

# Developmental Evaluation and Accountability to Learning

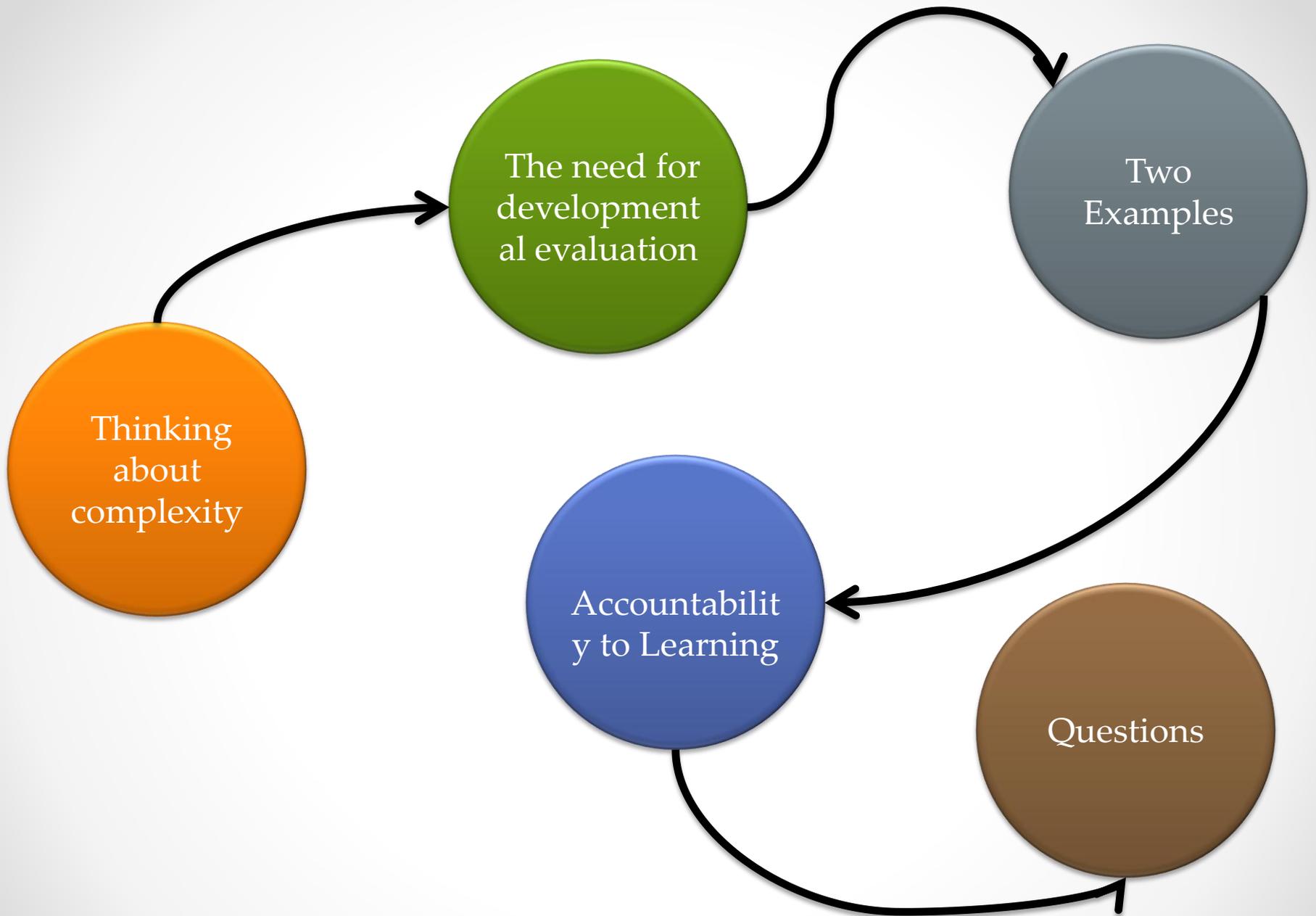
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# What is evaluation? A useful but perhaps incomplete definition

- Evaluation is defined both as a means of assessing performance and to identify alternative ways to deliver
- “evaluation is the systematic collection and analysis of evidence on the outcomes of programs to make judgments about their relevance, performance and alternative ways to deliver them or to achieve the same results.”

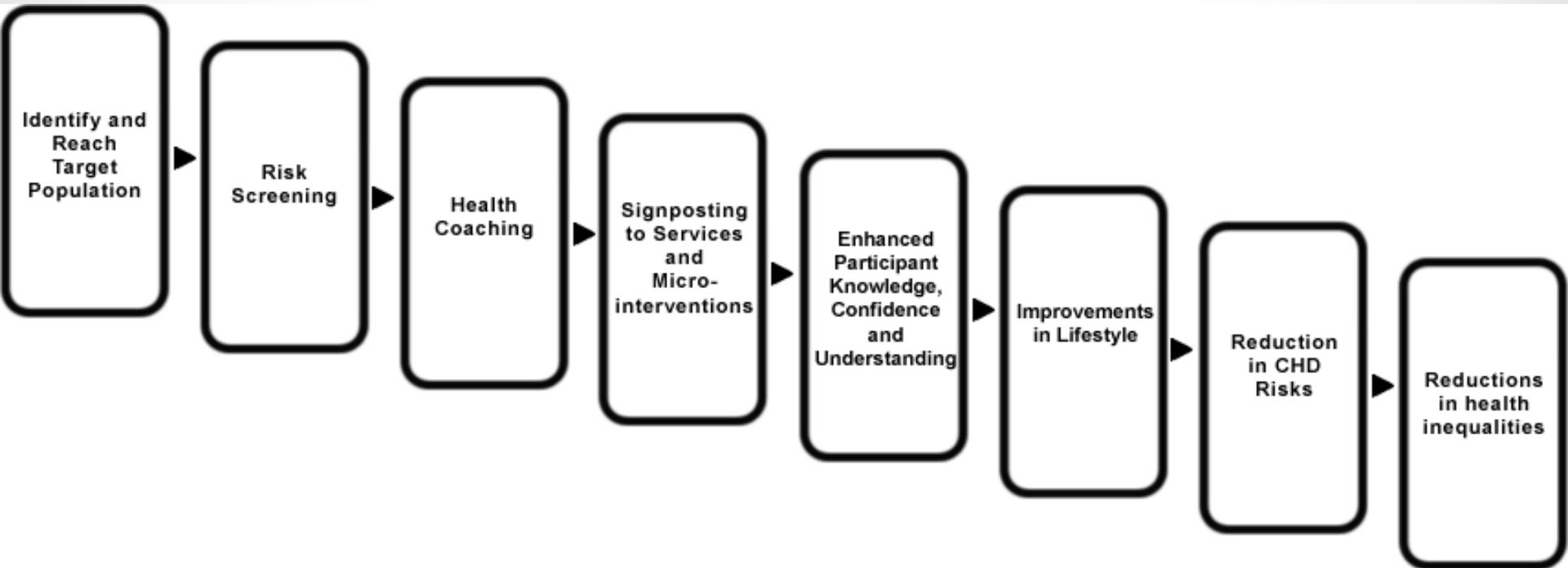


.....what role can evaluation/ evaluative thinking play in navigating interventions?

# (Mark, Henry and Julnes, 2000

- Assessing merit and worth
  - Causal questions, RCT, observational studies
- Programme and organizational improvement
  - Formative evaluation
- Oversight and compliance
- *Knowledge development*
  - *Neglected purpose of many evaluations*

# An Example: Primary Prevention Have a Heart Paisley



# Another Purpose

- Towards integrated knowledge translation:  
Enhance likelihood that a program/policy have impact on key outcomes...Evaluation/Evaluative thinking needs to help inform knowledge translation

## Features of complex interventions (Pawson et al., 2004)

- The intervention is a theory or theories
- The intervention involves the actions of people.
- The intervention consists of a chain of steps
- These chains of steps or processes are often not linear, and involve negotiation and feedback at each stage.
- Interventions are embedded in social systems and how they work is shaped by this context.
- Interventions are prone to modification as they are implemented.
- Interventions are open systems and change through learning as stakeholders come to understand them.

# Questions to describe complex interventions

- How hard is it to describe?
- How hard is it to create?
- What is its degree of organization?

## System Dynamic Approaches (Sterman, 2006)

- Constantly changing;
- Governed by feedback;
- Non-linear, History-dependent;
- Adaptive and evolving;
- Characterized by trade-offs;
- Policy resistance: “The result is *policy resistance*, the tendency for interventions to be defeated by the system’s response to the intervention itself.”

# The logic of an evolutionary strategy

- Box et al (1978, p. 303):
- *... the best time to design an experiment is after it is finished, the converse is that the worst time is the beginning, when least is known. If the entire experiment was designed at the outset, the following would have to be assumed as known: (1) which variables were the most important, (2) over what ranges the variables should be studied... The experimenter is least able to answer such questions at the outset of an investigation but gradually becomes more able to do so as a program evolves. (p. 303)*

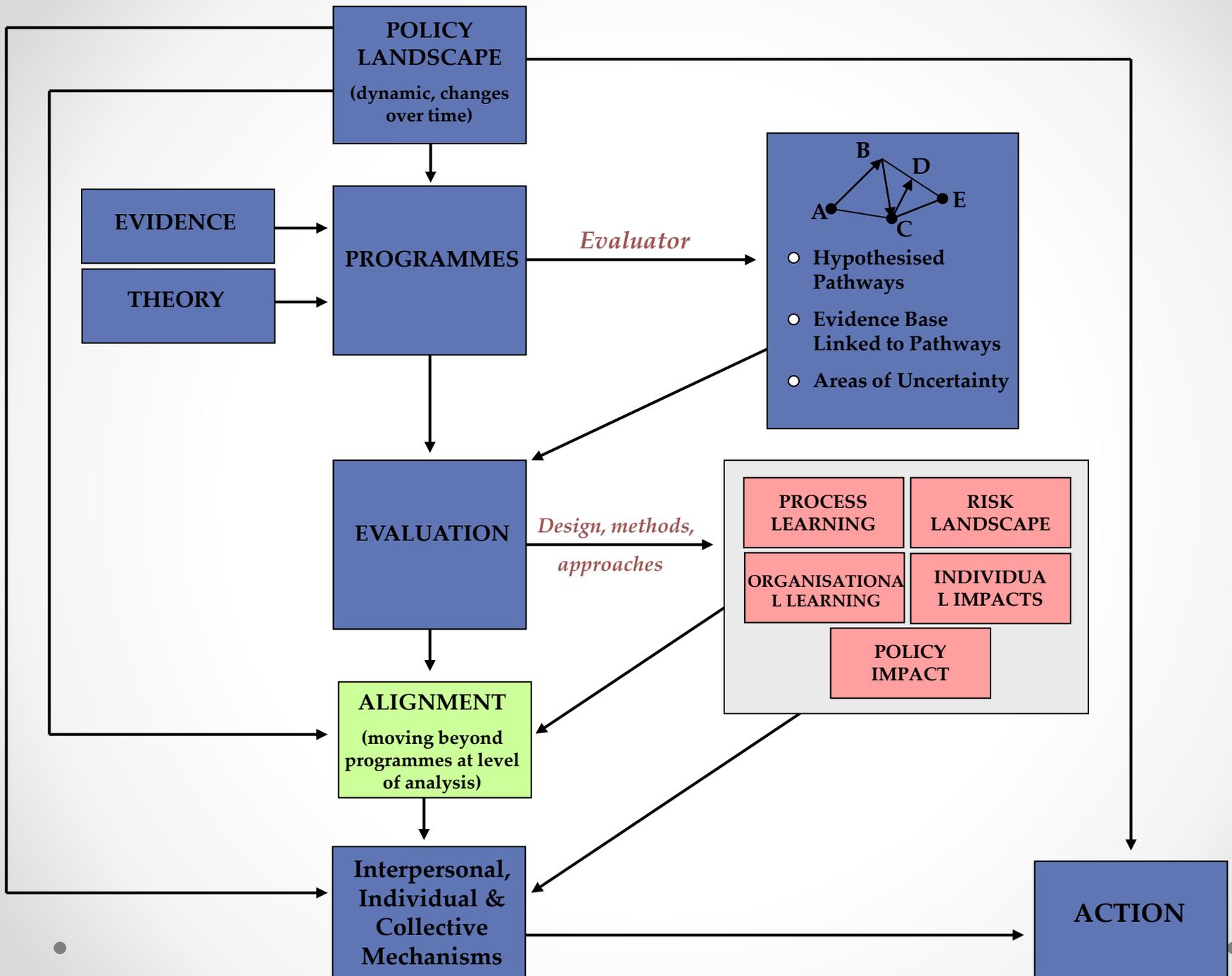
# What kind of evaluation will you be doing?

## Formative



## Developmental





# Defining Developmental Evaluation (Patton, 2011)

- “How can you tell if an evaluation is truly developmental? I’ll offer a more sophisticated answer as the book unfolds, but let’s start simply with purpose and outcomes: Is the purpose and focus of the evaluation helping develop something? Is something getting developed? Did something get developed? If so, what? How? With what implications? *The focus of developmental evaluation is on developing innovations.*”

# Developmental Evaluation

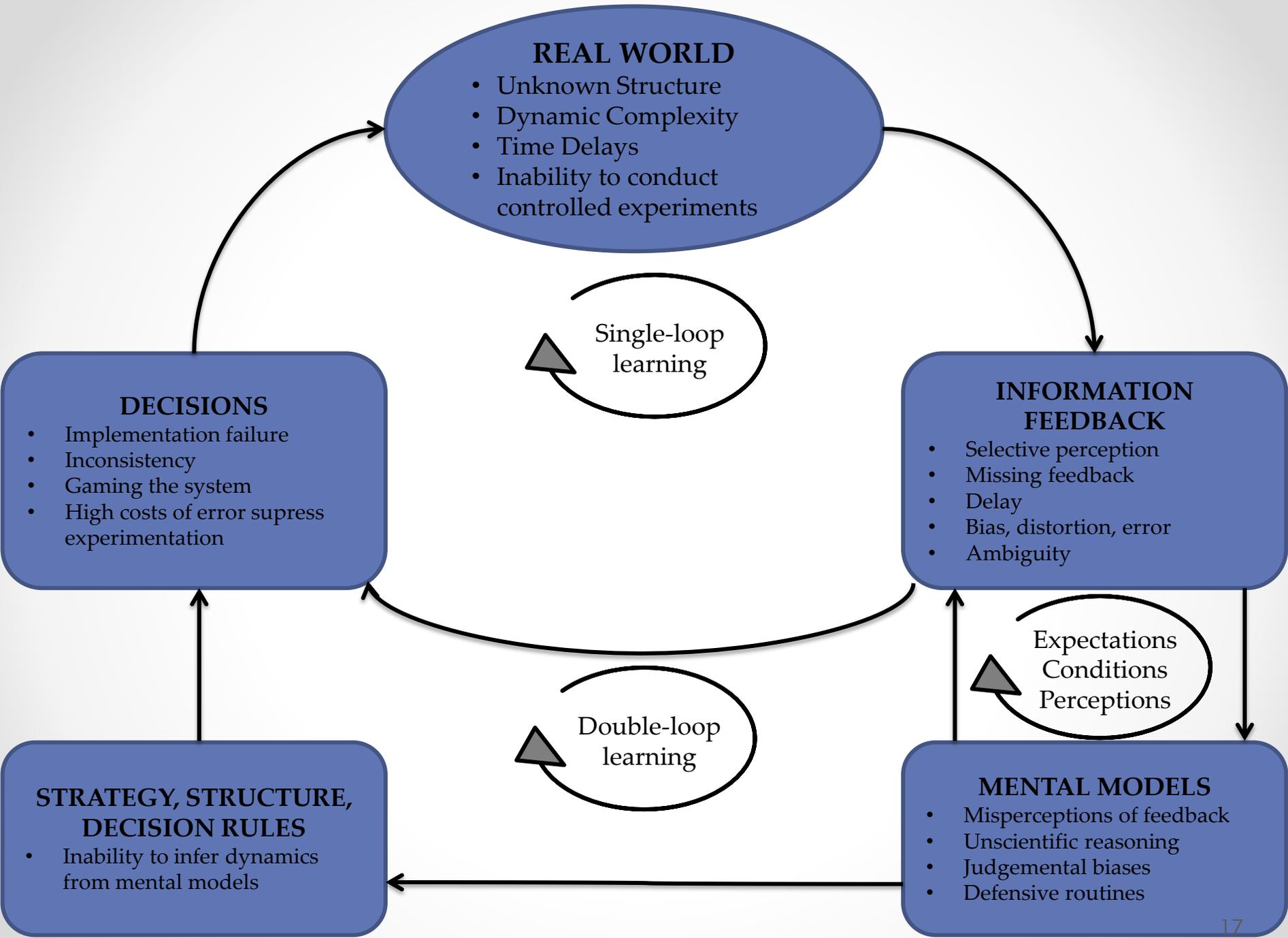
- “Ongoing development in adapting a project, program, strategy
- Adapting effective general principles to a new context
- Developing a rapid response in the face of a sudden major change

- “Preformative development of a potentially scalable innovation
- Major systems change and cross-scale developmental evaluation

# Single loop and double loop learning

## (Patton, 2001; Sterman, 2006)

- “In essence, a problem- detection-and- correction process is single-loop learning. Single-loop learning is like a thermostat that knows when it is too hot or too cold and turns the heat off or on. **The thermostat can perform this task because it can receive information (the temperature of the room) and take immediate corrective action.**
- *In double-loop learning, those involved go beyond the single loop of identifying the problem and finding a solution to a second loop that involves questioning the assumptions, policies, practices, values, and system dynamics that led to the problem in the first place and intervening in ways that involve the modification of underlying system relationships and functioning.”*



# Differences between developmental and summative/formative evaluation

(Patton, 2011)

# appropriate

- “Manageable and stable situation; root cause of the problem being addressed is known and bounded; intervention reasonably well conceptualized; goals known; the key variables expected to affect outcomes are controllable, measurable, and predictable.
- Complex, dynamic environment; no known solution to priority problems; no certain way forward and multiple pathways possible; need for innovation, exploration, and social experimentation.”

# Dominant niche and mindset

“Finding out if a program model works: focus on effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and scalability.

- Exploring possibilities; generating ideas and trying them out; preformal model, so preformative; nonsummative in that ongoing innovation and development is expected, never arriving at a fixed intervention.”

# Targets of Change

- “Identified outcomes for intended program beneficiaries and participants; change in individual behaviors and performance indicators.
- Systems change along a continuum from small local systems to disruptive social innovations aimed at major, cross scale impacts on big problems.”

# How can developmental evaluation help?

- Incomplete knowledge
- Understand context
- Dynamic complexity/contexts
- Timeline of impact
- Nature of connections
- Alignment with long term goals
- Heterogeneities of impacts
- Heterogeneous mechanisms
- Supply and demand of information
- Sustainability
- Spread

# What does an evaluator do?

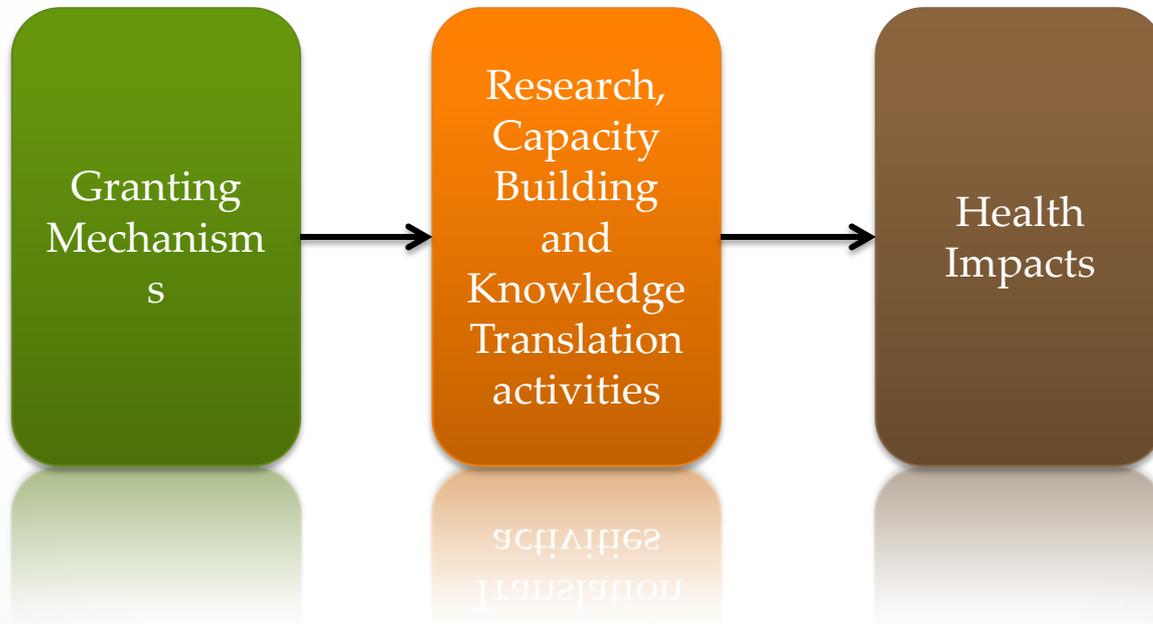
- Hang-out (spend time)
- Understand
- Question
- Relationship-build
- Facilitate
- Create spaces for dialogue
- Workshops
- Connect

# Two Examples

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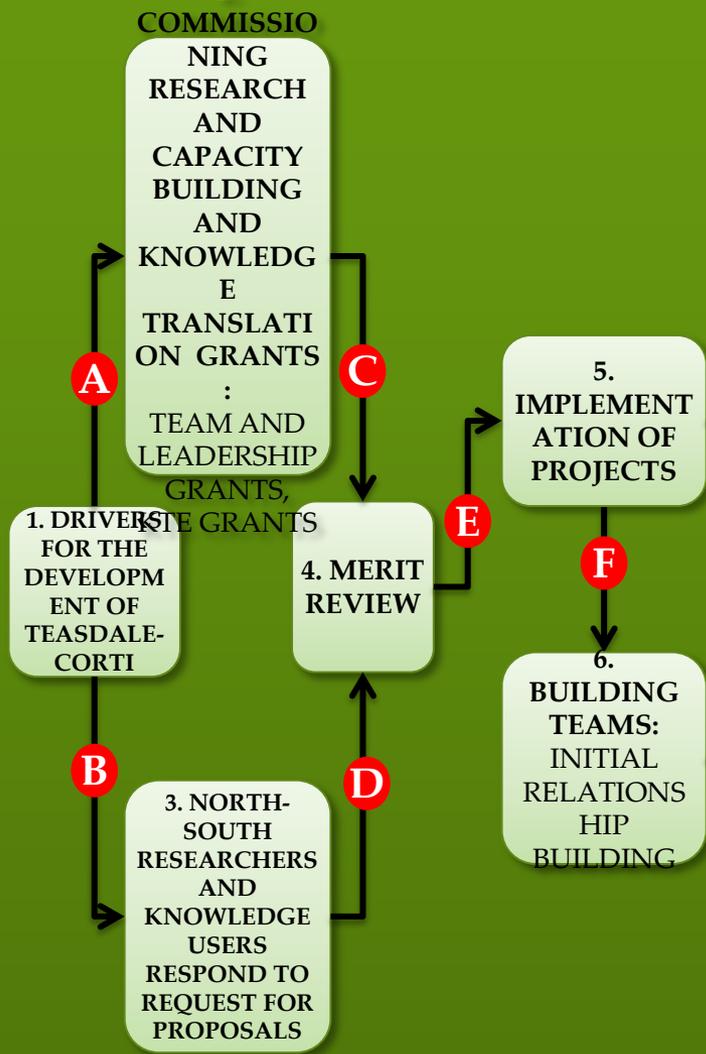
# Goals

“To contribute to improving health and strengthening health systems in low and middle income countries (LMICs), by supporting innovative international approaches to integrating health knowledge generation and synthesis (including consideration of environmental, economic, socio-cultural, and public policy factors) through research, health research capacity development, and the use of research evidence for health policy and practice.”

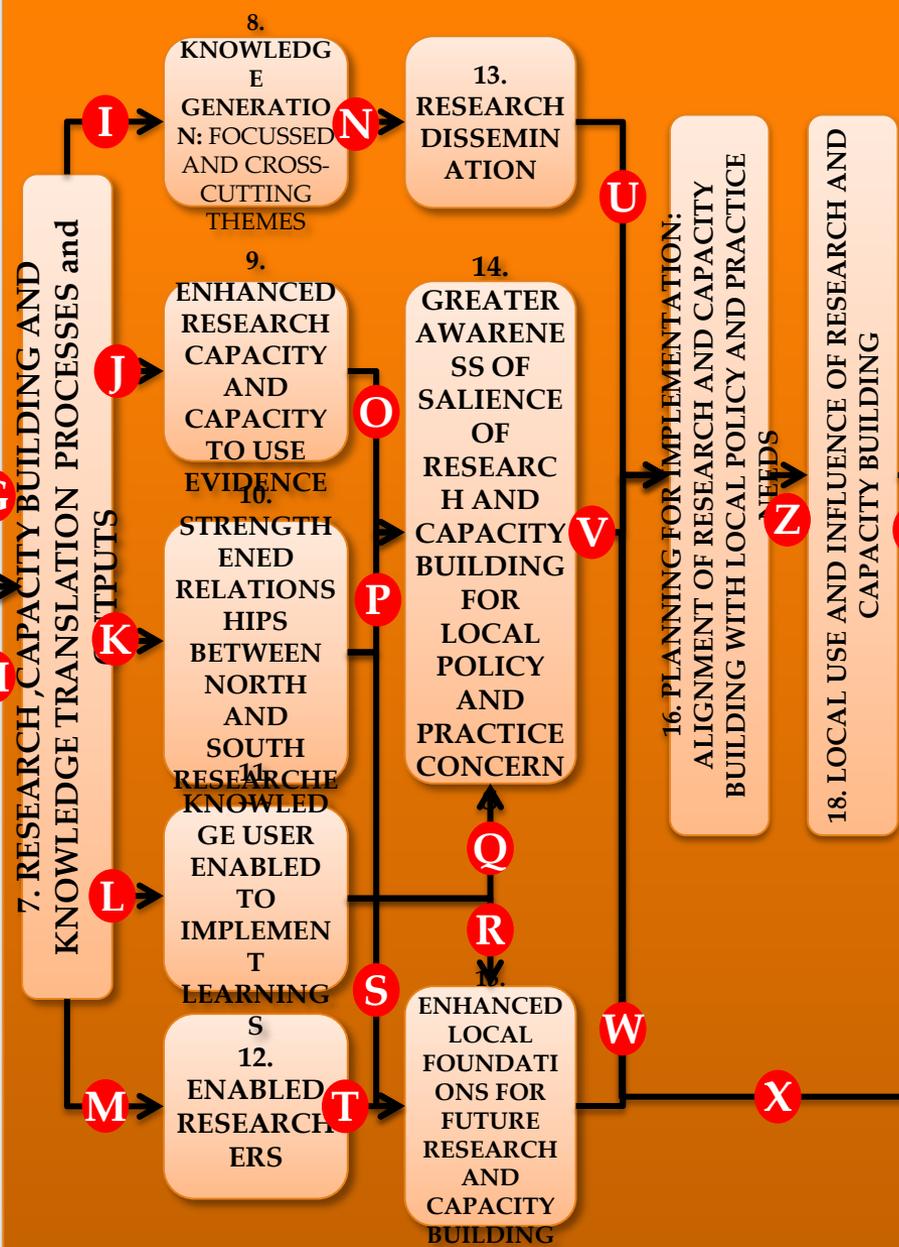


# Direct Control

2.



# Direct Influence



# Indirect Influence

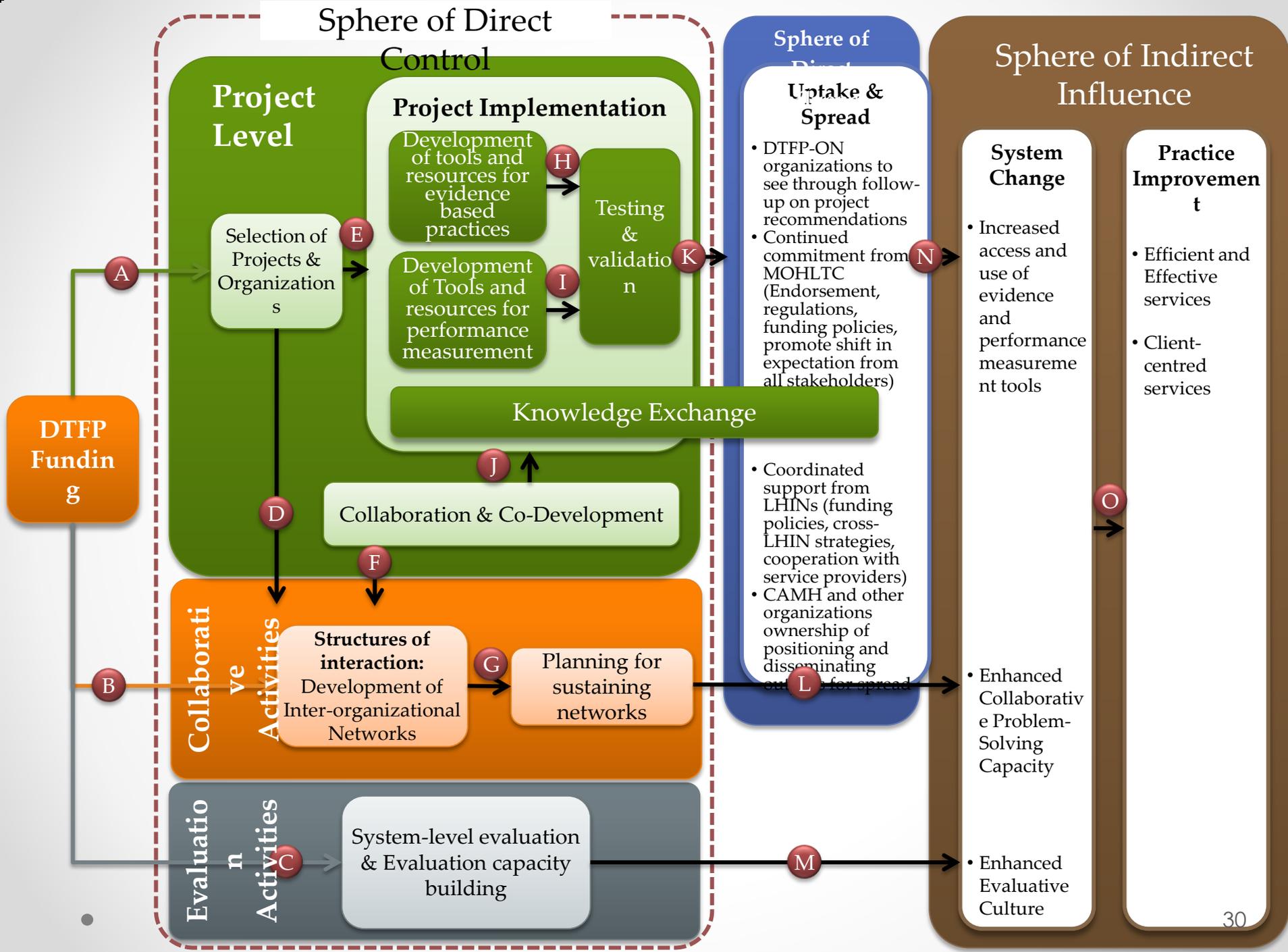


# Basic Questions

- \* How complete is our knowledge of how these initiatives are intended to work?
- \* What is the context where these interventions are being implemented?
- \* Do we have clarity on the timeline of impact of such initiatives?
- \* How do we ensure that we don't get caught up in the 'activity space' of such initiatives?
- \* How do we align metrics to provide incentives to focus on the outcomes?

# DTFP PURPOSE

- “The DTFP aims to provide the incentive for provinces, territories and key stakeholders to initiate projects that lay the foundation for systemic change leading to sustainable improvement in the quality and organization of substance abuse treatment systems, as well as increase the availability of treatment services to meet the critical illicit drug treatment needs of at-risk youth in high needs areas.”
  - (DTFP Framework, Health Canada, 2008)



# Developmental Evaluation

- Help identify potential areas for connections within DTFP – where can project learn from one another
- Help in documenting project processes, e.g. sampling frame
- Help in learning how to evaluate networks
- Help in building evaluation capacity
- Help in documenting project and system learning
- Help in realizing potential next steps

ENSURE THAT MOST  
PROJECTS GO THROUGH  
A PROCESS OF  
TESTING/VALIDATION  
BEFORE ESTABLISHING  
THE VALUE-ADDED OF  
THE PROJECTS

CLARIFY THE VALUE-  
ADDED OF EACH  
PROJECT

Actions that are needed

By Projects

ALIGN LEARNING  
ABOUT UPTAKE FROM  
THE PROJECT TO THE  
NEEDS OF THE  
TREATMENT SYSTEM:  
FOCUS ON THE 'HOW'

DEVELOP A CLEAR  
SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

CLARIFY ROLES THAT  
MOHLTC PLANS TO PLAY  
REGARDING FUTURE OF  
DTFP

ANTICIPATORY  
PLANNING FOR  
ADDICTIONS  
TREATMENT SYSTEM

needs that are necessary  
by  
**MOHLTC/LHINs**

THE LHINs NEED TO  
BE MORE ENGAGED  
WITH DTFP-ON

- Continue to clarify the connections between the projects and how it will impact the additions system



- Data-needs for system-level decision making.
- Examples of how data-use has enhanced system-level decision making

- Leadership and resources are needed for system-level change

- Innovative views of performance might be needed for sustaining system-level change

# Accountability to learning

Conducting an evaluation is not the  
same as learning

What is  
being  
learned

Existing  
services  
and gaps:  
Timing of  
funding

Learnings  
about  
context/part  
nerships

Learnings  
about  
context/impl  
ementation

Key  
assumptions/ti  
meline of  
impact

How are the  
ideas around a  
policy shifting

Learning  
about what  
is working

Who is  
learning

# Towards a science of learning from evaluations

...

Models of Causation  
(Successionist vs.  
Generative Models  
of Causation)

Ecology of  
Evidence

Program Theory  
and  
Incompleteness

Integrating  
Knowledge  
Translation with  
evaluation

Capacity  
Building

Time Horizons  
and Functional  
forms

Development al  
evaluation in  
Complex  
Dynamic  
Settings

Portfolio of  
designs  
and approaches

Spread, Scaling  
up and  
Generalization