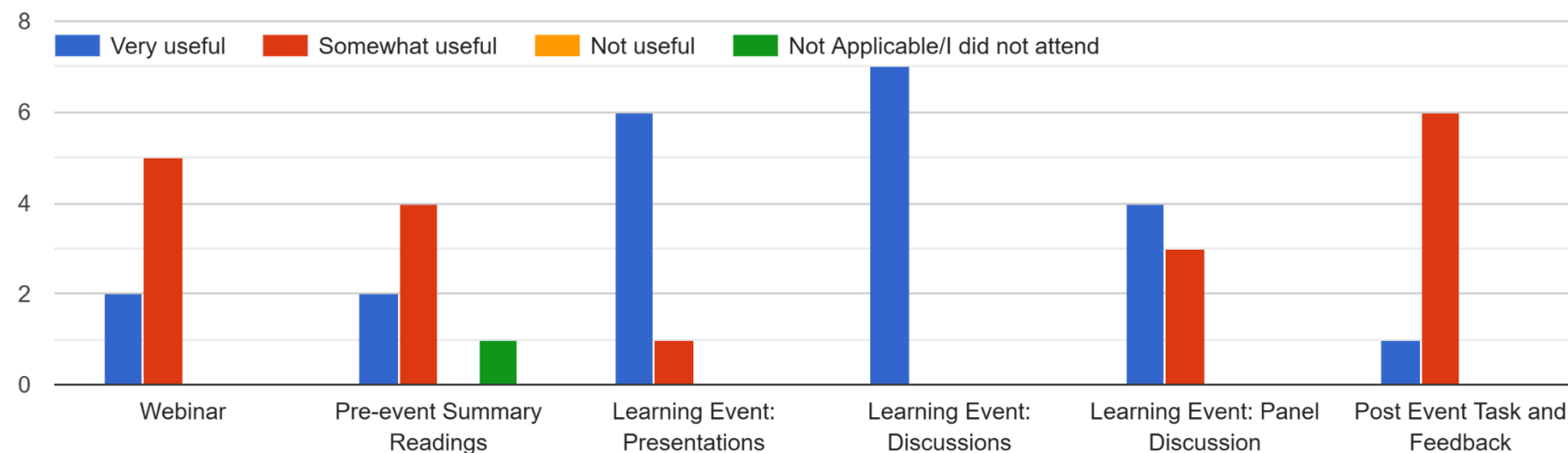## Session three: post-session self-assessment in change in capacity

Please rate your capacity/knowledge in relation to each of these themes has changed after participating in the learning event in Belgium.
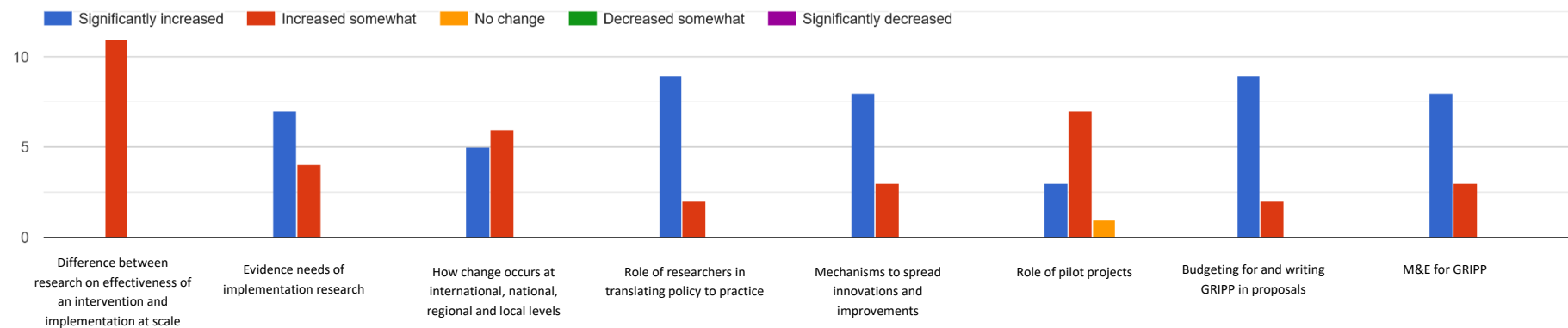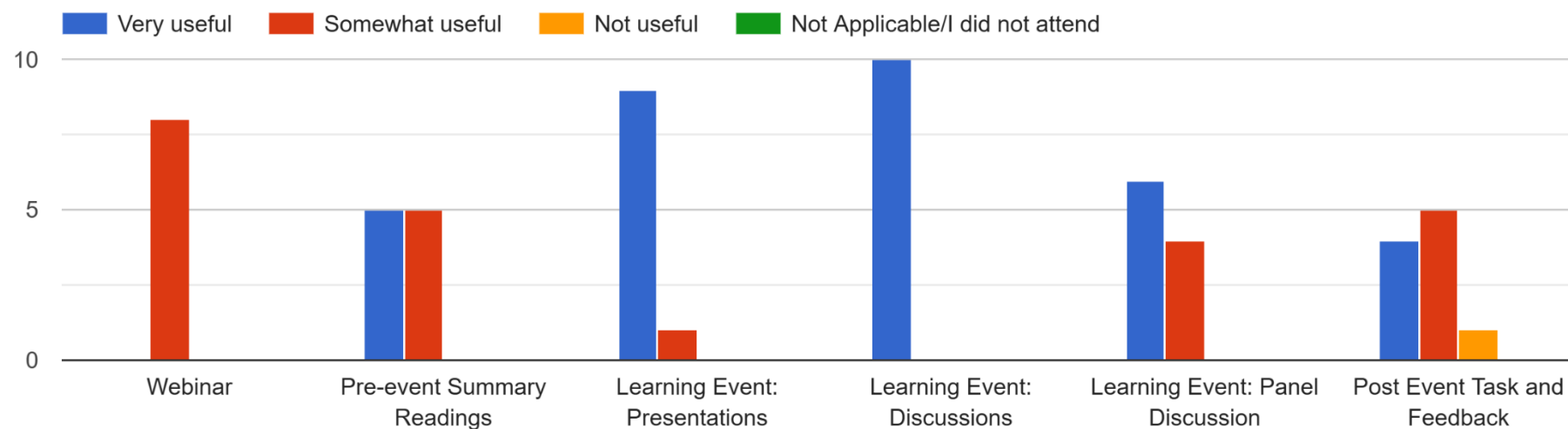
Session One

Which elements of the learning trajectory have you felt have been most useful so far.

Session Two

Which elements of the learning trajectory have you felt have been most useful so far.

Session Three

Which elements of the learning trajectory have you felt have been most useful.