

## **Team work is Dream work – researchers & policy makers working together!**

You may have heard the saying “Adversity introduces a man to himself” (Albert Einstein) or “the most successful people see adversity not as a stumbling block, but as a stepping stone to greatness” (Shawn Achor). At present, there is no greater adversity for the human race than the global coronavirus pandemic. It seems like overnight our world turned into a science fiction movie, with mankind in the fight against a common enemy, racing against time to save the human race from annihilation. Yet despite the darkness upon us, we see countries, scientists, medical experts, health care workers all working towards one common goal of finding a cure or producing vaccines to save mankind –So in the face of adversity – hope, innovation, discovery and solutions are also born.

While the problem of getting the right kind of information, at the right time to help policy makers may not be as dramatic as the coronavirus, it has long been a problem between researchers and policy makers. In this story we see a similar pattern, the working together of researchers and collaborative teams of expertise with policy makers to find a solution. For those of you who are old enough to remember the movie “back to the future” which was about time travel – researcher in their own way turned to the wisdom of the past to inform the future. They studied documents and previous studies highlighting the reasons why there has been a lack of reliable information or evidence available for policy makers to use and why it took so long for them to get it. They also looked at approaches that worked and built their plan of action on the strengths of these approaches. In cases where they didn’t have enough information, they conducted studies to find out more.

Using the Scottish Government’s information on pregnancies and new-born babies, their purpose was to develop a system or a way to care for pregnant mothers and their babies. They developed a way to provide high quality and easy to understand information. Their approach had several steps involving a variety of expertise and stakeholders working together, deciding what were the right questions to ask and what information was best to inform policy? How could they use this information in a shorter time frame? So they made the process better, faster and easier. They made long documents shorter and easier for policy makers to read and use. Their work may have been on pregnant women and babies, but the process they used can be applied to different situations for developing policies and turning it into practice to make a difference.

Go.....researchers and policy makers.....Go!!!!!!.....collaboration with great minds working together just proves.....team work is dream work!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

- The problem was getting the right information for policy makers to use at the right time
- Researchers working together with a variety of experts and policy makers was key.
- They developed a solution through a series of steps.