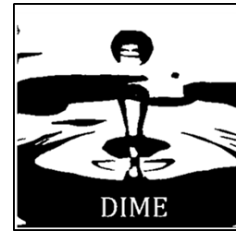




Human Development *Africa*



# Operational Issues: How to Incorporate Impact Evaluation into Projects

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So you want to do an Impact Evaluation...

# **Operational Issues**

# Implementation Issues

- 1 Choosing what to evaluate
- 2 How to make evaluation impact policy
- 3 Finding control groups
  - Retrospective versus prospective designs
  - Making the design compatible with operations
  - Ethical Issues
- 4 Data: Coordinate IE & Monitoring Systems

# 1. Choosing what to evaluate

- Spend evaluation resources wisely
- No need to apply impact evaluations to everything
- Criteria
  - Large budget share
  - Affects many people
  - Little existing evidence of impact for target population

# 2. Policy impact of evaluation

What is the policy purpose?

Provide evidence for pressing decisions

Design evaluation with policy makers

Plan for review, use of evaluation results

# How to make evaluation impact policy

- Address policy-relevant questions
  - What policy questions need to be answered?
  - What outcomes answer those questions?
  - What indicators measures outcomes?
  - Are the indicators SMART?
  - How much of a change in the outcomes would determine success?

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Example: Scale up pilot?

Criteria: Need at least a **X%** average increase in beneficiary **outcome over a given period**

# Policy impact of evaluation

## ● Cultural shift

From retrospective evaluation

Look back and judge.

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to prospective evaluation.

- Decide what need to learn.
- Experiment with alternatives.
- Measure and inform.
- Adopt better alternatives overtime.

## ● Change in incentives

- Rewards for changing programs .
- Rewards for generating knowledge.
- Separating job performance from knowledge generation.

# 3. Finding Control groups

2 basic concepts

- Retrospective **vs.** Prospective
- **Evaluation strategy** depends on the program's rules of operations



# Retrospective Analysis



**Retrospective Analysis** is necessary when we have to work with a pre-assigned program (*expanding an existing program*) and (hopefully!) existing data (*baseline?*)

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# Prospective Analysis



In **Prospective Analysis**, the evaluation is designed in parallel with the assignment of the program, and **the baseline data can be gathered.**

# Where Do Comparison Groups come from?

- The **rules of program operation** determine the **evaluation strategy**.
- We can almost always find a valid comparison group if:
  - ❑ the operational rules for selecting beneficiaries are **equitable, transparent and accountable**;
  - ❑ the evaluation is **designed prospectively**.

# Operational rules and prospective designs

*The majority of programs cannot assign benefits to the entire eligible population*

## Budget-Money limitations:

- Cannot reach all eligible beneficiaries because of budget constraints
  - Eligible beneficiaries that receive benefits are potential treatments
  - Eligible beneficiaries that do not receive benefits are potential controls

## Logistical-Timing limitations:

- Cannot reach all eligible beneficiaries at once
  - Those that go first are potential treatments
  - Those that go later are potential controls

*Many programs have clear rules about who benefits and who doesn't*

## Beneficiary Selection-Targeting rules:

- Who qualifies and who does not, based on clear, measurable rankings
  - Those above the cut off are potential treatment
  - Those below the cut off are potential controls

# Operational rules and prospective designs

- Use opportunities to generate good comparison groups and ensure baseline data is collected.
- 3 questions to determine which method is appropriate for a given program

**Money:** Does the program have sufficient resources to achieve scale and reach full coverage of all eligible beneficiaries?

**Timing:** How are potential beneficiaries enrolled in the program – all at once or in phases over time?

**Targeting Rules:** Who is eligible for program benefits?

Is the program targeted based on an eligibility cut-off or is it available to everyone?

Can we rank beneficiaries based on eligibility?

# Choosing your IE method(s)

Money →	<i>Excess demand</i>		<i>No Excess demand</i>	
Targeting →	<i>Targeted</i>	<i>Universal</i>	<i>Targeted</i>	<i>Universal</i>
Timing ↓				
<b><i>Phased Roll-out</i></b>	+ Randomized assignment + RDD	+ Randomized assignment + Randomized promotion + DD with matching	+ Randomized assignment + RDD	+ Randomized assignment to phases + Randomized Promotion to early take-up + DD with matching
<b><i>Immediate Roll-out</i></b>	+ Randomized assignment + RDD	+ Randomized assignment + Randomized Promotion + DD with matching	+ RDD	<i>If less than full take-up:</i> + Randomized Promotion + DD with matching

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# Ethical Considerations

## Do not delay benefits

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Rollout base on budget/administrative constraints

## Equity

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Equally deserving beneficiaries deserve an equal chance of going first

## Transparent & accountable method

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- Give everyone eligible an equal chance
- If rank based on some criteria, then criteria should be quantitative and public

# Manage for results

## Prospective evaluation

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- Tailor policy questions
- Precise unbiased estimates
- User resources wisely
  - Better methods
  - Cheaper data
  - Timely feedback and program changes
  - Improve results on the ground

# 4. Data: Coordinate IE & Monitoring Systems

- Projects/programs regularly collect data for management purposes
- Typical content
  - Lists of beneficiaries
  - Distribution of benefits
  - Expenditures
  - Outcomes
  - Ongoing process evaluation
- Information is needed for impact evaluation

# Monitoring information used to:

Verify who is beneficiary

When started

What benefits were actually delivered

Necessary condition for program to have an impact: **Benefits need to get to targeted beneficiaries.**

# Overall Messages

## Impact evaluation

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Is useful for:

- Validating program design
- Adjusting program structure
- Communicating to finance ministry & civil society

## Evaluation design

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Derived from clear, transparent rules of program operation

A good one requires estimating the counterfactual:

- What would have happened to beneficiaries if had not received the program
- Need to know all reasons why beneficiaries got program & others did not

# Design Messages

- Address policy questions  
Interesting is what government needs and will use.
- Ensure stakeholder buy-in.
- More options are available if you use prospective designs.
- Good monitoring systems & administrative data are critical to informing IE.



**THANK YOU**