

Applying Implementation Research in Education

February 18, 2023



**GUIDANCE NOTE ON
USING IMPLEMENTATION RESEARCH
IN EDUCATION**



Welcome

- Polls (please raise your hand)
 - What is your background in IR?
 - Relatively new to IR
 - Have learned/read about IR – some knowledge
 - Strong IR knowledge
 - Have implemented one or several IR projects
 - What is your professional background?
 - Researcher, university background
 - Implementer background
 - Both (researcher and implementation)
 - Student



Agenda

1:30	Welcome and BE ² introduction
	Why Implementation Research?
	Guidance Note introduction Brief Q&A
	Who should be involved in implementation research and how?
1:55	Using systems thinking for a complete stakeholder picture and research design Brief Q&A
	How might implementation research planning and implementation planning be integrated?
	What factors should be considered in implementation research design/co-design to integrate into the ongoing implementation?
2:15	Break

2:30	Case study, small group discussions, and debrief
3:05	How should implementation research support organizational learning and adaptive management?
3:20	Break
3:35	Case study, small group discussions
3:55	New initiatives using IR
	Q&A
4:25	Closing
	Adjourn

Presenters & Facilitators



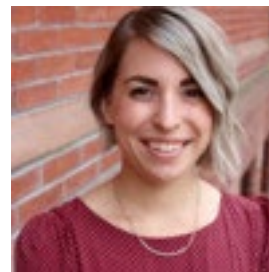
Christine
Allison,
consultant



Elena
Walls,
USAID



Kate
Ross,
FCDO



Jess Bergmann,
UNICEF
Innocenti



Marie-Helene
Cloutier, World
Bank



Rachel
Hinton,
FCDO



Keith
Holmes,
UNESCO



Moira
Faul,
NORRAG



Cirenia
Chavez,
UNHCR



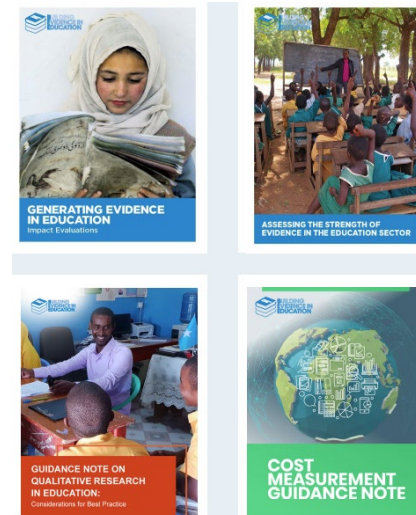
Maria
Brindlmayer,
BE2 Secretariat

BE² Introduction

- Building Evidence in Education (BE²) is a working group of over 40 bilateral education donors, multilateral education agencies and foundations active in education research, created in 2012, led by a Steering Committee.
- Mission: BE² fosters collaboration and coordination to advance the quality and relevance of evidence in education. It promotes the accessibility and use of research that supports decision-making to improve education outcomes.
- Existing BE² guidance notes:
 - [Generating Evidence in the Education Sector](#)
 - [Guidance Note on Qualitative Research in Education](#)
 - [Cost Measurement Guidance](#)
 - [Assessing the Strength of Evidence in the Education Sector](#)

- BE² Steering Committee:

- FCDO
- UN organization (UNICEF Innocenti – Office of Research and Foresight)
- USAID
- The World Bank





WHY IMPLEMENTATION RESEARCH?



Poll: Why are you interested in IR?

➤(in 15 words or fewer)

Development community claims that
we base policy and investment decisions on the best
available empirical evidence

BUT

What happens to evidence-based interventions when they
are implemented?

4 Gaps between Evidence and Practice

1. What is known is not what is implemented
2. What is implemented is not done with fidelity
3. What is implemented with fidelity is not implemented at scale sufficient to impact social problems.
4. What is implemented with fidelity and at scale is not sustained for a useful period of time.

Source: National Research Implementation Network



Most failure happens at implementation

- When new education programs or practices are adopted in schools, fewer than 50 % are likely to be implemented with sufficient fidelity (Gottfredson, 2002).
- Less than 33 % of efforts to install new evidence-based programs is successful. (Damschroder, 2009)

BE² IMPLEMENTATION RESEARCH GUIDANCE NOTE



**GUIDANCE NOTE ON
USING IMPLEMENTATION RESEARCH
IN EDUCATION**

Implementation Research Guidance Note

Table of Contents

Preface

1. Introduction
2. Appropriate Use: When should implementation research be used?
3. Research Design: What are the key elements of design?
4. Implementation: How can implementation research be integrated into implementation?

Annexes

Co-created guidance note for commissioning, designing and implementing implementation research

Thanks to the Working Group Members!

- Amy Jo Dowd, Independent
 - Asyia Kazmi, TBMGF
 - Benjamin Hickler, UNICEF - Innocenti
 - Cirenía Chavez, UNHCR
 - Clio Dintilhac, TBMGF
 - Benoit d'Ansembourg, UNHCR
 - Elena Walls, USAID
 - Jessica Bergmann, UNICEF Innocenti
 - Jill Popp, LEGO Foundation
 - Keith Holmes, UNESCO
 - Kate Jefferies, FCDO
 - Kate Ross, FCDO
 - Marie-Helene Cloutier, The World Bank
 - Nadeen Alalami, Dubai Cares
 - Patrick Daru, ILO
 - Taitos Matafeni, UNICEF Innocenti
- Other key contributors:
- Rachel Hinton, FCDO
 - Deborah Greebon, USAID
- Co-creation facilitator and author:
- Christy Allison



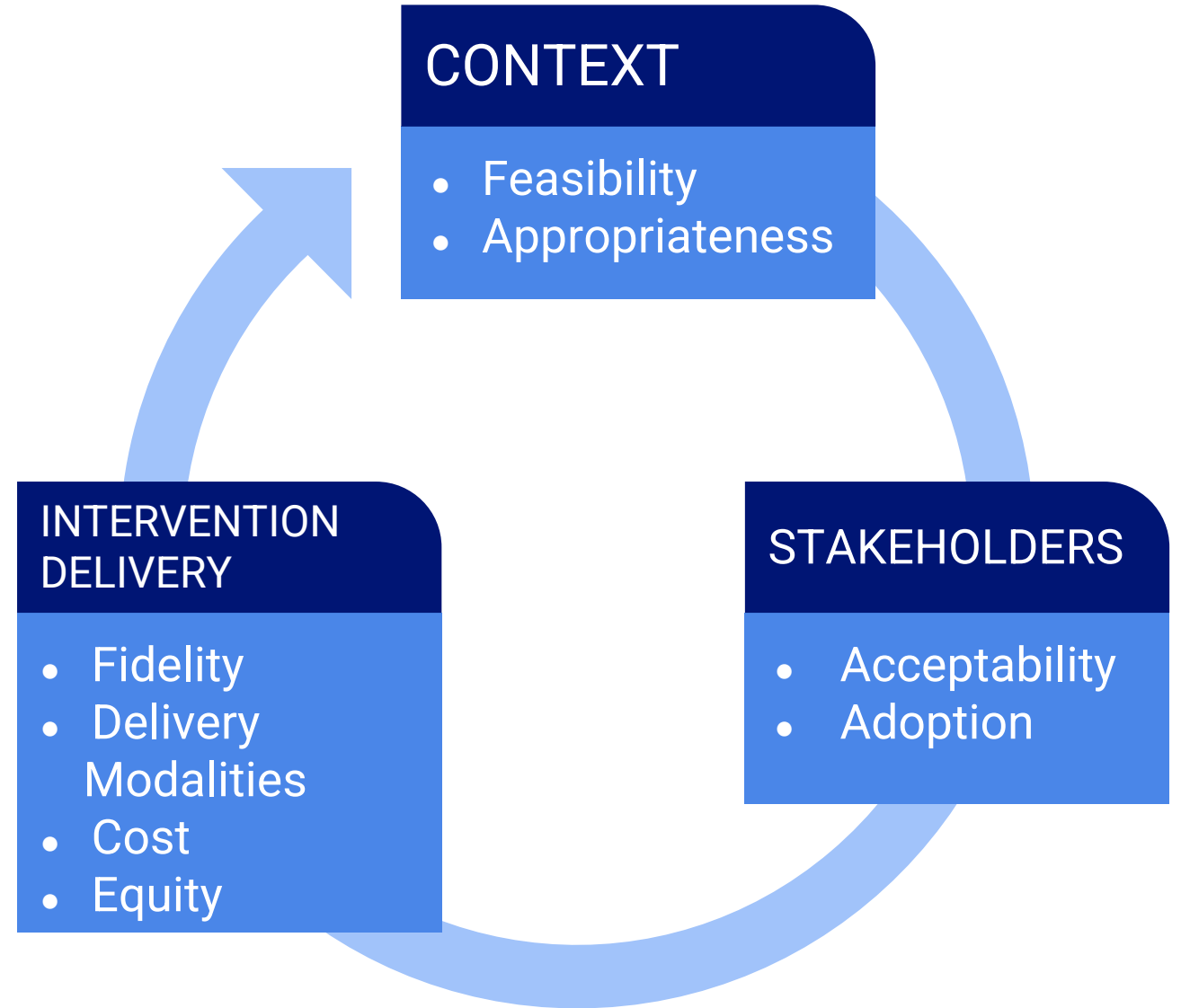
What Is Implementation Research?



Implementation research is scientific inquiry into questions concerning program implementation —the act of carrying an intention into effect, which can be policies, programmes, or individual practices (interventions)

Goals of Implementation Research

- Ensure sensitivity to context & responsive implementation of intervention
- Examine stakeholders' ability to absorb the intervention in the context of their motivations, incentives, capacities and constraints
- Provides information for adaptation of intervention characteristics & strategies



Goals of Implementation Research

Helps implementers discover unanticipated problems and seek solutions using evidence-driven consultations with local partners and front-line educators. Specifically, seeks to

- Understand what is and is not working and for whom.
- Learn how and why implementation implementation is going right or wrong and under what contextual circumstances.
- Test different intervention delivery approaches to improve overall implementation fidelity and results.

IR helps bridge the gap between evidence and practice and drives local ownership and results.

Questions?



Focus of Today's Workshop

Section 4. Implementation: How can IR be integrated into implementation?



Who should be involved in implementation research and how?



How might implementation research planning and implementation planning be integrated?



What factors should be considered in implementation research design/co-design to integrate into the ongoing implementation?



How should implementation research be conducted?



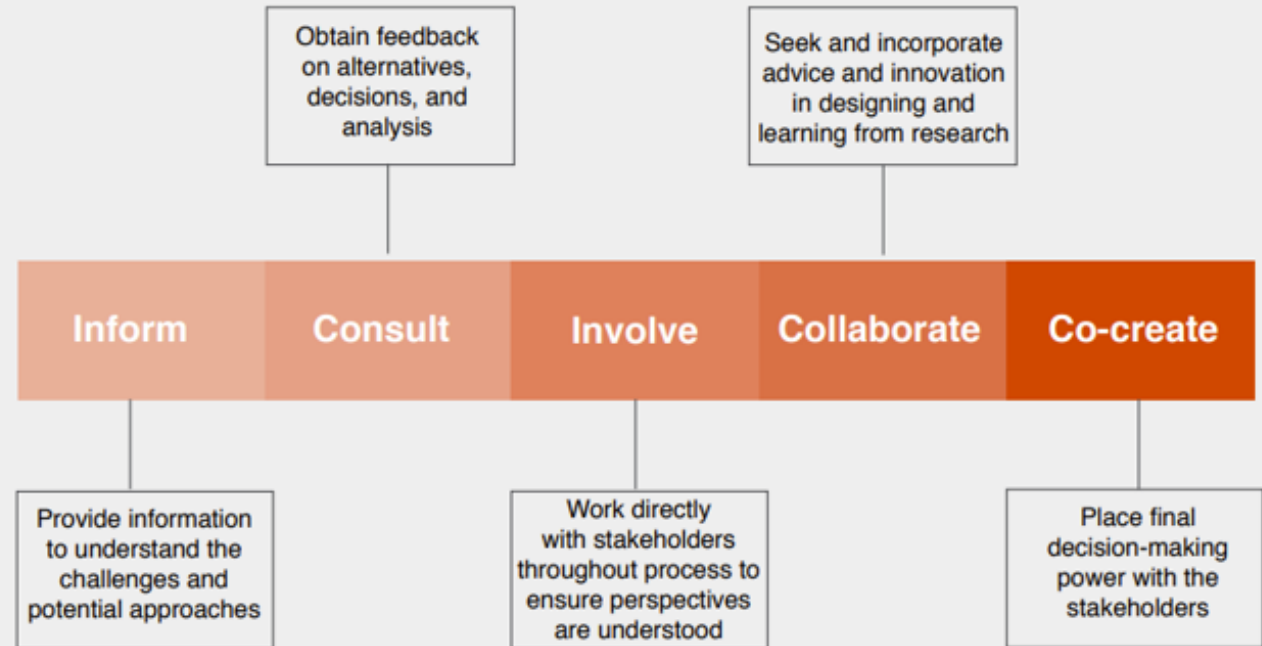
How should implementation research support organizational learning and adaptive management?

Who should be involved
in implementation
research and how?



Which stakeholders need to be engaged for what purpose?

Continuum of Stakeholder involvement



Key Questions for Stakeholder Engagement

How can we identify key stakeholders and the roles they should have?

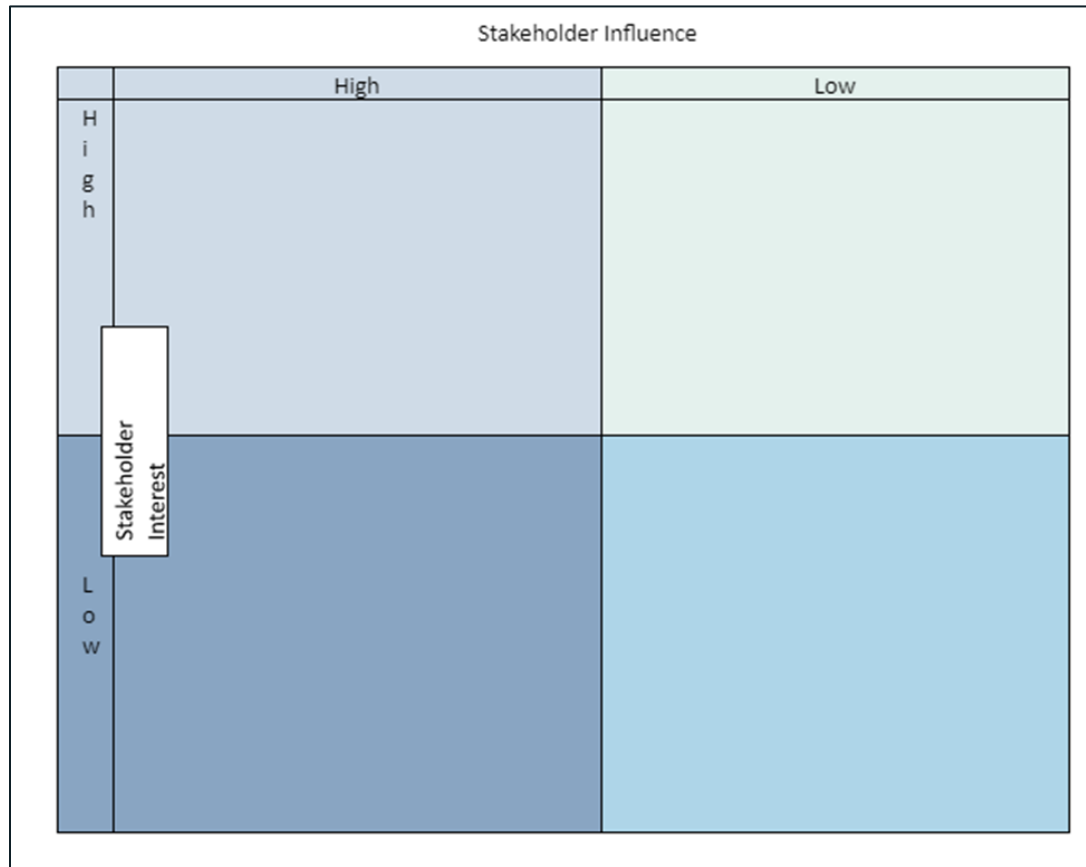
What dynamics should we be aware of among key stakeholders?

How do we create a collegial (non-hierarchical) space for co-creation and learning?

How do we maintain engagement over time?

Guidance Note Tools for Stakeholder Engagement

Annex C1



Annex C2

Stakeholders	Role/Engagement Profile	Means of Communication	Content Needed	Timing / Frequency	Persons(s) Responsible
Intervention staff and partners					
Government agencies					
Teachers and teacher unions					
Community organizations and local leaders					
Community members (students, parents)					
Donor(s)					
Other stakeholders					

Using systems
thinking for a
complete
stakeholder picture
and research design

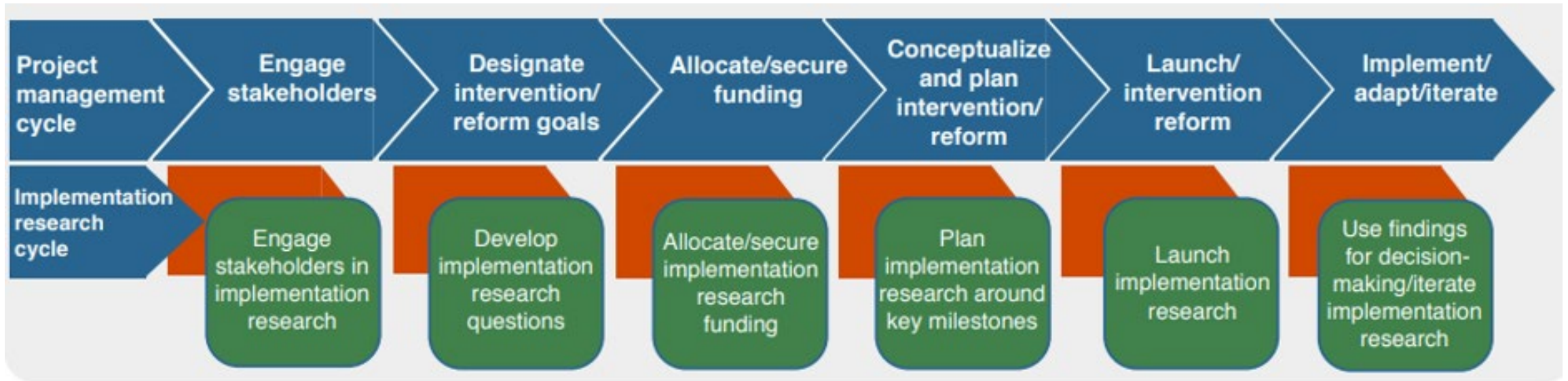
Questions



How might
implementation
research planning and
implementation
planning be integrated?

Alignment of implementation and implementation research cycles

Project management cycle and implementation research cycle



What factors should be considered in implementation research design/co-design to integrate into the ongoing implementation?



Implementation Research Design Principles



Intentional and planned as part of an intervention/reform



Pragmatic and embedded in implementation



Formative and real-time



Participatory



Systems-focused

Key Steps for Integration...



Documentation of the intervention (core strategies, fidelity benchmarks, key milestones)



Development of implementation research design



Plan for data collection and documentation (including integration with planned activities and routine M&E, where appropriate)



Data management and analysis

Guidance Note Tools for Research Design and Integration

Annex B1

What do we need to know? (Research question)	Why do we need to know this? How will the findings be used? (Goals, linking to implementation framework)	What is the timeframe by which we need to know this? (Key adaptation dates)	Where/with whom does this information reside? (Participants)	What kind of data will answer the question? (Methods)	How will we analyze the data? (Analysis)	What limitations or threats to validity might we anticipate?	How can we mitigate those limitations or threats to validity?

Annex B2

Research Question (RQ)	Data Collection Instrument 1	Data Collection Instrument 2	Data Collection Instrument 3	Data Collection Instrument 4	Data Collection Instrument 5	Data Collection Instrument 6	Data Collection Instrument 7
RQ 1:							
RQ 2:							
RQ 3:							
RQ 4:							

Questions



Break

What is next:

2:30	Case study, small group discussions, and debrief
3:05	How should implementation research support organizational learning and adaptive management?



Break-out: Case Study Options

Case Study 1: South
Africa Directorate of
Basic Education –
Scaling Effective
Teaching Practices

Case Study 2: Aga Khan
Foundation Schools
2030 – Human Centered
Design for Classroom-
based Innovation

Case Study 3: USAID
ACCELERE! – Early Grade
Reading Instruction, DRC

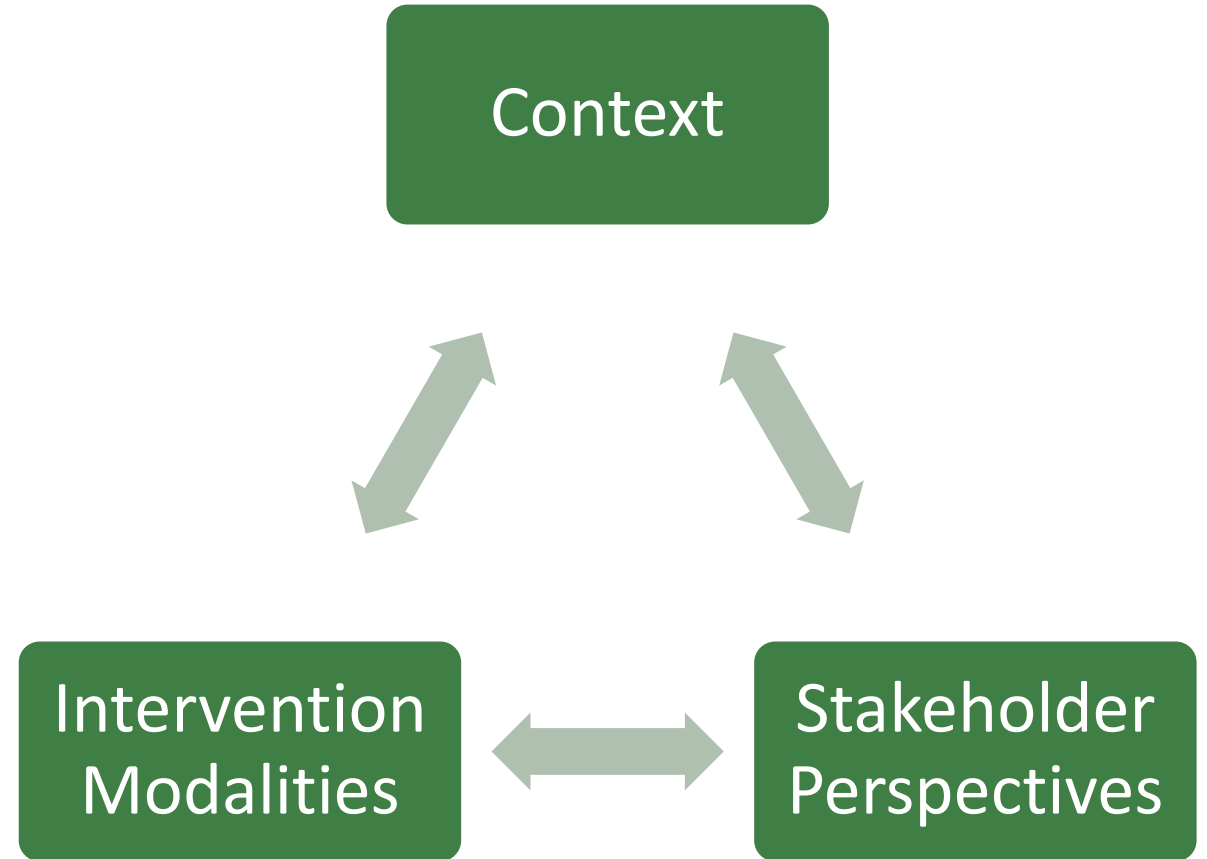
Stakeholders – 10 minutes

- At your tables, please brainstorm who the stakeholders might be for the implementation research described in the case study handout.
- Use the stakeholder influence and interest chart to map out who you might need to include.



Implementation Research Questions – 10 minutes

- Brainstorm research questions that you might find interesting for your selected case study.
- Identify at least one question for each of the three factors.

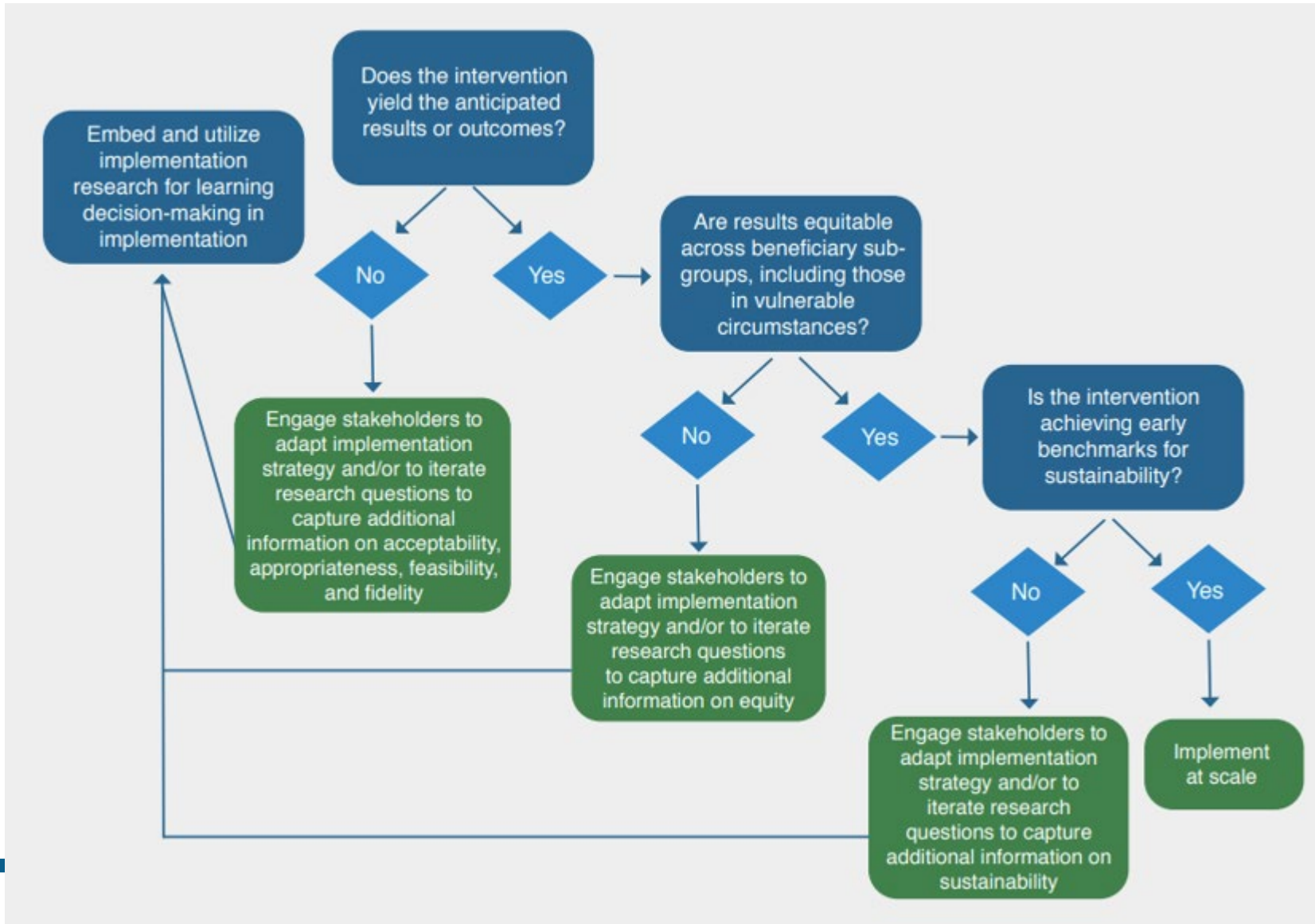


Feedback from break-out groups



How should implementation
research support
organizational learning and
adaptive management?

Implementation research in organizational/ project learning and adaptation processes



Mechanisms for Ensuring Utilization of Implementation Research



Flexibility in implementation approaches and structures



Leadership and incentives



Learning activities



Iteration of implementation research

Break

What is next:

3:35	Case study, small group discussions
3:55	New initiatives using IR
	Q&A
4:25	Closing
4:30	Adjourn



Break-out: Case Study Options

20 min

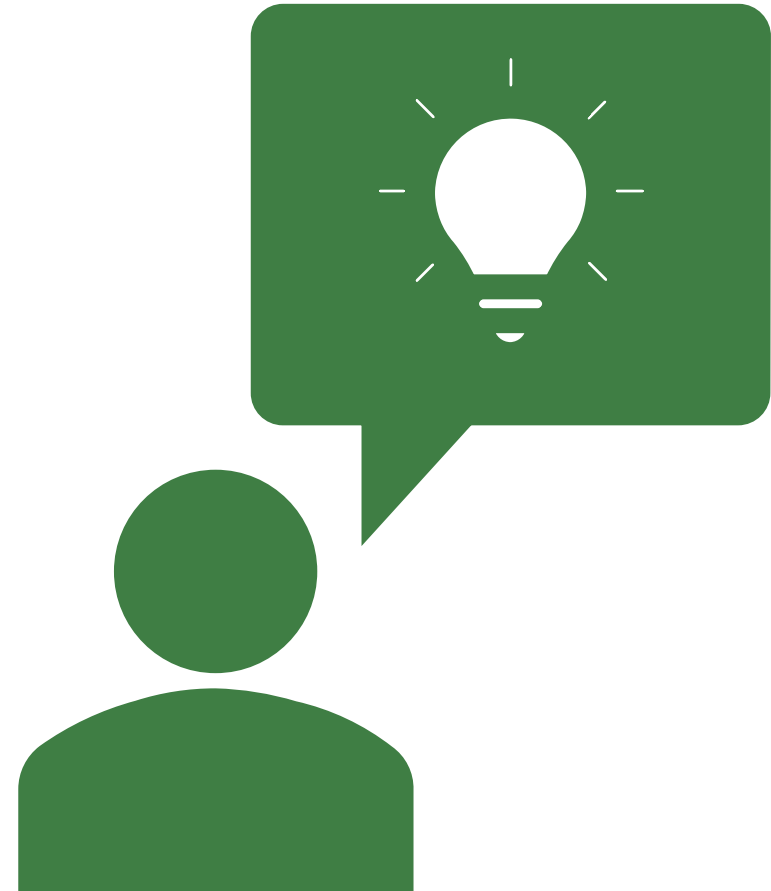
Case Study 1: South Africa Directorate of Basic Education – Scaling Effective Teaching Practices

Case Study 2: Aga Khan Foundation Schools 2030 – Human Centered Design for Classroom-based Innovation

Case Study 3: USAID ACCELERE! – Early Grade Reading Instruction

Learning and Adaptation – 15 minutes

- At your tables, please brainstorm what approaches the stakeholders in the case study could take to ensure uptake of the lessons learned through implementation research.
- Identify specific barriers and solutions.
- Use the flip chart paper at your tables to record your answers.



New initiatives using IR

US AID Youth Excel

FCDO – What Works Hub

UNICEF

Feedback and Questions



Closing

Thank you!



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/global-education-evidence-advisory-panel-geeap>



<https://twitter.com/GEEAP>



Contact: Secretariat@building-evidence-in-education.org

Reserve slides



Case Study: Aga Khan Foundation's Schools 2030 in Kenya

- Five key learning domains at each of three education transition points (approximately ages 5, 10, and 15).
- The project's human-centered design (HCD) approach to generate new classroom-based innovations necessitates implementation research on the classroom-based innovations.
- Key Questions:
 - What are the different attitudes, behaviors and needs of participating teachers who are introducing HCD into their classrooms?
 - What does the learning journey of participating teachers look like?
 - Which phases of the HCD process have been more readily accepted and adopted by participating teachers, and why? How has the HCD process been adapted for the context, and why?
 - What is the perceived usefulness of the tools and materials created to support the HCD process?



Case Study: Aga Khan Foundation's Schools 2030 in Kenya

Initial Outcomes:

1. Four learner personas/profiles that characterize the different attitudes, behaviors, and needs of teachers that helped identify potential pain points and supports needed. (In response, changes have been made to delivery modes, supports offered, and a devolution of responsibility for facilitation activities in some sites.)
2. Identification of five essential building blocks to improve the implementation of HCD processes in Kenya.
3. Development of a tool to evaluate the solutions emerging from the HCD process.
4. A shortened, simplified 'sprint' version of the HCD toolkit has been developed for the Kenyan context to reduce the burden on participating teachers.
5. Adjustment in the timing of each HCD cycle to allow for more time for innovation and prototyping of solutions.

Case Study: Chemonics ACCELERE! In Democratic Republic of Congo

➤ Goal: to improve teaching and learning for Grades 1-4 and accelerated learning programs through:

- Teacher and administrator training in early grade reading methods
- Developing, testing, and distributing teaching and learning materials

➤ Focus: 9 provinces, 5000 schools, 3.6 million students


➤ Key Research Questions:

- RQ1: Which essential components are associated with strong reading performance?
- RQ2: Which specific activities are associated with strong reading performance?
- RQ3: Which specific activities are associated with result-level outcomes?
- RQ4: Which result-level outcomes are associated with strong reading performance?

Case Study: Chemonics ACCELERE! In Democratic Republic of Congo

➤ Initial Results:

- Confirmation of correlations between essential components and desired outcomes, as well as between specific activities and desired outcomes (including materials received by female facilitators during their training, gender committee membership, school directors attending a reading/writing training, and length of time School directors participated in parent organization training).
- The project-level FOI research helped improve project implementation and target resources and efforts.
- Increase in support to provincial teams, improved delivery and implementation timing, and improved targeted support.
- The classroom-level FOI data also informed revisions to the TLMs (particularly around writing and student assessment).
- Refinement of internal procedures for TLM supply chain management.



BE2 Guidance Note on Implementation Research for Scale

Section 2. Appropriate Use: When should IR be used?



When is it appropriate to use IR?



What are common areas of inquiry that IR can address?



Case study examples



BE2 Guidance Note on Implementation Research for Scale

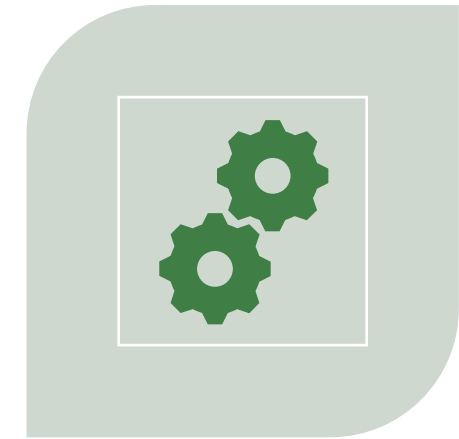
Section 3. Methods and Tools: How can IR be done?



WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS OF
IMPLEMENTATION RESEARCH DESIGN?



HOW MIGHT IMPLEMENTATION RESEARCH
BE DESIGNED FOR COMMON AREAS OF
INQUIRY?



CASE STUDY EXAMPLES

Research Design

Exercise – 8 minutes

- Select one of the research questions from the case study.
- Complete the research design template for that question in your small group.

What do we need to know? (Research question)	Why do we need to know this? How will the findings be used? (Goals, linking to implementation framework)	What is the timeframe by which we need to know this? (Key adaptation dates)	Where/with whom does this information reside? (Participants)	What kind of data will answer the question? (Methods)	How will we analyze the data? (Analysis)	What limitations or threats to validity might we anticipate?	How can we mitigate those limitations or threats to validity?
--	--	---	---	---	--	--	---

Break-out discussion

- At your tables, discuss the incorporation of IR into your ongoing projects
 - How are you incorporating IR/how could you incorporate it?
 - What challenges do you foresee?