

Brief #2:**Do practitioners prefer to connect with researchers who are local?**

By: Adam Seth Levine (President of research4impact and Assoc Prof of Government at Cornell)
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Background: In early 2018 I reached out to several practitioners' listservs and invited them to share problems they were facing in their work in which they thought research might be helpful. In response I would match them with a social scientist one-on-one. I targeted listservs composed of non-partisan, non-profit organizations with a mission to remedy social ills. 37 practitioners from 10 countries (New Zealand, Ireland, UK, Canada, Kenya, Australia, Jordan, Netherlands, Kenya, and the US) responded over several months.

Based on these requests I identified four reasons why nonprofit practitioners want to engage with social scientists: 1) to receive an overview of a research literature, 2) to help make an immediate evidence-based decision, 3) to gain ideas about how to measure impact, and 4) to collaborate on a new project (see here for more details: www.r4impact.org/how-it-works).

Main Finding: These requests also help answer another important question: *Do practitioners prefer to speak with researchers who are local?* One long-standing concern with connecting research and practice is that the implications of research findings are often presented in a highly "decontextualized, distant way" that makes it difficult for practitioners to apply them to the specific context where they work.¹

With that concern in mind I asked practitioners if they wanted to speak with someone who not only knows the relevant research, but is also located in their own country and/or has deep knowledge of the local context where they work. Only one researcher (located in the UK and looking for an overview of a large research literature) said yes and requested a UK-based researcher. The typical response among others was that they did not anticipate having difficulty deciding whether and how research would be applicable in their specific context.

*Proportion of Practitioners Requesting a Local Researcher
(For everyone, and by goal; N=37)*

<i>All practitioners</i>	<i>3%</i>
<i>Goal 1: To receive an overview of a large research literature</i>	<i>5%</i>
<i>Goal 2: To help make an immediate evidence-based decision</i>	<i>0%</i>
<i>Goal 3: To gain ideas about how to measure impact</i>	<i>0%</i>
<i>Goal 4: To collaborate with a researcher on a new project</i>	<i>0%</i>

Check out www.r4impact.org/how-it-works for more on what we're learning about researcher-practitioner relationships!

¹ Bartunek, Jean. 2007. "Academic-Practitioner Collaboration Need Not Require Joint or Relevant Research: Toward a Relational Scholarship of Integration." *Academy of Management Journal* 6: 1323-1333.