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Working Paper 18

Is Measuring Policy Influence Like Measuring Thin Air?

The Experience of SurveyMETER in Producing Three
Episode Studies of Research-based Policy Influence





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The Experience of SurveyMETER in Producing Three Episode Studies of Research-based Policy Influence

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Key Messages

- Episode studies can help document the relative contribution of research-based evidence to a policy change.
- The experience of SurveyMETER with piloting the production of three episode studies for the first time is that these internal projects require intent and leadership from senior management.
- Tools such as episode studies are not an end in themselves. They are one among several tools that can provide information about the ways of working of the policy research institute and the degree to which it informs and influences policy process and policy actors.
- Internal research projects such as the episode studies undertaken by SurveyMETER are a great opportunity for learning and confidence-building for the staff and the organization.
- Investing in producing episode studies requires staff with good writing skills and, importantly, leadership and organisational culture that support investments in this type of research activities.



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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ALZI	:	Alzheimer Indonesia <i>Alzheimer Indonesia</i>
BKBPP	:	Badan Keluarga Berencana dan Pemberdayaan Perempuan <i>Family Planning and Women's Empowerment Agency</i>
BPPD	:	Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah <i>Regional Development Planning Agency</i>
CAS UI	:	University of Indonesia Centre of Ageing Studies <i>University of Indonesia Centre of Ageing Studies</i>
Dinaskersos	:	Dinas Tenaga Kerja dan Sosial <i>Employment and Social Affairs Agency</i>
DPRD	:	Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah <i>Regional Legislative Council</i>
Perda	:	Peraturan Daerah <i>Regional Regulation</i>
Program KB	:	Program Keluarga Berencana <i>Family Planning Program</i>
KSI	:	Knowledge Sector Initiative <i>Knowledge Sector Initiative</i>
KRL	:	Kota Ramah Lanjut Usia <i>Senior-Friendly City</i>
RAD	:	Rencana Aksi Daerah <i>Regional Action Plan</i>
RAPPERDA	:	Rancangan Peraturan Daerah <i>Regional Bill</i>
SurveyMETER	:	Survey, Measurement, Training and Research <i>Survey, Measurement, Training, and Research</i>



Executive Summary

This paper reflects on the experience of SurveyMETER, a policy research institute based in Yogyakarta, in writing three episode studies of policy changes informed by its policy research on public services for the elderly in Balikpapan, Denpasar and Jakarta.

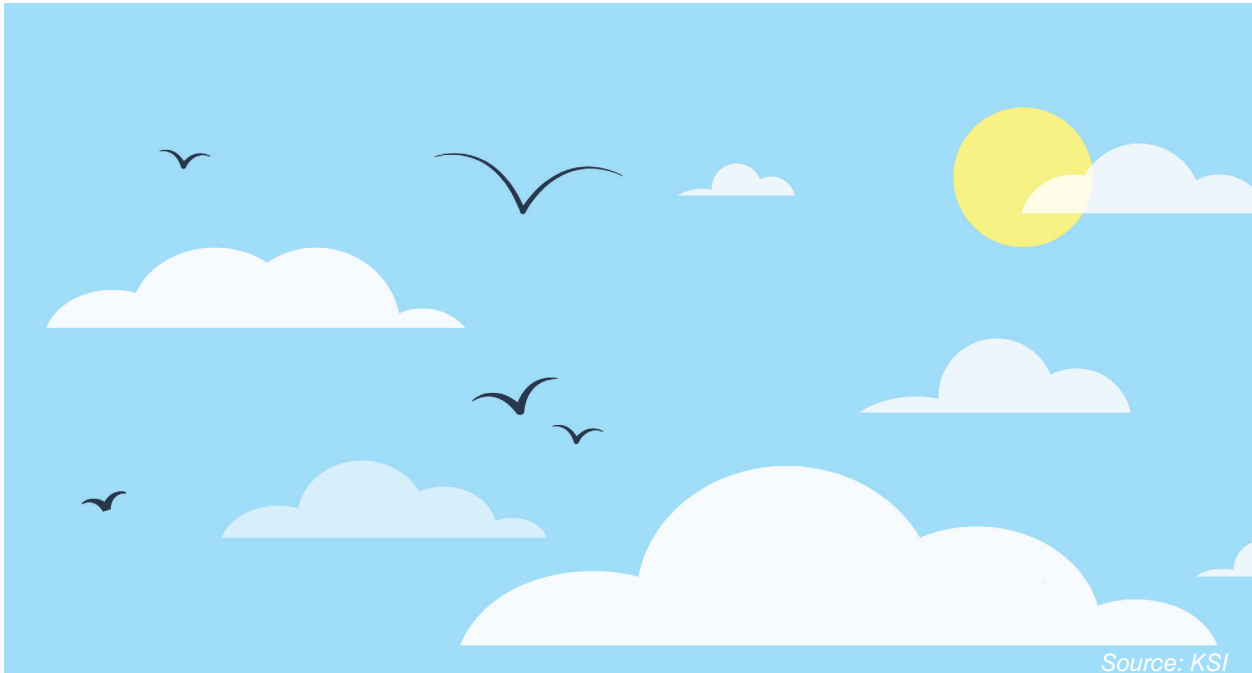
Episode studies start from a clear policy change and describe a timeline of key events that led to the policy change, trying to assess the relative contribution of research-based evidence. It was the first time that SurveyMETER had conducted this type of study to assess and document its policy influence.

A key lesson from the experience of writing these episode studies is that investments of time and resources in these internal projects require intent and commitment from the leadership of the organisations. Without such support it is very difficult to overcome the typical challenge in policy research organisations in which staff are usually involved in several projects at a time. A second lesson is that tools such as episode studies are not an end in themselves. SurveyMETER's senior management, from its Executive Director down, view episode

studies as one tool among several that can provide information about the ways in which the institute works and the degree to which it informs and influences policy processes and policy actors. A third lesson for SurveyMETER is that internal research projects such as these are a great opportunity for learning and confidence-building for the staff and the organisation. The final lesson is that writing episode studies requires good writing skills and, importantly, leadership and organisational culture that support investments in this type of research activities.

1

Introduction



Is measuring the policy influence of research-based evidence like trying to measure thin air? Why do it, and how is it best done?

These are the questions that we have tried to answer in this story of change.¹ To do so, we describe and reflect on the experience of SurveyMETER,² a policy research institute based in Yogyakarta, in writing three case studies of policy change informed by its policy research and policy influence strategy.

SurveyMETER was established in 2002 and has gained a strong reputation in Indonesia for the quality of its policy research, particularly regarding its quantitative methods and analysis as well as

training and capacity development on research methodology. SurveyMETER is one of 16 Indonesian policy research institute with which the Knowledge Sector Initiative (KSI)³ collaborates to strengthen the demand and use of research-based evidence by Indonesian policy makers. SurveyMETER conducted three episode studies on policies supporting the elderly as an important tool to purposely identify specific policy changes and engage directly or through intermediary organisations with policy makers and government institutions.

The three episode studies of policy change written by SurveyMETER are:

- Building Partnerships for Designing Policy: Episode Study of the Jakarta Declaration on

¹ Stories of change are knowledge products that describe an experience or a case where a (policy research) organization has tried or introduced a new process for planning, managing, and assessing their activities and operations and the impact of those changes. Stories of Change are not evaluations and help 1) share qualitative data that might otherwise get lost and 2) reflect on lessons for the organization as a whole.

² See: <http://surveymeter.org/>

³ See: <http://www.ksi-indonesia.org/>

Being a Dementia- and Age-Friendly City ⁴

- Data that Inspires Policy: Episode Study of Balikpapan's Experience Towards Being an Age-Friendly City 2030 ⁵
- Information Strengthens Policy: Episode Study of the Commitment of Denpasar in Integrating Policies of Being a Child-Friendly City, Age-Friendly City, and Green Open Spaces of a Healthy City ⁶

For SurveyMETER, this was the first time it had allocated staff time and financial resources to document how its policy research contributes to changes in specific policy decisions. This is part of SurveyMETER's mission to transform its organisation and move beyond being a knowledge production institute to being a broader knowledge-to-policy institute. To do so, SurveyMETER needs to be able to document instances where its research and policy-influencing work contributed (or failed to contribute) to policy change and the reasons why. This adds a new source of learning to the monitoring system that SurveyMETER has in place to monitor the effectiveness of its policy and research work.

Before we dive into SurveyMETER's experience in developing the three policy change case studies, we want to highlight a couple of points that can help to provide a view of SurveyMETER's experience within a conceptual framework.

Let's first consider policy change. What is policy change? What do we mean by policy change? Policy change can take different forms. Jones and Villar (2008) suggest there are different types of policy change to which research-based evidence and analysis can contribute. Policy research can contribute to *framing debates and getting issues on the political agenda*. Policy research can contribute

to *changing the way policy decisions are made* and opening up debate. Policy research can help to define policy options and lead to changes in the *content of laws, regulations, and budgets*. Policy research can also contribute to a change of behaviour, such as policy makers actively seeking inputs from policy researchers to inform their decisions.

The second point concerns the assessment of policy influence. Policy research institutes like SurveyMETER are project-based organisations. As such, they need to receive funding to implement research projects. The funders can be the state, development partners, or private organisations. Until recently, these funders may have been happy with policy research institutes simply reporting the number of publications or events held to present and discuss research results and policy options. This is no longer the case. Policy research institutes in Indonesia and overseas now have to be able to find ways to say if and how their policy research has contributed to policy change. This is not an easy thing to do if the relevant systems and capabilities are not in place.

In 2007 Ingie Hovland published a paper at the Overseas Development Institute entitled 'Making a Difference: M&E of Policy Research'⁷ that suggests a framework for policy research organisations to help monitor policy change. The framework comprises five monitoring areas (see Box 1). For each monitoring area, Hovland identifies several tools that can be used to monitor progress. The monitoring evidence generated together from the five areas allows judgments to be made about the overall contribution that the policy research organisation or policy research project has had on policy change.

The three case studies of policy change written by SurveyMETER inform *Monitoring Area 5* -

4 Available in Bahasa Indonesia at: <http://surveymeter.org/read/333/studi-episode-kota-ramah-lanjut-usia-dki-jakarta>

5 Available in Bahasa Indonesia at: <http://surveymeter.org/read/331/studi-episode-kota-ramah-lanjut-usia-kota-balikpapan>

6 Available in Bahasa Indonesia at: <http://surveymeter.org/read/332/studi-episode-kota-ramah-lanjut-usia-kota-denpasar>

7 Available at: <https://www.odi.org/publications/1751-making-difference-m-e-policy-research>

Box 1 - Making a Difference: M&E of Policy Research

Monitoring Area 1 - Strategy and Direction: Monitoring and evaluating the basic plan and strategic direction of the research institute will lead to its intended (policy) goals.

Monitoring Area 2 - Management Processes: Assessing if and to what extent the internal systems and processes support the production and communicate high-quality research.

Monitoring Area 3 - Outputs: Tools and processes that can help monitor and evaluate the quality of the outputs produced by a policy research institute (e.g. working papers, journal articles, policy briefs, website, meetings, events, networks, etc.).

Monitoring Area 4 - Uptake: Tools that help to monitor and assess the direct responses to research outputs produced by the research institute (e.g. the research is mentioned in a government policy paper, on a range of websites, referred to in a newspaper article, requests for discussions by government officials, etc.).

Monitoring Area 5 - Contribution to Policy Outcomes and Policy Change: Tools and processes to be able to monitor and document changes in behaviour, knowledge, policies, capacities and/or practices that the research has contributed to, directly or indirectly.

Source: Hovland, I. 2007

Contribution to Policy Outcomes and Policy Change, i.e. tools and processes to be able to monitor and document changes in behaviour, knowledge, policies, capacities and/or practices that the research has contributed to, directly or indirectly.

These policy change case studies, also called episode studies, start from a clear policy change. They describe a timeline of key events that led to the policy change, trying at the same time to assess the relative contribution of the evidence and the policy-influencing strategy of SurveyMETER. Episode studies are qualitative studies. Data and information are gathered through semi-structured interviews with key informants. They are written in a storytelling style and can include charts and infographics to help describe the changes and the linkages between actors and key decision points over time (see Start and Hovland 2004).

The next section describe the content of the episode studies as well as the processes undertaken by SurveyMETER to produce them. The question we want to address is why SurveyMETER made the decision to invest in the episode studies. In the following section we look at the process of producing the episode studies and reflect on the differences between what was planned and what actually happened during the execution of the studies. In the last section we draw our conclusions from the key lessons learned from SurveyMETER's experience which can be useful for other policy research organisations planning to invest in a similar process.

2

Three Cities, Three Policy Changes, Three Episode Studies

The three episode studies revolve around the goal of SurveyMETER to inform and influence policies in three cities to improve the care of and public services for the elderly. The point of departure was the completion in April 2013 of a study entitled *Satu Langkah Menuju Impian Lanjut Usia Kota Ramah Lansia (KRL)*, Age-Friendly City Initiatives in Indonesia by SurveyMETER and

local policy makers. This provided them with a degree of acceptance by policy makers and civil servants in the regional agencies (*dinas daerah*) that is necessary for any policy research uptake. In Balikpapan for example, the policy suggestions from the study were supported by the Mayor who appointed a staff member from the *Dinas Tenaga Kerja dan Sosial* (Employment and Social Affairs

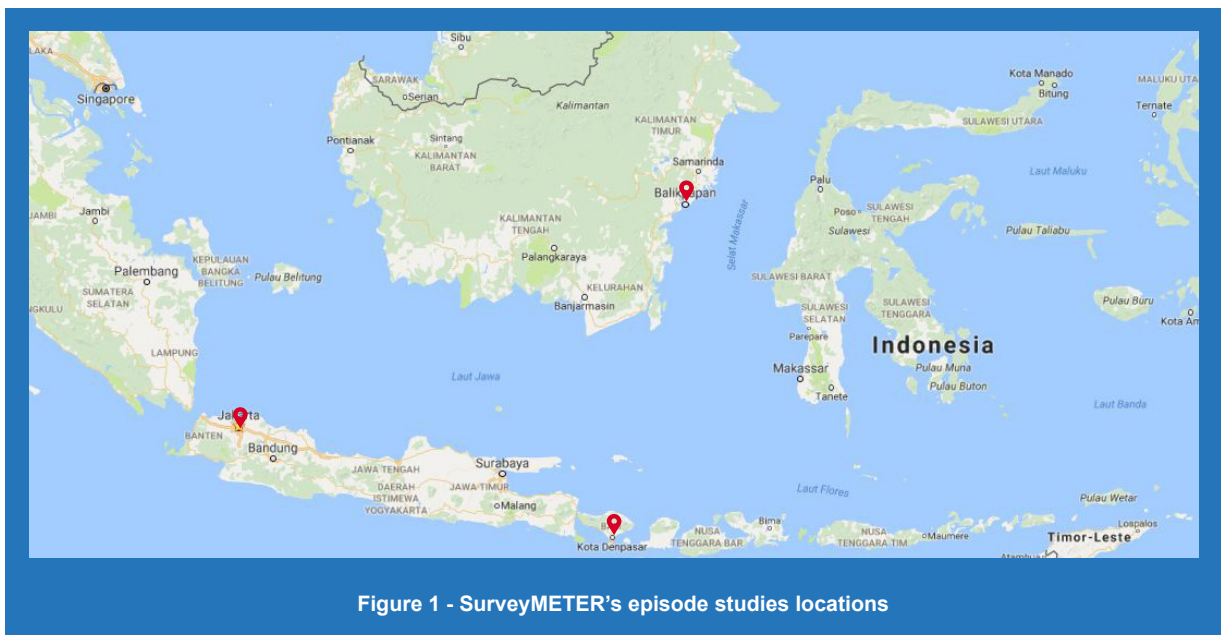


Figure 1 - SurveyMETER's episode studies locations

the University of Indonesia Centre of Ageing Studies (CAS UI). The completion of the study kick-started a series of workshops to reflect on and discuss the policy options recommended by that study in 14 cities across Indonesia. As a result of those discussions, three cities were significant in the decision they each made to take concrete policy measures to become age-friendly cities: Balikpapan, Denpasar, and Jakarta.

In all three cities, the team of SurveyMETER and CAS UI had a good and trusted relationship with

Agency) to ensure that the *Kota Ramah Lanjut Usia* (Age-Friendly City) study recommendations and information were incorporated correctly into the design of both the East Kalimantan *Rencana Aksi Daerah* (Regional Action Plan) 2015–2030 and the Balikpapan regional action plan to implement an age-friendly city (*Rencana Aksi Daerah Kota Balikpapan Menuju Kota Ramah Lanjut Usia, RAD-LSU*). These initiatives as well as the local election where the Mayor's re-election campaign led to the passing of *Perda Kesejahteraan Lanjut Usia* (Regional Regulation on Seniors' Welfare). In June

2015, Balikpapan was announced as *Kota Menuju Ramah Lansia* (Age-Friendly City).

The process of policy change in Denpasar and Jakarta was similar. In Denpasar, the demand and uptake came from the Governor and the Mayor who saw SurveyMETER's Kota Ramah Lanjut Usia (Age-Friendly City) study as providing the evidence to strengthen existing policy, namely working through Badan Keluarga Berencana dan Pemberdayaan Perempuan (Family Planning and Women's Empowerment Agency) and to develop the grand design of Kota Layak Anak, Kota Ramah Lansia, dan Ruang Terbuka Hijau dalam Kota Sehat (Child-Friendly City, Age-Friendly City, and Green Open Spaces of a Healthy City Program) and Age-Friendly City, all of which are part of the Rencana Panjang Jangka Menengah Daerah (Regional Government Medium-Term Development Plan) 2015–2020.

In Jakarta, the policy-influencing strategy of SurveyMETER involved an intermediary organisation with a strong advocacy reputation on ageing health issues of senior citizens, Alzheimer's Indonesia (ALZI). The alliance between SurveyMETER and ALZI led in September 2015 to a statement of commitment by the Governor of Jakarta, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama to promote Jakarta not only as a Kota Ramah Dementia (Dementia-friendly City) but also as a Kota Ramah Lansia (Age-friendly City).

This is in brief what the three episode studies of SurveyMETER concern. In the case of Balikpapan and Denpasar the policy change described by the episode studies consisted of policy content, while in the case of Jakarta the research evidence contributed to informing the knowledge and awareness of policy makers on senior citizen issues.

However, what interests us here is why SurveyMETER decided to invest its own time and resources in producing the three episode studies. We explain the reasons in the next section.

2.1 The rationale for producing three episode studies


First of all, the mission and vision of SurveyMETER is 'to become a knowledge institution which inspires and strengthens evidence-based policy'⁸. To do so, SurveyMETER needs to be able to document and learn from instances where its research and policy-influencing work contributed (or failed to contribute) to policy change and the reasons why. A second reason is that a process like the one required to develop the episode studies adds a new source of evidence and learning to the monitoring system that SurveyMETER has in place, that can, for example, guarantee the rigour of its research methods and the quality of its policy research outputs. The episode studies, therefore, are an internal pilot project for SurveyMETER to expand its monitoring system to capture stories of influence. A third reason is that funders and development partners are asking for evidence of the policy influence of the research work they commission from SurveyMETER. Being able to document the contribution to policy change for the research produced by SurveyMETER will continue to strengthen SurveyMETER's credibility amongst development partners and government institutions.

So, how did the SurveyMETER team go about planning the three case studies?

2.2 What was planned?

The first stage of the project was for the team to produce an internal Terms of Reference to describe and agree on the writing style for the episode studies, the format, the number of pages, etc. This guideline also included a description of the steps required to conduct these qualitative studies from the identification of key informants, such as the Dinas Tenaga Kerja dan Sosial, Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan, Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah; to the review of policy documents, such as the Rancangan Peraturan Daerah; to fieldwork in the cities to collect data; and lastly discussion, analysis, and write-up at the SurveyMETER office in Yogyakarta.

8 SurveyMETER website: <http://surveymeter.org/page/37/vision-mision>



Each episode study was managed by a team of three researchers, and a total of nine researchers (all full-time staff of SurveyMETER) were involved. Given the pilot nature of the project, the director of SurveyMETER assigned the staff to the episode studies and supervised the work of the entire team. The criterion for selecting the staff was the director's knowledge of each person's interest in expanding their knowledge and experience with qualitative research methods.

The teams planned for five working days for data collection (both primary data from interviews and secondary data from policy document reviews). The analysis and write-up was then planned to take one month for each city. The plan was to conduct and complete the three episode studies between July to December 2015.

The target audience of the episode studies was: local governments to share evidence about policy change in cities and municipalities; NGOs and advocacy organisations working on ageing and elderly people's policy issues as sources of information on program development and engagement with government counterparts; and development partners to document and share examples of policy impact of policy research and evidence-based advocacy. The team planned to publish the episode studies in two languages, Indonesian and English, to reach an international audience.

2.3 What actually happened?

Things rarely go according to plan. So what did happen when the team set out to conduct the episode studies?

The Terms of Reference did help the team to manage the process and stay on track in terms of the activities required to complete the three studies. However, two main changes occurred to the plan. Only one person was assigned to the episode study in Jakarta. This was due to the fact that the other two team members originally assigned were re-assigned to other research activities in SurveyMETER. This caused the Jakarta case study to slow down. It

was impossible for one person to conduct all the interviews and review the policy documents in one five day trip. Instead of one field visit to Jakarta, the data collection took place over one two-day and one three-day trip. In the case of Balikpapan and Denpasar the team managed to stick to the plan and collect the data during one week for each study.

Another factor particular to the study in Jakarta, was appointment setting was highly dependent on the civil society organisation counterpart because SurveyMETER had not yet built a relationship with the government.

Further delays during the analysis and write up stage extended the deadline of the episode studies pilot. Once back in Yogyakarta, all three teams struggled to balance their time between that required to complete the episode studies and competing other project work in SurveyMETER. For example, all three members of the Denpasar team were at one point assigned full time to another research project. A new researcher was assigned to assist but they needed time to familiarize themselves with the episode study's rationale, process and content.

All three episode studies required more time than was originally planned for the write up. All the studies, which were written in Indonesian, received comments and feedback from the team supervisor (i.e., the director of SurveyMETER) and went through five revisions before being signed off for final proofreading and quality assurance.

Overall the production of the episode studies was completed in March 2016.


2.4 Why were there differences?

Projects are not immune to the randomness that governs life and human activities. However, this does not mean that planning and plans are a waste of time. Plans help a team to agree on an overall direction and the stages and outputs that are required to achieve project goals. Good plans are never set in stone and can be changed if circumstances change.

SurveyMETER developed plans for the episode studies. These plans helped the SurveyMETER team to agree on how much time the team members should allocate to the task. During the implementation, as we have seen in the previous section, some circumstances changed and the SurveyMETER team and director had to be flexible and adapt along the way.

We identified four main factors that determined changes in the planned activities to develop and produce the episode studies:

- **The demand on people's time was a challenge:** all three episode studies took longer than planned. The main challenge for the teams was not so much the amount of time allocated for field work and data collection in Denpasar, Balikpapan and Jakarta; those activities went more or less according to plan. In each location the teams took five working days (in the case of Balikpapan and Jakarta, split between two trips) as planned. The challenge for the team came when they returned to the SurveyMETER office in Yogyakarta when they felt the pressure of having to juggle multiple projects tasks funded externally. It was difficult for them to dedicate the time needed for the analysis and write up of the episode studies, which was an internal project funded by SurveyMETER itself. In the end the team needed one month longer than they had originally planned to write up the episode studies, and deadlines for submitting drafts to peer review had to be changed several times. The conflicting demands on time were not only faced by the team collecting data and writing the studies, but also the supervisor of the pilot, the Executive Director of SurveyMETER. She also struggled to manage the time allocated for the pilot, the team, to monitor progress, as well as to review draft studies. Like other team members, she also had to juggle multiple responsibilities, which in some cases resulted in delays in providing feedback and answers to the episode studies team.
- **Setting meetings with key informants takes time:** key informants of these policy studies were civil servants and policy makers who were not always easy to reach due to their schedules and other commitments. The episode studies were not exempt from these problems and the team had to accommodate changes in the interviewees' schedules several times.
- **Storytelling takes time and requires practice:** storytelling was a new writing style for the SurveyMETER team. SurveyMETER's analysts' and researchers' main area of expertise is quantitative research which involves specific competencies. Most of the SurveyMETER staff are data collectors, enumerators, analysts, and researchers who translate and package analysis into reports for funders. The storytelling and qualitative research required for the episode studies was something new which pushed the team to work not only with new research methods but also a new writing style. It was a learning experience which required changes in the deadlines as the draft studies needed more than one revision. At the same time, this pilot helped the SurveyMETER team to test and expand their research and communication capabilities.
- **Iteration can take time (but it is worth it):** the structure of the episode studies changed several times during the drafting and write up process which contributed to extending deadlines. One thing that the SurveyMETER team mentioned is that at the beginning of the pilot they were not clear about the structure of the final episode studies. Earlier in the year, in January 2016, SurveyMETER was involved in a one-day workshop organised by KSI in Jakarta that brought together KSI's policy research partners, Indonesian government partners, and representatives of the program funding body, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. SurveyMETER was one of the organisations that presented an example of policy influence to which they contributed. That was when they presented for the first time one of their three episode studies, which had not yet been published. During the weeks preceding the workshop,



SurveyMETER received input and assistance from SOLIDARITAS, a Jakarta-based social enterprise that specialises in approaches related to performance management and organisational learning. The episode study team thought that the input and feedback from SOLIDARITAS were very useful to shape not only the presentation at the workshop but also the structure and flow of the three episode studies on which they were already working. The finalisation of the episode studies required several iterations (and a public presentation) which extended their schedule, but helped the teams to improve the final outputs.

In the next section we draw our conclusions and share some of the tips that SurveyMETER has learned which may be helpful for other policy research organisations interested in telling their stories of policy influence.

3

What We Have Learned




We started this paper by asking whether measuring the policy influence of research-based evidence is like trying to measure thin air. Well, the experience of SurveyMETER shows that with the right intent it is possible and useful to measure policy influence.

A key lesson from the experience with the episode studies of SurveyMETER is that these internal projects require intent and leadership from senior management. Without this support, it is very difficult to overcome the typical challenges in policy research organisations where staff are usually involved in several projects at a time, and there is tension between research work which is externally funded (and therefore pays for the institute's running costs) and internal projects (which have to be self-funded by the organisation). The leadership and senior management mandate of these internal projects is a signal that the organisation is serious about trying to do something new and different. Furthermore assigning staff members to these types of research work makes staff feel that they have the support and mandate required to manage multiple

responsibilities. This creates a safe space for adaptation, iteration and learning, especially when a team is exploring testing new research methods and knowledge products.

A second lesson is that tools such as the episode studies are not an end in themselves. SurveyMETER's senior management, from its Executive Director down, view the episode studies as one of several tools that can provide information about the ways in which the institute works and the degree to which the institute informs and influences policy process and policy actors. It is the evidence gathered by monitoring uptake of policy research, the quality assurance of policy research products and communication activities, and so on that together provide SurveyMETER's managers with the information to judge whether the institute's research has contributed to changes in policy and development results. The important caveat that has emerged from the discussion for this paper is that SurveyMETER aims at informing and influencing policy-making in the specific area of public services for supporting the elderly. SurveyMETER does not



aim to influence policy with all of its policy research work and activities. In most cases SurveyMETER, with its credibility and reputation, acts as an evidence producer for government actors and development partners who need that evidence to inform policy discussions and decisions. In those cases SurveyMETER does not have a specific (policy) objective, other than as mentioned in its vision statement “to become a knowledge institution which inspires and strengthens evidence-based policy”. With policies supporting the elderly it is different. Here SurveyMETER is making a deliberate effort to identify specific policy changes and engage directly or through intermediary organisations with policy makers and government institutions. It is here that the episode studies are an important tool to document policy influence.

The third lesson for SurveyMETER is that internal research projects such as these are a great opportunity for learning and confidence-building for the staff and the organisation. SurveyMETER is well known for its quantitative research work. The episode studies can contribute to expanding the range of research products of the organisation and enhancing the reputation and credibility of the organisation.

The fourth lesson is that writing episode studies or producing any other knowledge products requires not only good writing and analytical skills by staff, but also leadership that nurtures an organisational culture that supports these types of research activities. In the case of SurveyMETER this is part of the ongoing organisational transformation from a primarily survey-based organisation to a knowledge-based organisation, conducting analysis and influencing policy.


Episode studies can be criticized for being cherry picking exercises. We think that this criticism misses two important points: first, episode studies are one of several tools for monitoring the contribution to policy and practice of the policy research of an organisation. Episode studies have to be treated as any other research project. They have to follow

a certain methodology and be approached with a certain degree of healthy self-criticism. Episode studies could also be written by hired consultants, but they bring more benefit by generating lessons and expanding capabilities if they are conducted by SurveyMETER staff.

SurveyMETER has plans to conduct more of these studies while at the same time fine-tuning and adding some data collection tools and processes to the monitoring system for uptake of the policy research produced by the institute. One potential idea is to design an episode study on the policy change resulting from the collection of information/ data on policy changes related to the study of online news.

So, based on our experience with the now-completed three episode studies, what would SurveyMETER do differently, if involved in a new episode study?

- SurveyMETER would plan to spend more time at the beginning of the study and ahead of interviews to design and develop the timeline of events up to the policy change. This would probably require a more in-depth review of articles in regional/national newspapers. This will facilitate the design of interview questions for key informants.
- In parallel or as part of the development of the timeline, the team would need to better understand the political economy and context in which the policy change occurred. This would help the writing of precise interview questions and also help better identify and select key informants.
- As mentioned, SurveyMETER developed detailed guidelines at the start. It is now revising its guidelines to incorporate the lessons learned from these first episode studies.
- SurveyMETER plans to continue to be flexible and adaptable in future episode studies. Internal discussion suggests that five working days full time by a team of two or three is sufficient to conduct context analysis, review



of policy documents, review of media and news, and to develop a timeline of key events. It has also been agreed that data collection should be through face-to-face interviews or by phone, and data analysis should take a team working full-time a maximum of three weeks. The final write up, including peer review and revisions, should take ten days for a team working full time.

The episode study experiment has been a success for SurveyMETER. Much learning has taken place and insights have emerged throughout the process. SurveyMETER has adopted one new tool in its monitoring system to research, document, and look at the contribution its research makes to a specific policy area. As Marcel Proust once wrote “the real voyage of discovery consists not [only] in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes”



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The Knowledge Sector Initiative (KSI) is a joint program between the government of Indonesia and Australia that seeks to improve the lives of the Indonesia people through better quality public policies that make better use of research, analysis and evidence.

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