



**International Initiative for Impact Evaluation**

# **Turning Evidence into Action: The Role of Communications in Impact Evaluation Programs**

**Emmanuel Jimenez**

# Challenge 1: Communicating evaluation evidence and accountability

- It is hard enough to communicate evidence when it's for learning.
- Harder when evidence is also for accountability for results:
  - Did the intervention achieve what it was supposed to? If so, who or what was responsible?
  - Leads to sensitivities; question of independence



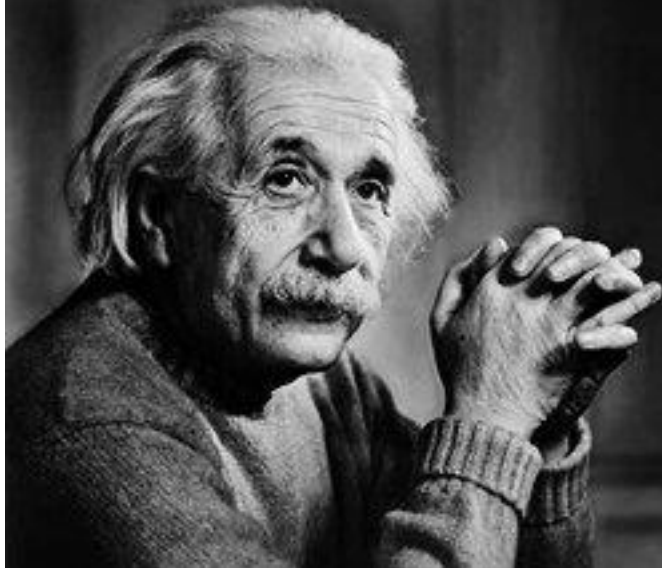
DOVE COVERLY

"MISS WILCOX, SEND IN SOMEONE TO BLAME."

# Challenge 2: Communicating technical material is difficult

If you can't explain it **simply**, you don't understand it well enough.

– Albert Einstein



# Challenge 3: Different perspectives and incentives of decision-makers and researchers.

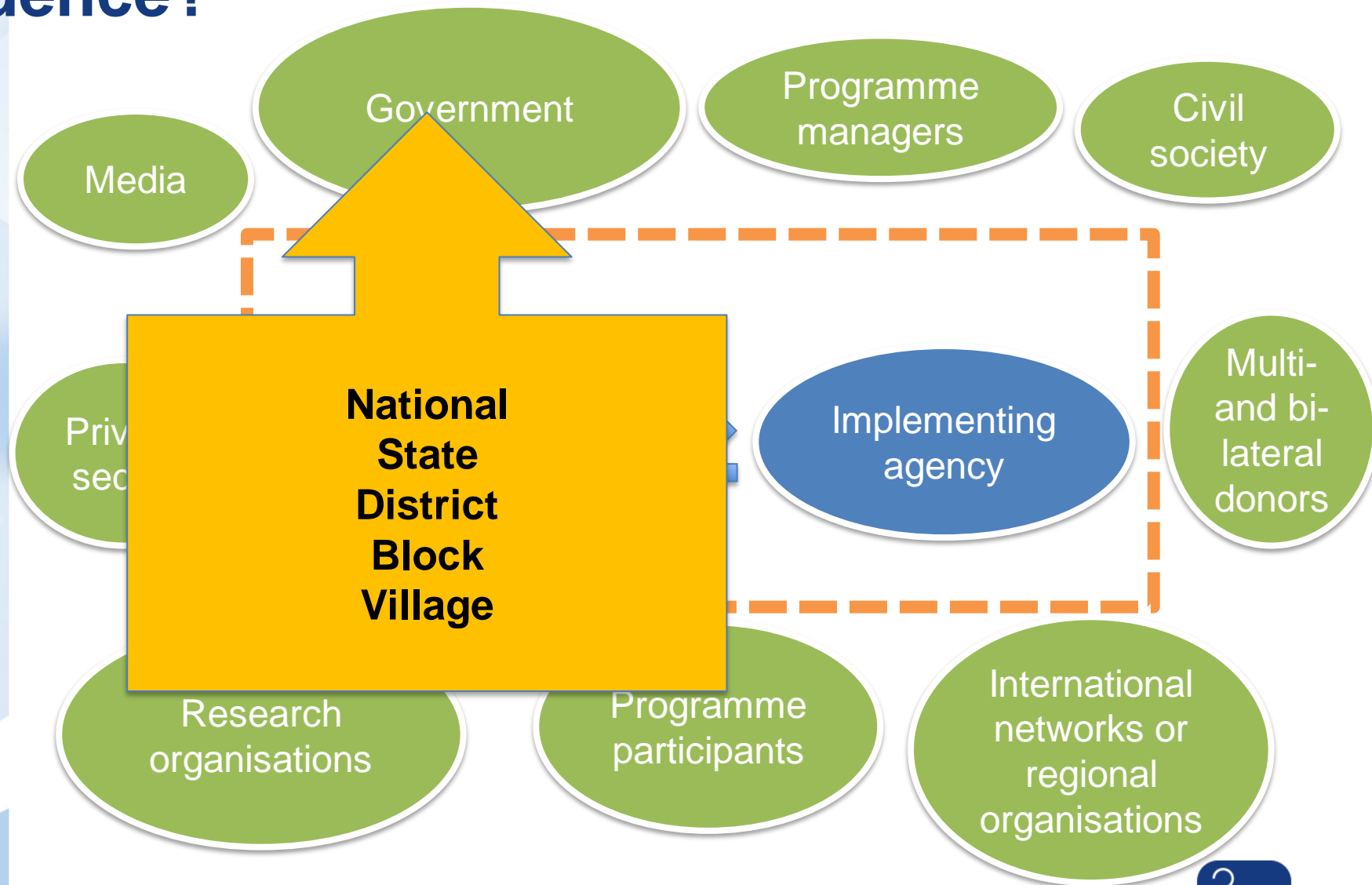
- Decision-makers want advice based on evidence that is
  - Clear and decisive
  - Immediately available when needed
  - Easy to implement
  - Confidentially given if negative
- Researchers present evidence that is
  - Nuanced and finely balanced
  - Well reviewed
  - Not always practical
  - Transparent and open to all: publications



# What can be done?

- Identify and engage stakeholders:
  - To whom should researchers communicate and how should they do so? [Nor: what is objective?]

# General Lessons: Who are the users of the evidence?



# Example: CCT in Philippines, Impact of Pantawid Pamilya Program

- **Program objective:** to reduce intergenerational poverty through improved human capital, specifically through increased children's education and health
- **Intervention:** direct conditional cash transfers to explicitly targeted poor households
  - Grants given directly to target poor households, conditional on children's school enrolment/attendance and health center visit for basic health services
  - Underlying theory: reduced leakage, targeting and income and price effects

# Critiques of 4P motivated IE

- Opposition by militant left and their political allies and concerns/criticisms by some vocal NGOs, LGUs, Church, from right AND left
  - Palliative and ineffective against poverty
  - Dole out promoting mendicancy, dependency/laziness and abuses (corruption and vices)
  - Claims that funds are better spent on job creation
  - Made the poor “complacent”
- Need to produce credible evidence based on Philippine realities to ensure that resources are well spent, given
  - Concerns about external validity of LAC experience and above-mentioned unintended consequences



# Pantawid IE: Big picture findings

- **Effective in improving key education and health indicators** like children's school enrolment rate, school attendance and reduced stunting (consistent with global CCT results)
- **Reduction in self-rated poverty rate**
- **Overblown concerns** about PP encouraging laziness, dependency and mendicancy (consistent with international experience) –
- **Pantawid is not a panacea and impact varies** (heterogeneity)
  - For example, no significant impact on some important indicators like diarrhea,
  - IE results point to the need to make adjustments and take complementary measures: updating beneficiary lists, reviewing program benefits, etc which are criticized.
- **Above empirical findings are strategically important**
  - To respond to concerns about Pantawid and ensure program effectiveness and sustainability
  - To draw attention to issues needing further action and research without destroying the program.



# What can be done?

- Identify and engage stakeholders:
  - To whom should researchers communicate and how should they do so?
- Tailor messages accordingly :
  - Ensure that it is well-communicated by using the right media and the right teams.

# Avoiding data dumps

## 3ie's Systematic Review on What Works to Improve Participation and Learning in Schools

- Main study: 850 pages
- Summary: 40 pages



# Key elements of useful evidence

## Impact evaluation findings are

- **CLEAR:** work on clear messages that are solution oriented
- **FEASIBLE:** Provide affordable, logistically possible, politically feasible and sustainable solutions
- **TIMELY:** Recognise windows of opportunity



"This is gobbledeygook. I asked for mumbo-jumbo."

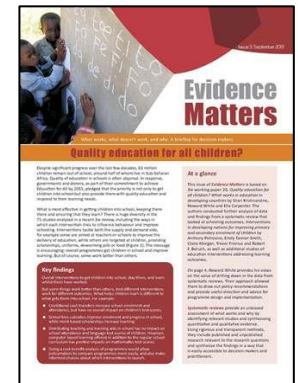


**NEED INTER-DISCIPLINARY TEAMS**

# Communication channels appropriate for the audience

## ■ Integrated communication

- Meetings and events
- Presentations
- Policy briefs
- Infographics
- Plain language summaries
- Multimedia
- Study tours
- Blogs and social media
- Traditional media
- Newsletters
- Listservs



# What can be done?

- Identify and engage stakeholders:
  - To whom should researchers communicate and how should they do so?
- Tailor messages accordingly :
  - Ensure that it is well-communicated by using the right media and the right teams.
- Plan communications and engagement plan
  - Planning communications and engagement should be done when planning evaluation
  - Budgeting and staffing are key.

# Have a plan: 3ie's Stakeholder engagement and evidence uptake plan (SEEP)

- Should be drafted in consultation with implementing partners and key stakeholders
- Having a plan is important
  - ✓ Maps key stakeholders right at the outset
  - ✓ Guides the engagement and communication activities for different stakeholders
  - ✓ Ensures strong reporting on evidence uptake and use objectives and key indicators
- The SEEP is a living document as policymaking and programming contexts are dynamic and may change during the study period
- We encourage teams to reserve up to 10 per cent of their budget for SEEP activities

# How does the SEEP help researchers engage?

Context analysis

*Identify knowledge gaps, relevance and timeliness of issue, political and social context, culture of evidence use*

Risks

*Risks associated with study implementation and uptake of findings, identifying mitigating actions*

Evidence uptake  
and use  
objectives

*Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound*

Stakeholder  
analysis and key  
influencers

*Objectives help determine stakeholders; levels of influence; plan engagement approach; aligned with research*

Engagement and  
Communication  
plan

*Identify key study milestones and engagement activities, outputs and objectives*

Monitoring and  
learning

*Engagement, uptake and use indicators; capturing lessons on study design, implementation and engagement*





# Application: Philippines Policy Window

- 3ie Engagement that puts Policy Maker in Driver's Seat
  - Partnership between 3ie NEDA and DFAT Australia
- Phase 1: resulted in impact evaluations for DOLE, DSWD, Supreme Court
- Phase 2: just starting
- Plan for engagement from the beginning (including budget)

# Engagement and communication in the PWP

- The researchers communicated regularly with key **stakeholders**, e.g., the department and the Institute of Labor Studies in the case of the evaluation of DOLE's Special Program for Employment of Students (SPES)
- They **conducted training** so agencies could engage with the evaluations.
- Teams also **planned** engagement and communication and **documented and shared** progress with us:
- Communication and engagement through-
  - Knowledge products
  - Debriefs at PWP Steering committee meetings
  - Informing technical working groups and agency forums, e.g., PESO Congress for the DOLE study
  - Closed door meetings with key agency decision makers
  - Public webinar communicating evaluations to wider audiences

# Online resources, videos, meetings, webinars



3ieimpact.org/our-work/philippines

Since 2014, 3ie has supported five impact evaluations of programs/reforms implemented by the Philippine Department of Labor and Employment, the Department of Social Welfare and Development and the Supreme Court. Aside from organizing demand generation workshops and policy forums to build understanding and ownership of evaluations among Filipino policymakers, the program has also supported a ten-day CLEAR workshop to strengthen in-country evaluation capacities among evaluators, academics and local researchers. Click on the video to Watch stakeholders talk about the unique contribution of the evidence program.

For a quick overview, read the program brief.

### Evidence from the program

<b>How the Special Program for the Employment of Students (SPES) is improving student outcomes</b> This evaluation looks at the impact of the Philippine Department of Labor and Employment's Special Program for Employment of Students targeting low-income youth.	<b>Role of judicial reforms in providing speedy justice</b> We supported three impact evaluations of the Philippine Supreme Court judicial reforms to improve court efficiency. The reforms included electronic court dispute settlement system revised guidelines for cr...	<b>Improving the delivery of the Sustainable Livelihoods Program (SLP)</b> This evaluation measures the effectiveness of providing seed capital for microenterprise development to participants of Sustainable
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[View report](#) | [View brief](#) | [Watch video](#)

[Watch video](#)

## Service delivery programmes prioritised by the policy makers



Scroll for details



Marie

DSWD ASec Rhea B. Penaf...

NEDA Carlos Bernardo O...

DOLE/Dominique Rubia-Tuta...

Yoonyoung Cho

Nasreema Sampaco-Badd...

PHILIPPINE INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Ariceto Orbeta

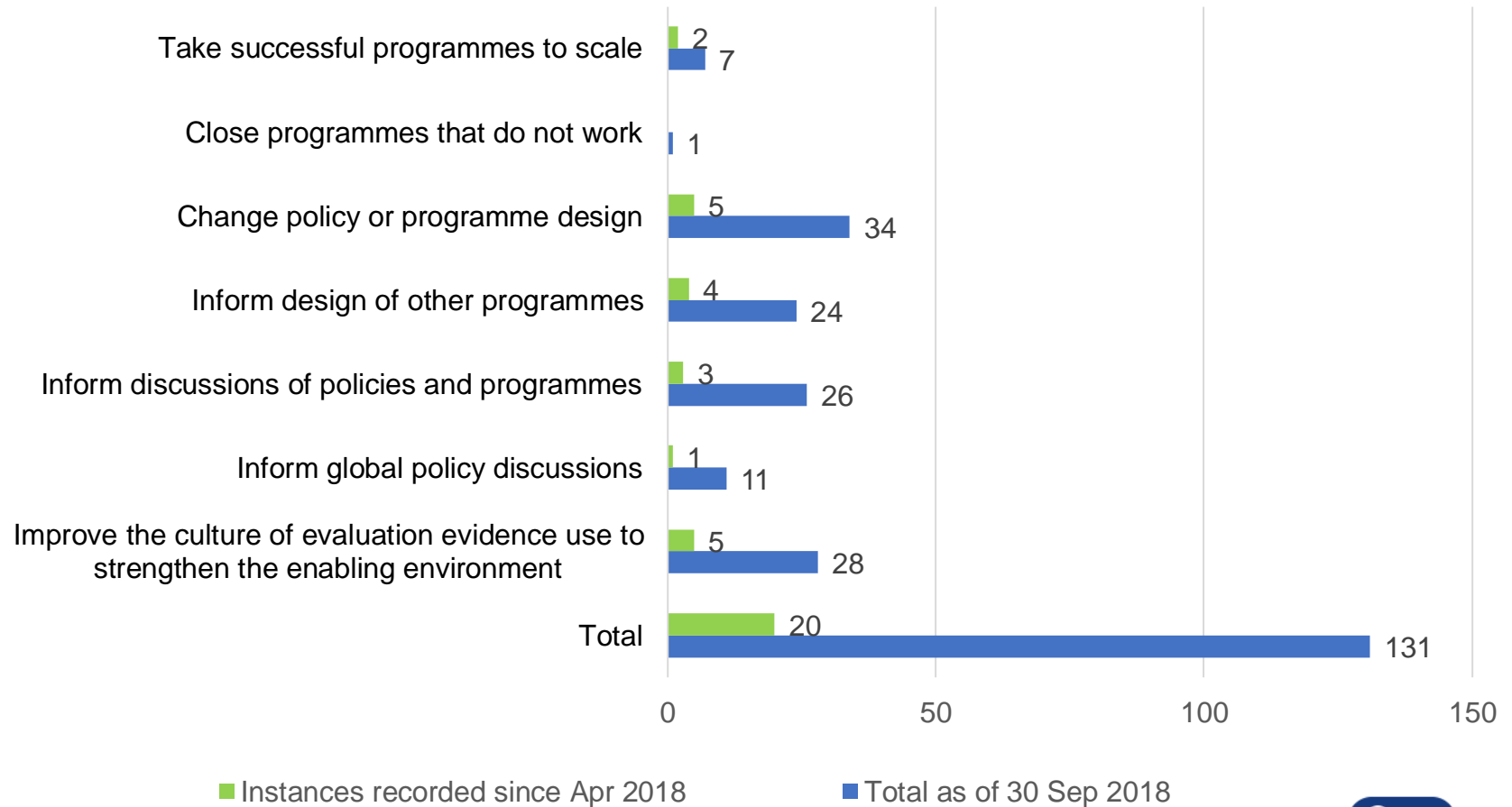


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- Monitor use of evidence

# Monitoring: Take-up of evidence – capacity and incentives to use evidence

Figure 1: Uptake and use of 3ie-funded impact evaluations, systematic reviews and evidence gap maps (2013- September 2018)



# In sum: engage as well as communicate


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# Thank you



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