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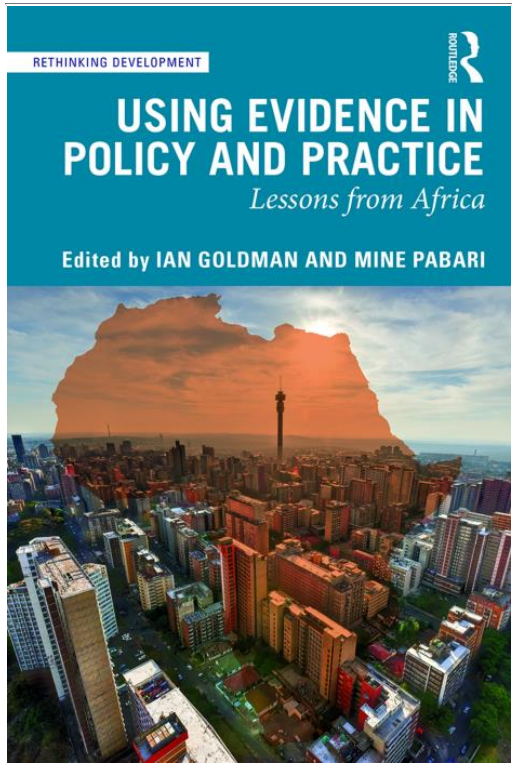
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Rapidly Responding To Policy Queries with Evidence: learning from the Rapid Response Services in Uganda



July 21, 2020

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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, published by Routledge: 'Using Evidence for Policy and Practice – Lessons from Africa' available at: https://www.routledge.com/Using-Evidence-in-Policy-and-Practice-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 :

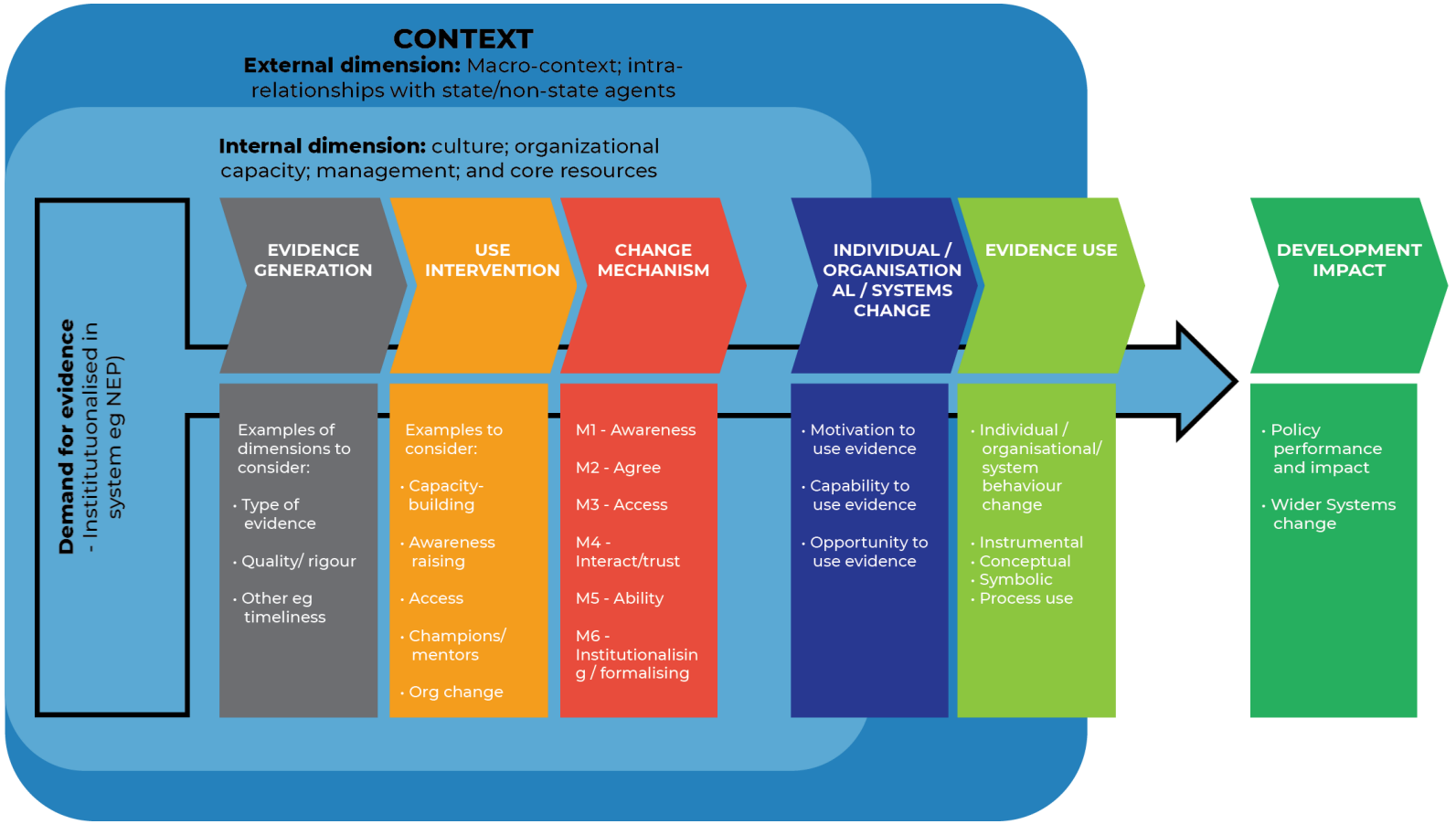
- Science of Using Science's framework (Langer, Gough, Tripney 2016)
- The Context Matters framework (Weyrauch, Echt and Suliman, 2016)

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;

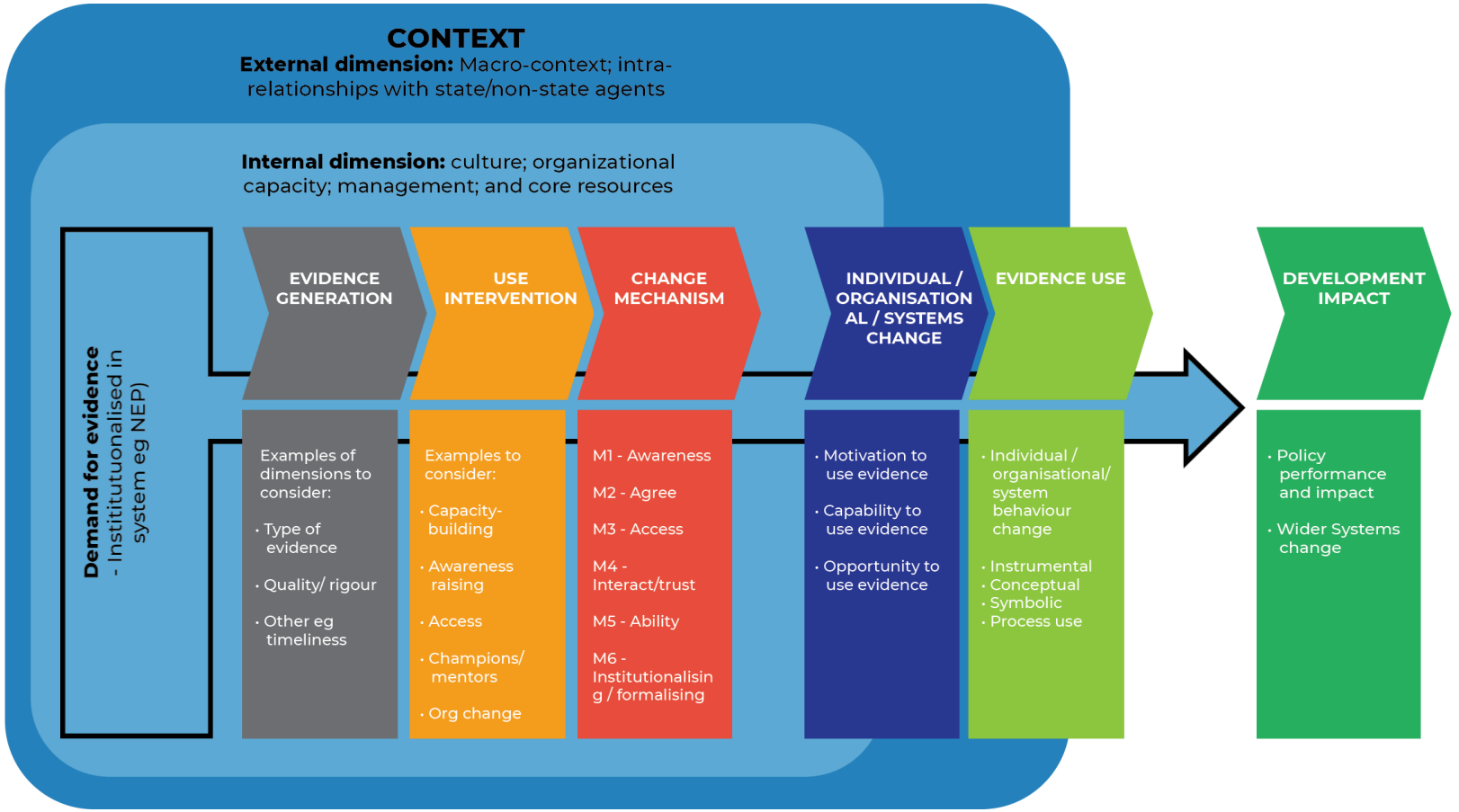
  → allows for cross-learning and collaboration around synergies of different EIPP interventions and approaches.

Analytical framework/TOC



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Analytical framework/TOC



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Overview of the Rapid Response service

Rapid Response Service

- Is a Knowledge translation strategy that seeks to avail **already synthesized research evidence** to facilitate decision makers in passing **quick and/or urgent decisions** of policy relevance.

  - Best available evidence e.g. systematic reviews and local evidence- quality, quantity
  - Timely: At the time it is needed for decision-making defined as less than 28 days to a policy decision in Uganda
  - Tailored to an urgent need of the policy or decision-maker (individual, institutional)
  - Contextualized
  - Accessible – package, language et cetera

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Public systems queries

- Financing, Governance
- Organization arrangements
- Implementation strategies
- HTAs

Time within - 28days





- Search strategy drawn and compared amongst team
- Search is done for the best available research evidence
- Evidence appraised, contextualized and summarized





The RRS model

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Summary of the Cases

National: Mandatory food fortification Regulation

- 1996: Uganda signed onto the United Nations' global commitment to end micro-nutrient deficiencies.
- 2002: Leadership for the food fortification program set up at the National Working Group (NWG) in the Ministry of Health.
- 2004: First legislations- Voluntary regulations and standards for food fortification, the Food and Drugs Act (Food fortification)
- 2007: The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) provides funding for standardization of food fortification.
- 2011: GAIN requests for a rapid response brief on how a public health program can be sustained beyond its funding phase.
  - Started a process that ended with passing of the mandatory food fortification regulation.

District: Community distribution of misoprostol

- 2009: WHO issued a recommendation that supported the use of misoprostol in the third stage of labor.
- 2012: A local NGO in Uganda, the Programme for Accessible Health Communication and Education (PACE) Uganda, conducted a pilot for community distribution of misoprostol in Mubende district.
  - The success of this pilot motivated PACE to scale up the community distribution of misoprostol with funding from Maverick Collective's PSI in five selected districts.
  - There was a lot of push back from the local health workers about the potential effects of misoprostol in the community.
  - The district leadership sought evidence from the Rapid response service about optimal distribution of misoprostol and the potential adverse effects for each model.

District: Reducing the turnaround time for Gene Xperts for TB

- 2012: An innovative programme, the Gene Xpert MTB/RIF rolled out in selected health facilities to improve TB diagnosis.
  - A laboratory system for TB diagnosis using the Gene Xpert designed around existing Hub system in Uganda.
- 2015: Mukono District Health Team had quality improvement in 2015 to identify and improve inefficiencies.
  - Initiated solutions to the identified challenges: increased the number of hub riders, improved recording and identification of samples and results.
  - The turnaround time remained unacceptably high- at least 2 weeks.
- 2017: District leadership approached the Rapid response service for evidence on how to strengthen the sputum specimen referral system to reduce the turnaround time.

Use interventions

USE INTERVENTION

Examples to consider:

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

Instrumental use:

- Evidence from the Rapid response brief informed strategies for increasing the Gene Xpert efficiencies through implementing a GPRS printer in the laboratory system.

Conceptual

- Clarified initial perspectives about the potential abuse of misoprostol and mistrust in the distribution.
- Informed discussions of the National Working group for the mandatory food fortification regulation

CHANGE MECHANISM

M1 - Awareness

M2 - Agree

M3 - Access

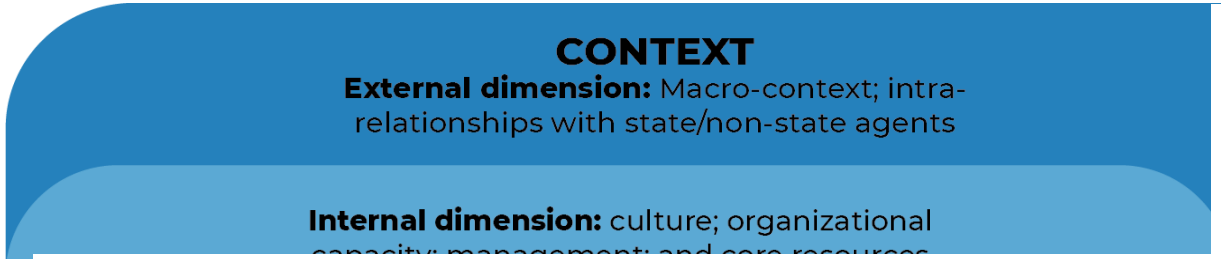
M4 - Interact/trust

M5 - Ability

M6 - Institutionalising / formalising

- *Accessibility of the evidence and the service*
- *Dialogue and interaction*
- *Demand driven approaches*
- *Neutral and credible processes*
- *Visibility*

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Contextual factors

- Levels of decision-making e.g. national versus sub-national level
- Demand for evidence from the politicians from the district technical team
- Relationships and trust between knowledge brokers and users of the evidence
- Demand for accountability at the user's department.
- Feedback mechanism between the knowledge brokers and the users of evidence.
- Incentives for the user e.g. recognition of achievements
- Attitude of the user of evidence

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CONTEXT

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

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

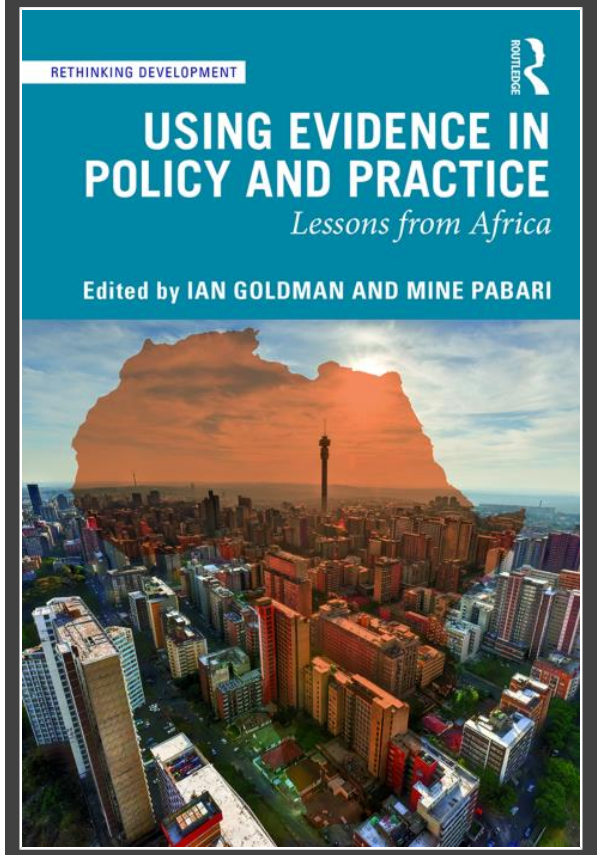
Contextual factors

- Use of evidence perceived as an extra task for the decision-makers
- Previous experience e.g. positive experiences influence more use of evidence and otherwise
- Champions within the policy of decision-making space can make a difference
- Policy or decision-makers' ability or having the structures to generate, search for and interpret evidence
- Availability of resources to the policy or decision-maker e.g. computer, internet access

Reflections and Lessons

- The context of policy and decision-making should be considered when supporting the users of evidence:
- Relationships and trust between the knowledge brokers and users of evidence
- Credibility and ownership of the evidence
- Visibility of the knowledge brokers
- More than one approach is necessary e.g. Increase awareness for evidence, advocacy and provide a service

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Forewords, *Ruhakana Rugunda, Prime Minister, Republic of Uganda and Paul Cairney, University of Stirling;* 1. 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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Aug (in French) Chapter 12 'Using evidence for tobacco control in West Africa'.

Sept Chapter 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'.

Oct Chapter 11 'The contribution of civil society generated evidence to the improvement of sanitation services in Ghana'.

Nov Chapter 6 'Use of evidence in a complex social programme: case of an evaluation of the state's response to violence against women and children in South Africa'.

Dec (in French) Chapter 11 'The challenges and potential of evaluations to positively inform reforms: working with producers in the Benin Agriculture Sector'.

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Thank you

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