Packaging Information

Policy briefs

What is a policy brief?

Policy briefs are concise reports designed to bring researchers’ findings to decision-makers. By using a focused approach and clear language, policy briefs aim to make complex information accessible to policymakers and non-academics.

How to write and present a policy brief

- The executive summary should give your policy brief a strong opening. It should cover the why, what, where, how and when of your policy recommendations. The summary will usually be one or two paragraphs long.
- Always include a table of contents.
- Keep the reader engaged and provide information at a glance by using catchy and to-the-point headings and subheadings.
- It is also worth structuring a policy brief with short, key points, while still getting an impression of the overall picture.
- Providing sufficient details can make your policy brief more effective. However, the brief should be concise and readable. Try to keep the word count to a maximum of 4,000 words, about one or two pages, usually only one or two pages.
- Use evidence from a lot of reliable sources in different fields.
- Avoid jargon and acronyms. In fact, avoid all unnecessary words.
- Avoid repetition. Each paragraph should be no longer than three sentences. A single sentence is better than a longer sentence, and a simple - one word is better than two, a shorter word than a longer word.
- Use catchy and eye-catching headlines to lead your reader around the page. Innovative design and bold headings that stand out amongst other documents will be very likely to share the document and forward it to interested in or agrees with what is presented, he/she might be of interest. This can create scope for a project that excites, interests or motivates each to delve in and read. Policymakers are extremely busy people and so how they make this information accessible to all the different audiences it is trying to influence, projects need to package it in such a way that is appropriate to each, a way that excites, interests or motivates them.

DANDELION produced factsheets for each of the policy briefs, demonstrating how targeted policy briefs are best-practice examples of how this type of policy brief can work. These include:

- Factsheets are a lot shorter than policy briefs and are best-practice examples of how this type of policy brief can work. These include:

Factsheets

What is a factsheet?

Factsheets are concise reports designed to bring researchers’ findings to decision-makers. By using a focused approach and clear language, factsheets aim to make complex information accessible to non-specialised audiences.

How to write and present a factsheet

- Give reference links so the reader can find out more about the issue. Factsheets should be self-contained documents - imagine that your reader has not read anything before and that they have not heard of the issue.
- Keep things simple. Including too much information at one time may overwhelm the reader.
- Remember to show you care and avoid repeating words and phrases.
- Your language should be straightforward but remember to use words and phrases.
- Avoid jargon and acronyms. In fact, avoid all unnecessary words.
- Avoid repetition. Each paragraph should be no longer than three sentences. A single sentence is better than a longer sentence, and a simple - one word is better than two, a shorter word than a longer word.
- Use stylish branding to promote your project.
- Make it relevant, a factsheet can also be shared indefinitely.
- As long as the data is up-to-date and relevant, a factsheet can also be shared indefinitely.
- The way a project presents or packages its information will heavily impact on how impactful it will be once they’ve read your factsheet.

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Policymakers are extremely busy people and so how they make this information accessible to all the different audiences it is trying to influence, projects need to package it in such a way that is appropriate to each, a way that excites, interests or motivates them.

The way a project packages or presents its information will heavily impact on how effective their communications are in reaching their target audience and maximizing the impact they make – and even a small difference in impact can mean the difference between getting noticed or not. Understanding the reader you need to communicate with is crucial to effectively communicate your research, and this is especially true in the context of policy briefs and factsheets, which are two very different yet equally effective short and concise ways of capturing the attention of readers quickly while at the same time getting across the important facts of the topic and any calls for action.