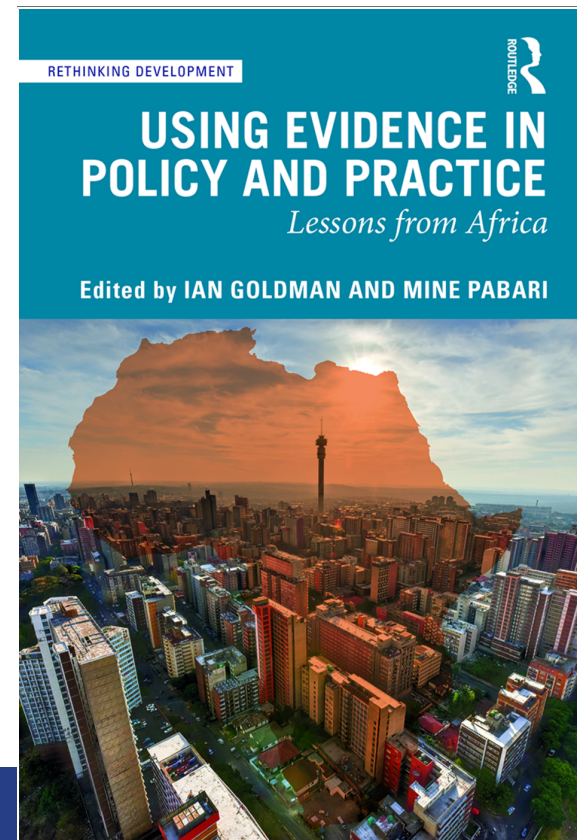


# Using evaluations to inform policy and practice in a government department: The case of the Department of Basic Education in South Africa

7 May 2020



# Research project

- Research project on Using Evidence for Policy and Practice
- Perspective of policy makers (co-authors)
- African research team with researchers in each country
- 8 cases from 6 countries/West Africa, linked with the Twende Mbele countries
- Explores use of different types of evidence (evaluations, research, rapid synthesis, citizens engagement)
- And what supported evidence use to happen
- Book coming out in June 'Using Evidence for Policy and Practice – Lessons from Africa'

<https://www.routledge.com/Using-Evidence-in-Policy-and-Practice-Open-Access-Lessons-from-Africa/Goldman-Pabari/p/book/9780367440077>

# Chapters/cases

- 5 Using evaluations to inform policy and practice in a government department: The Case of the Department of Basic Education in South Africa
- 6 Use of evidence in a complex social programme: an evaluation of the state's response to violence against women and children in South Africa
- 7 The influence of local ownership and politics of the use of evaluations in policy making: The case of the public procurement evaluation in Uganda
- 8 Rapidly responding to policy queries with evidence: Learning from Rapid Response Services in Uganda
- 9 The challenges and potential of evaluations to positively inform reforms: working with producers in the Benin Agriculture Sector
- 10 Parliament and public participation in Kenya: The case of the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act 2013
- 11 The contribution of civil society generated evidence to the improvement of sanitation services in Ghana
- 12 Using evidence for tobacco control in West Africa

# Introduction to Analytical framework

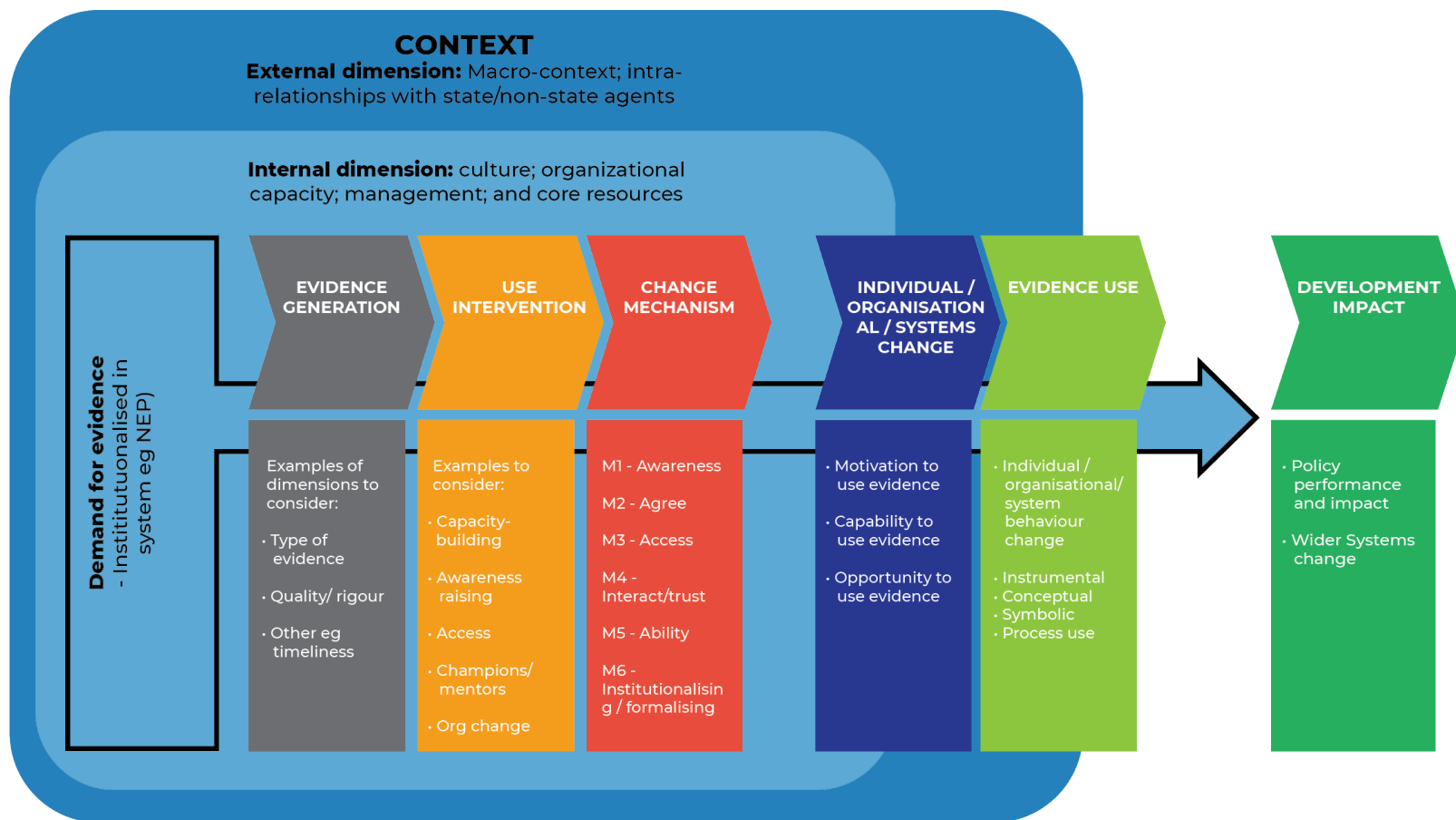
## Builds on :

- Science of Using Science's framework (Langer, Gough, Tripney 2016)
- The Context Matters framework (Weyrauch, Echt and Suliman, 2016)

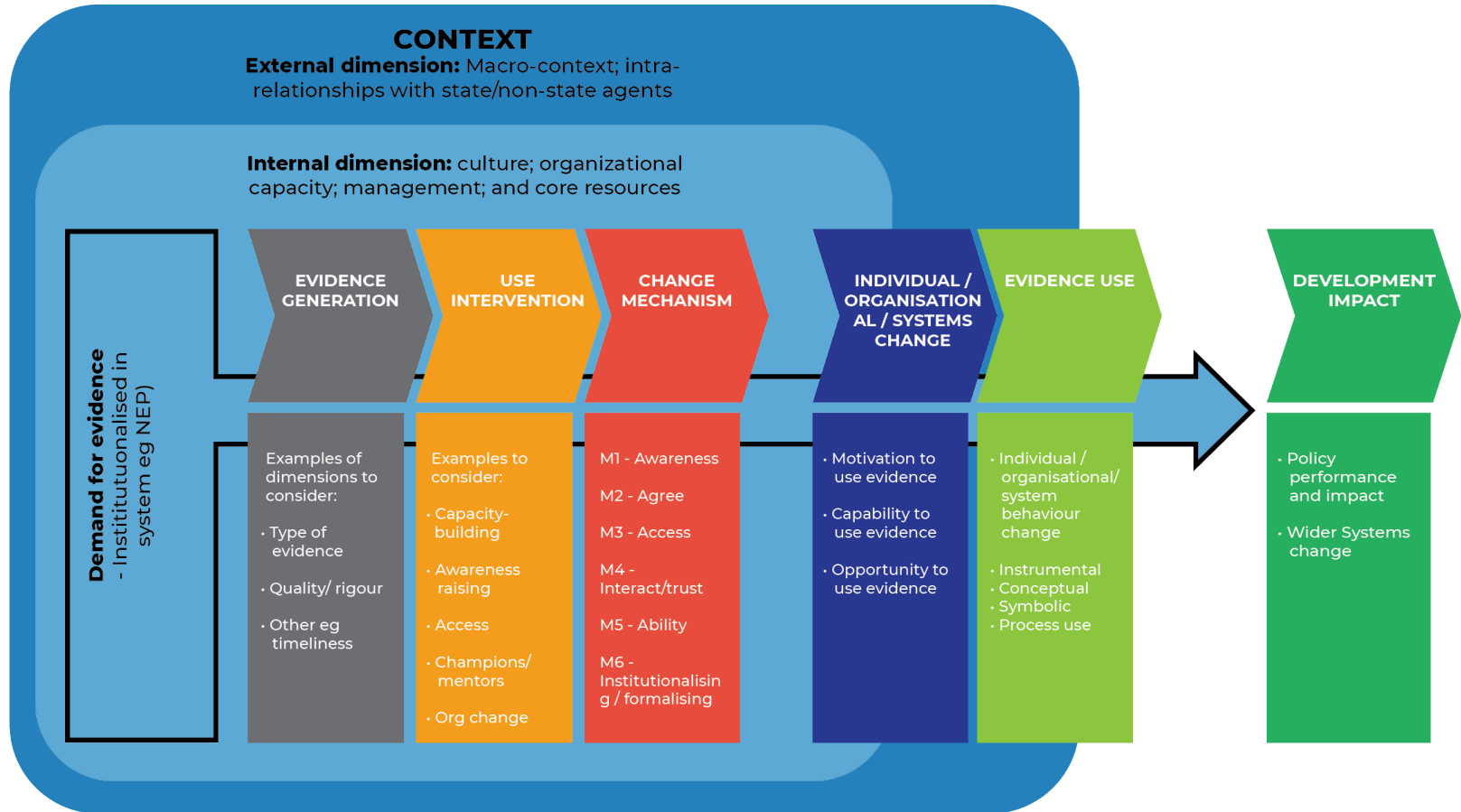
## What does the framework do?

- to investigate and unpack the effectiveness of programmes and instruments aiming to support decision-makers' use of evidence.
- to present an inductive analytical tool to explore evidence-use interventions, not necessarily outlining what or how interventions *should* lead to positive impacts on decision-makers' use of evidence.
- to structure the generated research and tacit knowledge evidence-base in a consistent manner which allows us to identify patterns in the *overall* evidence-base *across* case studies;
  - allows for cross-learning and collaboration around synergies of different EIPP interventions and approaches.

# Analytical framework/TOC





# Analytical framework/TOC



# The case – Department of Basic Education in South Africa

# DBE early adopter of evaluations

- Strategic choice to bring evidence for decision-support into managers' domain.

DBE Evaluations	Status
1. Early Childhood Development	2013 Improvement Plan
2. Grade R introduction (Impact)	2013 Improvement Plan
<b>3 Funza Lushaka</b> 	2013 – 2015 Improvement Plan
<b>4 National School Nutrition</b> 	2014 – 2015 Improvement Plan
5 CAPS	2015 Improvement Plan
6 Early Grade Reading (Impact)	2015 – ongoing Improvement Plan
7 Scholar Transport	2019 Just finalised



# What were the programmes

- **Funza Lushaka Bursary Programme:**
  - Bursaries for student teachers to fill gaps in teachers, in subjects, and remote schools
- **National School Nutrition Programme:**
  - Feeding 9m+ learners at school, at least one meal
  - Objective to improve concentration in school and school attendance, so better learning

# Use of the Funza Lushaka evaluation

- Rethink **selection criteria** - DBE produced guidelines and criteria for selection of students based on geographic and subject area and stricter on selection of beneficiaries (instrumental use).
- Motivate for **funding to modernise the MIS** - obtained funding for online system, in use since October 2018
- Strengthen **placement** of graduating students - ITE directorate now reporting not on administration of placement but on where graduates placed on completion (instrumental use).
- **Theory of change workshop** brought together officials from higher education institutions, the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), civil society groups, and provincial and national officials to gain a better understanding of the bursary programme (conceptual/process use)
- Building **successful relationships**. In Oct 2018, DBE held an indaba to open a dialogue on teacher professionalisation, teacher standards and school-based initial teacher education models. Success of this event was attributed to the collaborative nature of the Funza Lushaka evaluation (process use)
- **Unintended use** - Parliament became more interested in understanding how FLBP graduates are placed in specific targeted areas rather than the logistical, administrative data concerning how placement was managed

• Individual / organisational/ system behaviour change

• Instrumental

• Conceptual

• Symbolic

• Process use

# Use of NSNP evaluation

- Task teams set up with their *de facto* terms of reference the NSNP evaluation recommendations relevant to the theme of the Task
- NSNP guidelines should specify who the meals are intended for, how leftover meals and stock should be dealt with, and monitor implementation.
  - DBE committed to revising its guidelines on meals and developing stock control and plans to manage leftovers, because there are learners who prefer certain meals to others, so they waste food when they do not eat.
  - DBE evaluated quality of soya mince and developed a list of compliant manufacturers, which was then approved and circulated to PEDs. Considering alternatives to soya as a protein in meals, in consultation with nutrition experts.
- Evaluation process deepened stakeholders' understanding of the NSNP activities, opportunities for better implementation, and utility (DPME 2017, p.19) (conceptual use).

- Individual / organisational/ system behaviour change
- Instrumental
- Conceptual
- Symbolic
- Process use

# Use interventions from DBE systems

Intervention	Effect and change mechanism activated
Knowledge brokering role of Strategic Planning, Research and Coordination Chief Directorate	<p>Unit 'marketed' itself to programme managers to see the value of improving implementation through evaluations and identifying possible topics.</p> <p>Undertook internal communication to inform management and minister of findings and recommendations</p> <p>Working with programme managers helped to build awareness of evaluations and findings, trust in credibility of findings, and ensure institutionalisation of responses to the evaluation</p>
Unit having technically strong members	Allowed DBE to play a strong role in the technical side of the evaluation, and increased the credibility and legitimacy of it within DBE, and so trust in the findings
Presenting and showcasing evaluation findings in different forums	Evaluations presented at Council of Education ministers, HeadCom of technical heads of education departments in provinces with national government, various interprovincial subcommittees, e.g. on teacher development; curriculum; planning and M&E. Helped to build <i>trust</i> in the evaluation results

Examples to consider:

- Capacity-building
- Awareness raising
- Access
- Champions/mentors
- Org change

CHANGE  
MECHANISM

M1 - Awareness

M2 - Agree

M3 - Access

M4 - Interact/trust

M5 - Ability

M6 - Institutionalising / formalising

# Use interventions arising from elements of the national evaluation system

Elements of NES	Change triggered
Evaluation Steering Committee	Enabled co-development of all stages of the evaluation. This facilitated agreement, ownership and trust between DPME and DBE and conviction in the usefulness of evaluation results
Developing TOC with stakeholders	Helped to build common understanding of how the programme worked, valuable in itself, and in the process interest by stakeholders in being part of the process
Validation workshop	Made stakeholders aware of the findings and recommendations were developed with them. Allowed stakeholders to reflect on the recommendations, agree and own them, and trust the results
Simple report	Improved accessibility helped with advocacy and dissemination of findings
Improvement plan	Developed closely with FLBP and NSNP. Provided formal mechanism for agreeing how to take forward recommendations
Report public	Once approved by Cabinet reports public on DBE/DPME websites. Helped in stakeholders being aware of the results
Approval by Cabinet	Cabinet helped to get evaluation taken seriously and in generating momentum for follow-up actions.
Role of DPME	Provided technical assistance, guidance and logistical support for processes involved in evaluations, and a bridge to reporting to Cabinet

USE  
INTERVENTION

Examples to consider:

- Capacity-building
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CHANGE  
MECHANISM

- M1 - Awareness
- M2 - Agree
- M3 - Access
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- M5 - Ability
- M6 - Institutionalising / formalising

## CONTEXT

**External dimension:** Macro-context; intra-relationships with state/non-state agents

**Internal dimension:** culture; organizational capacity; management; and core resources

# Contextual factors which facilitated use

- **Stability of leadership** – Minister in place since 2009 - political will to support independent evaluation
- **Crises** – 2012 textbook crisis provided the impulse for the dept to be prepared to consider changes
- **Champions** - Chief Directorate Strat Planning, Research and Coordination, which includes Research and Evaluations Directorate, have been champions for evidence generation and use.
  - Played an important role in helping their peers who manage programmes to appreciate the value of lessons from evaluations.
  - They have access to strategic discussions in DBE and so can broker use
  - Provided a technically strong partner for DPME to work with on the evaluations, and have played the knowledge broker role in DBE to maximise the likelihood of use.
- **Presence of national evaluation system** as well as support from DPME – provided many elements which encouraged use

# Barriers to use

- Reluctance to implement parts of **improvement plans** where proposed activities have negative political implications, are inconsistent with the law, too expensive to implement, impractical, lack management support or require policy amendment and therefore are not enforceable.
- **Hesitation** by some managers in undertaking evaluations, associated with uncertainty of the value of evaluations, concerns about underperformance and repercussions.
- In other evaluations, **legitimacy** where the service provider appointed in the competitive bidding process was a renowned critic of government programmes.

# Outcomes

- Knowledge broker role transferred.
- Joint communication capacity developed, using evidence and shared experiences
  - The NSNP leak stimulated interest in government evaluations in civil society.
- Stimulated interest in developing reporting tools and data systems.
- Stakeholder reporting strengthened in relation to accountability for placement, enrolment, and monitoring.
  - External auditors understanding as changes. read the report!
- Evaluation benefits materialized and strengthened internal relationships. Helped communication to encourage evidence use.



# Conclusions

- The cases presented in this chapter are evaluations where the evidence and recommendations from the evaluations were used.
- Knowledge broker role of the Chief Directorate was important in leading the use of evaluations. Constant need to reinforce the utility of the evaluations was a stumbling block but was overcome by consistently communicating the benefits.
- Despite low levels of understanding about the need for evaluation by programme managers and initial reservations about the evaluations being public, both evaluations eventually strengthened programme managers in reviewing and strengthening policy implementation.
- Overall, this case provides a picture of how a government department can undertake evaluations effectively, and the importance of an internal knowledge broker to champion and support this.
- It also shows the usefulness of a national evaluation system providing key elements that encourage use.

RETHINKING DEVELOPMENT

ROUTLEDGE

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Introduction to the Book; 2. An Introduction to Evidence-Informed Policy and Practice in Africa; 3. Using Evidence in Africa; 4. Mere Compliance or Learning; 5. Using Evaluations to Inform Policy and Practice in a Government Department; 6. Use of Evidence in a Complex Social

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# Thank you

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