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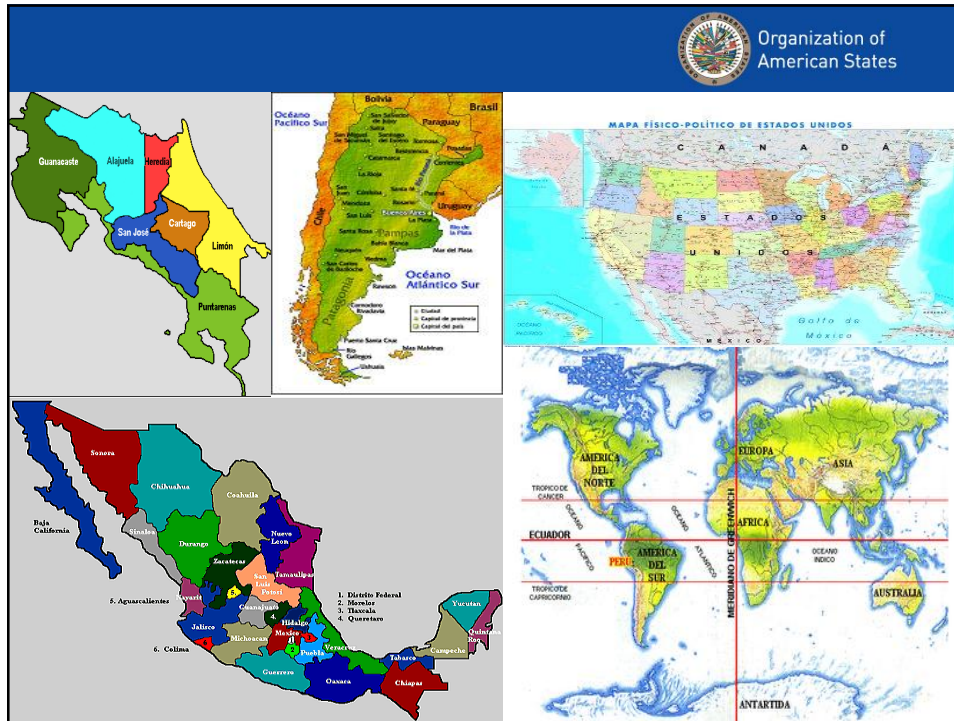
EVIDENCE-BASED NATIONAL DRUG POLICIES: SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPLICATIONS  
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# Evidence-based National Drug Policies: significance and implications

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Solid empirical and scientific evidence

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Essential inputs in the policymaking process and for effective implementation of National Drug Policies



## Evidence: key for the policymaking process

- Evidence: ambiguous term. Information collected through a systematic process.
- Evidence-based policy = a policy based on systematic or research-based evidence.
- Research = any systematic effort to increase the knowledge available. (OCDE, 1981)

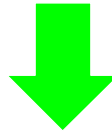


## Evidence: key for the policymaking process

- Research
- Critical evaluations
- Building theories
- Collecting data
- Analysis and codification related to practices and policies
- Research through action (self-evaluation by professionals, oriented toward improving practices)



## MISTAKE



To assume that all forms of evidence share the same importance, relevance and weight. In reality, government actors make judgments in selecting which evidence will be used, from where, and how, decisions that are often based on assumptions regarding their validity and utility. This is the reason why only hard evidence (empirical data) is used.



What are the criteria that policymakers should consider when identifying evidence that could be used in the policymaking process?

- Accuracy
- Objectivity
- Credibility
- Applicability
- Relevance
- Availability
- Source



## How to incorporate evidence in the policymaking process?

**Establishment of  
an action plan**



The evidence necessary in this first phase should allow the actors involved to: a) identify the country's problems; and b) understand their magnitude.

This information will allow those involved to understand the challenges imposed by this situation, in the subsequent phases.



## How to incorporate evidence in the policymaking process?

**Policymaking  
process**



The evidence required in this second phase should allow the actors involved to understand: a) the link between an activity and its results; b) the expected cost; and c) the impact of the intervention.

**Important: the quantity and credibility of the evidence.**



## How to incorporate evidence in the policymaking process?

**Policy  
implementation**



The evidence required in this third phase is fundamentally operative in nature, and its purpose is to improve the effectiveness of the initiatives.

It includes analytical work as well as training in technical capacities, expertise and field work.

Research and pilot projects are important.



## How to incorporate evidence in the policymaking process?

**Policy evaluation**



The main objective is the development of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

"It is essential to carry out an evaluation process to determine the effectiveness of the policies implemented and to serve as the basis for future decision making."  
(Young and Quinn, 2012)

Evidence should be objective, complete and relevant, and also communicated successfully.



## Why are evidence-based policies important for developing countries?

- EBPs have greater impact on socio-economic outcomes in developing countries than in developed countries, in part because the former are less institutionalized than the latter.
- Examples illustrating the value of EBPs in developing countries: a) when evidence greatly improves lives and b) when the absence of an evidence-based response causes widespread devastation.



## Aspects to take into consideration when developing and implementing evidence-based policies

- Weak socio-economic conditions. Resources for research and policy are scarce.
- Difficult political environments. There are places where political freedoms are limited and public accountability systems are weak, even in countries where elections are held. Political volatility tends to have a negative impact on the use of evidence in policy processes.
- Conflict. Civil wars or low intensity conflicts limit the application of EBPs.



- Barriers to evidence are greater in the implementation stage. You may notice problems such as: a) irresponsibility b) low participation c) corruption, and d) inability to incorporate evidence.
- Academic freedom, freedom of the press and the strength of civil society are important for effective EBPs. Also key in communicating ideas.



## Therefore...

- The use of evidence matters. Its proper use in the formulation and implementation of public policies favors countries' socio-economic development.
- Policies must be supported by a wide range of evidence, not only by empirical data. Key issues include: quality, credibility, relevance and cost.





## Therefore...

- Evidence is required in all facets of the development and implementation of national drug policies.
- While a number of limitations (time, capacity, cost) exist that affect the mechanisms available to mobilize evidence, efforts must continue to achieve it, and we must invest in it.



Thank you very much.