

# Developing a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Communicating Peace

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# War Prevention Initiative



- Project of the Jubitz Family Foundation
- Located in Portland, OR, USA
- Mission: *To advance the Global Peace System by supporting, developing and collaborating with peacebuilding efforts in all sectors of society*
- We do so by informing and educating about alternative to war and violence

# Peace Science Digest

- Project of the War Prevention Initiative
- Mission: *to make peace science research more accessible, understandable, and useful*
- Targets “peacebuilders, advocates, educators, media, elected officials, and other beneficiaries”
- Produces 8 issues per year, each featuring 5 articles



How do we know that we are informing and educating about alternatives to war and violence?

# Focus: Peace Science Digest

- Most public-facing and consistent output
- Allows us to pull different sources of evidence, including:
  - Survey results
  - Website analytics
  - Social media analytics
  - Newsletter analytics
  - Direct feedback from staff, Board of Directors, partners, and other key stakeholders
  - Personal interviews with readers

# March 2019

- Start of Volume 4, Issue 1
- [Peace Science Digest](#) had produced **24 issues**, summarizing **120 peer-reviewed articles**
- Outputs: printed magazine, website, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and weekly newsletter
- Limited staff capacity
- No systematic collection of direct feedback or other analytics
- Vague understanding of the audience

# Our Approach

- Identifying the Need
- Collecting an Evidence Base
- Gaining Consensus

# Identifying the Need: Results from the Reader Survey (May 2019)

- 54 respondents
- Largest respondent category was white (81%) men (58%) over 60 (41%)
- Smallest respondent category was female (39%) people of color under 30 (6%)
- 45% have a Master's degree, 38% have a PhD
- 28% work in a non-profit or non-governmental organization, 21% worked in a university setting, 19% are retired



# Identifying the Need: Reported Use

- “I am a lecturer in peace and conflict studies and it frames relevant issues to bring to my professional life, as well as my activist self.”
- “Sorry can't remember at the moment but the digest really helps me stay informed on scholarly work that is relevant to my profession.”
- “I’m a Peace Studies professor and I read the digest regularly to keep abreast of issues in my field.”
- “Cite the research in an issue-based meeting at work to inform the conversation.”

# Identifying the Need: Theory of Change

- Survey results indicated
  - Need for more information
  - Need to understand our current audience and target audience
  - Revisit the [Peace Science Digest's](#) mission, vision, and goals
- Theory of Change
  - Need to identify long-term goals
  - Examine how our activities support our goals
  - Make explicit our operating assumptions
  - Better understand the broader context

# Collecting an Evidence Base: Summer 2019

- Next steps following survey results and discussion:
  - Conduct Personal interviews
  - Develop audience personas
  - Network analysis
  - Market analysis
  - Extant literature on science communications, cognition, and the policy-making process

# Collecting an Evidence Base: Personal Interviews

- 22 survey respondents volunteered for personal interviews
  - Removed volunteers who had a personal relationship to the Digest
  - Randomly chose half --> 7 contacted
  - 2 respondents gave over the phone interviews
- Focus
  - How did you find out about the [Peace Science Digest](#)?
  - Why do you chose to read academic research?

# Collecting an Evidence Base: Audience Personas

- Marketing technique to create a board idea of the ideal stakeholder, including a high-level understanding of what they do and what's important to them.
- 5 personas: Ron, Dale, Liz, Jay, Jennifer

# Collecting an Evidence Base: Who is in our network?

- Survey results
- Facebook analytics
- Twitter analytics
- Newsletter analytics
- Google analytics

# Collecting an Evidence Base: What market are we competing in?

- Other research digests
- Other projects with goal to bridge research and practice



**Research  
Digest**



**Monkey Cage**

What's the Monkey Cage? • Newsletter

# Collecting an Evidence Base: Research to Policy



ARTICLE

DOI: 10.1057/s41599-017-0042-z OPEN

## Rethinking policy 'impact': four models of research-policy relations

Christina Boswell<sup>1</sup> & Katherine Smith<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT** Political scientists are increasingly exhorted to ensure their research has policy 'impact', most notably via Research Excellence Framework (REF) impact case studies, and 'pathways to impact' statements in UK Research Council funding applications. Yet the assumptions underpinning these frameworks often fail to reflect available evidence and theories. Notions of 'impact', 'engagement' and 'knowledge exchange' are typically premised on simplistic, linear models of the policy process, according to which policy-makers are keen to 'utilise' expertise to produce more 'effective' policies. Such accounts overlook the rich body of literature in political science, policy studies, and sociology of knowledge, which offer more complex and nuanced accounts. Drawing on this wider literature, this paper sets out four different approaches to theorising the relationship: (1) knowledge shapes policy; (2) politics shapes knowledge; (3) co-production; and (4) autonomous spheres. We consider what each of these four approaches suggests about approaches to incentivising and measuring research impact.

- Four approaches
  - Knowledge shapes policy
  - Politics shape knowledge
  - Co-production
  - Autonomous spheres

### Citation

Boswell, Christina, and Katherine Smith. 2017. "Rethinking Policy 'Impact': Four Models of Research-Policy Relations." *Palgrave Communications* 3(1): 44.

<sup>1</sup> University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK. Correspondence and requests for materials should be addressed to C.B. (email: christina.boswell@ed.ac.uk)



# Collecting an Evidence Base: How do people process information?

- Heuristics, “a mental shortcut that allows people to solve problems and make judgements quickly and efficiently.”
- Example of Cognitive Biases = Confirmation Bias

## Citation:

Kendra Cherry. “How Heuristics Help You Make Quick Decisions or Biases.” *Verywell Mind*. <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-a-heuristic-2795235> (July 26, 2019).

Kendra Cherry. “How Cognitive Biases Influence How You Think and Act.” *Verywell Mind*. <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-a-cognitive-bias-2794963> (September 07, 2019)

# Gaining a Consensus: Staff Retreat

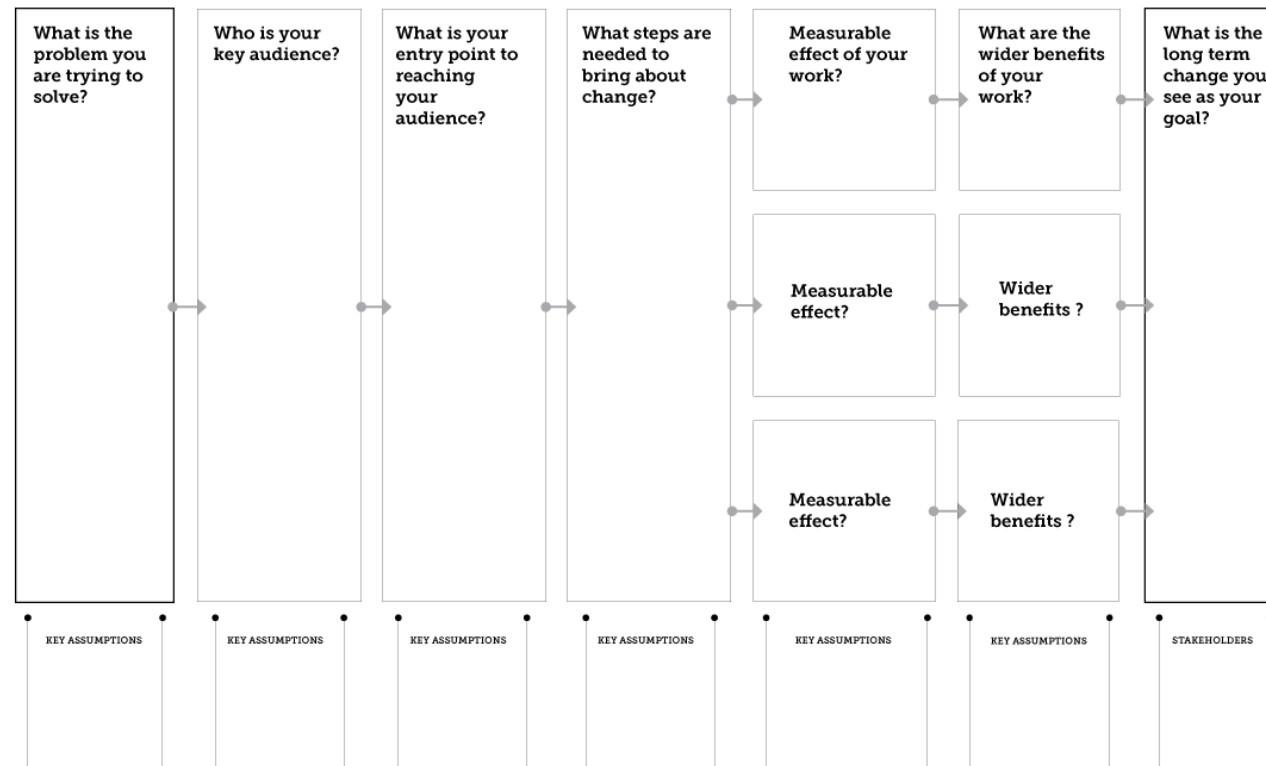
- September 2019
- Goals/expectations for the meeting
  - Develop a draft Theory of Change
  - Devote time to clarify our audience and how to engage them
  - Think big picture (refine mission, vision, and goals)

# Gaining a Consensus: Theory of Change



I want to clarify my priorities  
by defining my goals and the path to reach them

## THEORY OF CHANGE



From Development, Impact & You: <https://diytoolkit.org/tools/theory-of-change/>

# Gaining a Consensus: Problem Statement

There is a gap between what academic research says about peace and violence, and working knowledge that policy makers and practitioners use. Furthermore, there is a delay in application of academic research in policy and practice.

# Gaining a Consensus: Long-term Change

- Our audience will change or improve their behaviors by integrating lessons from the [Peace Science Digest](#).
- The peacebuilding field will become stronger changing the narrative and increasing the legitimacy of peace science.
- We contribute to a narrative change about war and peace by challenging a predominant militarist narrative on foreign policy.
- The demographic make-up of the peace field becomes more diverse.

# Gaining Consensus: Reiterate the Problem Statement

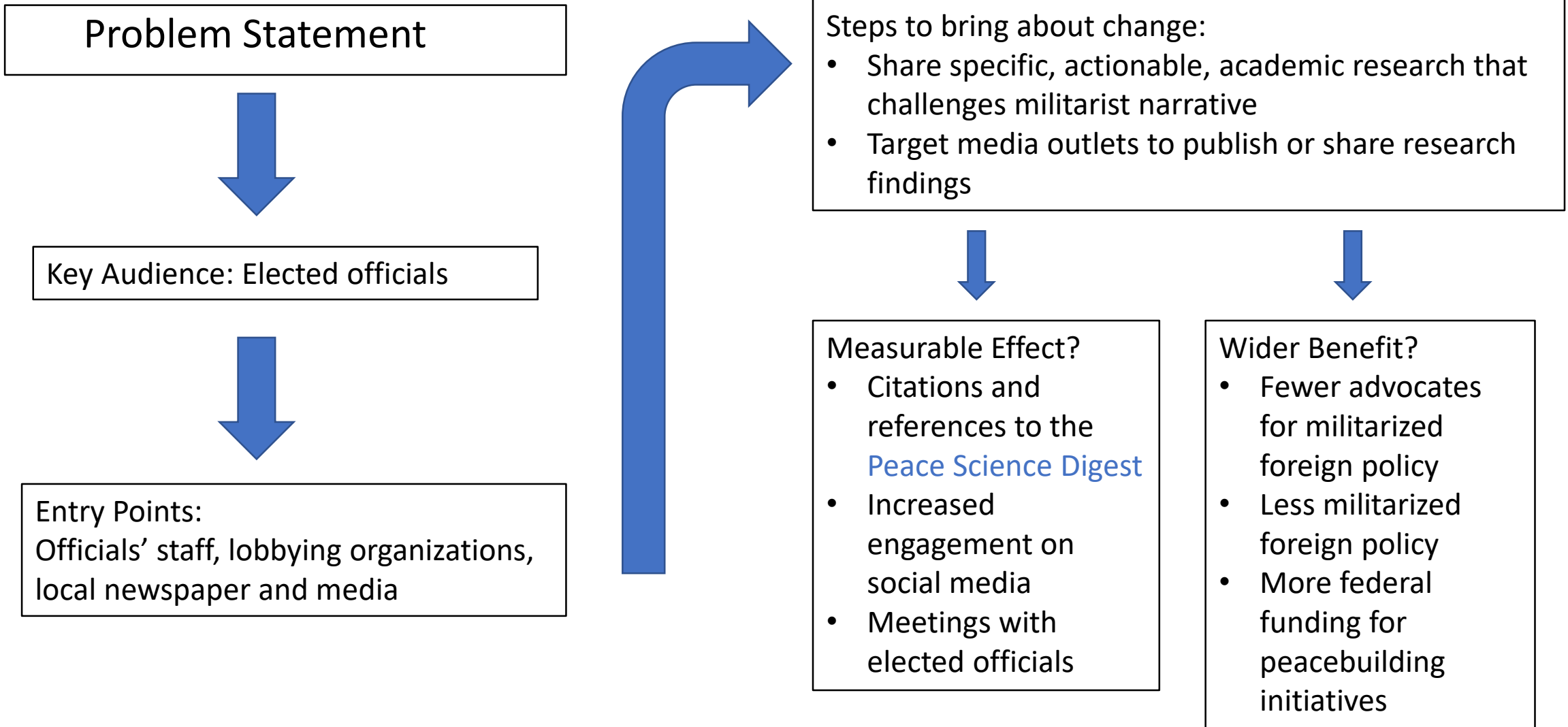
There is a gap between what academic research says peace and violence and working knowledge that policy makers and practitioners use. Furthermore, there is a delay in application of academic research in policy and practice.

As result, traditional and predominant militarist narratives that inform policy and practice are seen as more legitimate and common-sense. This militarist narrative is informed by masculinities and racism, which stifles diversity in the field of peace and security.

# Gaining a Consensus: Key Assumptions

- Practitioners and policy-makers rely on academic research to inform their work.
- Practitioners and policy-makers are receptive to research that may challenge their existing beliefs.
- The research published in the [Peace Science Digest](#) is generalizable.
- There are problems in the world that can be solved by research. We understand how to apply research to solve problems.
- There is a predominate militarist narrative in which knowledge and/or awareness about peace science research can counteract.
- There is a diversity problem in the field of peace and security.

# Gaining Consensus: Mapping it out





# Next Steps for Theory of Change

- Refine Problem Statement, Long-Term Goals, and Key Assumptions
- Develop and execute a monitoring plan
- Develop infrastructure to systematically collect data on key assumptions and audience
- Identify an external consultant to validate our approach

# Next Steps for Peace Science Digest

- Relaunch [Peace Science Digest](#) in 2020
  - Ending Volume, Issue format
  - Maintain Special Issues
- Advisory Council
  - Development
  - Strategic Communications
- Design and Web Development

# Thank you!

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