

THE ECOSYSTEM OF EVIDENCE

Navigating the future
of the ecosystem of evidence

Artificial intelligence and digital transformation
in research and healthcare

11th EBHC International Conference
Taormina, 21st – 24th October 2026

#EBHC2026

Evidence Access and Policy Practice

A Randomized Encouragement Study in Odisha

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30th GIMBE 1996-2026 EVIDENCE FOR HEALTH

Background

An official has a policy note to draft by Friday. Where does she look?

Research
High-quality evidence is more available than ever

- **Dispersed** across journals and reports
- **Technical** written for researchers
- **Slow to find** hard to access quickly

Decisions
Plans, proposals and policy notes, under time and capacity limits

So policy discussions rely on **prior practice, internal documents and informal knowledge**, rather than synthesised research.

OUR RESPONSE

The Evidence Q&A Portal: credible research in a clear, question-driven format

Aims

Can a question-driven portal strengthen evidence use in government?

THE STUDY ASKS

Does the Evidence Q&A Portal strengthen **evidence use within government decision processes** in Odisha, India?

AIM 1
Find

Help officials locate relevant research efficiently

AIM 2
Confidence

Increase confidence in interpreting and applying evidence

AIM 3
Integrate

Bring research into policy documents and discussions

AIM 4
Systematise

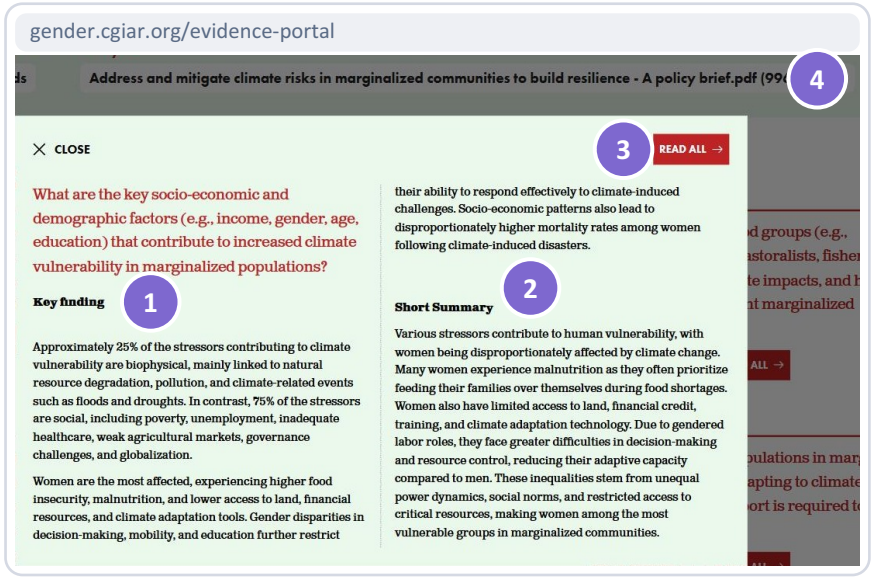
Make evidence use more systematic within departments

Also: what institutional and behavioural conditions shape evidence uptake?

Methods

Intervention: a question-driven portal for all, plus structured encouragement

THE PORTAL · open to all participants



1 Key finding

2 Short summary

3 Read all: long answer + review summaries

4 One-page policy brief (PDF)

Evidence Portal
reminders built from portal content

Did you know? Only 1 in 4 climate-vulnerability stressors is about the weather. The rest are social: poverty, weak markets, poor health care. **Read more →**

from a key finding · Mon 10:02

Myth: women are only victims of climate change. **Evidence:** they keep seeds, water and traditional knowledge. **2-min read →**

from a short summary · Thu 09:45

Briefing on climate risk this week? Grab the one-page policy brief. **Download PDF →**

from a policy brief · Mon 10:05

Illustrative reminders

ENCOURAGEMENT · randomly selected group

Reminders
Email and WhatsApp messages drawn from portal content

Light-touch follow-up
Kept brief, to fit officials' workloads

Changed since the abstract
Onboarding was given to everyone, not just the encouraged group

Everyone: portal access + onboarding session

Methods

Mixed-methods design: a randomised encouragement study plus qualitative research

RANDOMISED ENCOURAGEMENT DESIGN

Changed since the abstract: onboarding was given to everyone

All participants
Portal access + onboarding session

Encouraged group (random)
Reminders and light-touch follow-up

Comparison group
No further encouragement

COMPARE

Does encouragement increase portal use and observable evidence integration?

QUANTITATIVE

- **Baseline and endline surveys:** knowledge, attitudes, confidence, self-reported evidence use
- **Baseline done:** 117 participants across the four locations

QUALITATIVE

- **Semi-structured interviews:** how officials interpret evidence and use it in planning
- **Document reviews:** research referenced in policy notes and proposals

Baseline Findings

At baseline, most had visited the portal, but few used it in their work

FROM ACCESS TO USE · all 117 baseline respondents

100% had heard of the portal and attended onboarding

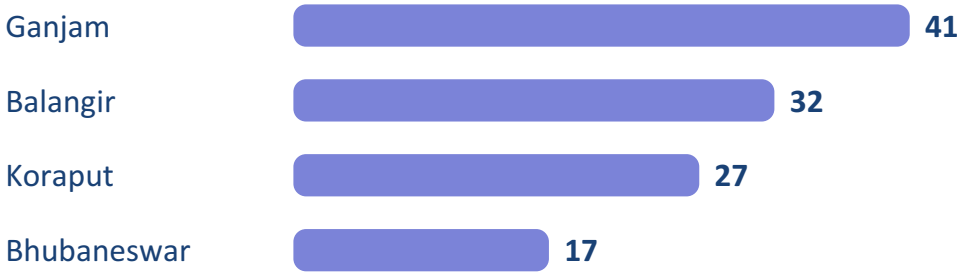
78.6% had visited the portal

23% **had used it in their day-to-day work**

Of those who visited, 75% went only once or twice. The gap between visiting and using is what the encouragement aims to close.

WHO RESPONDED

117 participants completed the baseline survey



Average age 37.5 | **76% men** | **72% district level**

74% government | **65% postgraduate**

Expected Results

No results yet. What we expect to change, and how we will see it

Access + encouragement	Short term	Medium term
Portal and onboarding for everyone Reminders and follow-up for a random group	Better awareness of credible evidence sources More confidence using research summaries	Research referenced more often in internal notes, concept papers and policy drafts

Beyond self-report: document reviews show whether research actually appears in notes and proposals, not just what people say.

Expected Results

We will also learn what gets in the way, and why the portal works or doesn't

BARRIERS TO UPTAKE WE WILL EXAMINE

Time pressures

Institutional incentives

Language constraints

Political considerations

MECHANISMS

Combining quantitative and qualitative data shows not only **whether** the portal influences evidence use, but **through which mechanisms**.

Surveys → whether evidence use changes

Interviews + document review → how and why it changes

Limits

What this study can and cannot tell us

LIMITATION	WHAT IT MEANS
Practice, not policy impact	We measure observable changes in evidence use, not direct effects on policy
External factors	Political shifts or administrative turnover may affect engagement
Self-reported measures	May be biased; document reviews add a check on actual practice
Documents miss informal influence	Changes in documents may not capture how evidence shapes decisions informally
Short time frame	Sustained behaviour change may need longer observation than the project allows

Conclusions

Producing research isn't enough: it has to fit everyday policy work

Synthesis + institutions

Evidence-informed policymaking needs accessible synthesis and supportive institutional conditions.

Everyday workflows

We test whether a question-driven portal can shift routine policy work towards more systematic research use.

Practical strategies

Findings will add to the evidence translation literature on embedding evidence in routine government decisions in resource-constrained settings.

The question isn't only whether good evidence exists, but whether it reaches everyday decisions.

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Thank you

Questions & discussion

What would make you open an evidence portal on a busy day?

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