Addressing the Knowing–Doing Gap
To better serve education policymakers’ evidence needs
OUTLINE

1. Introduction: Understanding the knowing-doing gap
2. Policymaker evidence use & needs: what have we learned?
3. Widening the sources of evidence: why, what, how?
4. EO’s Strategic Goals 2023-2028
5. Closing: an invitation to engage
Who are we?

An independent non-profit initiative in its 3rd year.

Vision: a world where the education of all children and young people is transformed by the best evidence.

Mission: ‘To improve the learning of every child and young person by helping leaders access and use the best evidence to guide their national policies and plans’.

A constructive disruptor: It’s not a lack of new evidence, but the inability to use what we know, that lies at the heart of the global education crisis.

Using a novel Education Evidence Pathway to bridge this ‘knowing-doing’ gap.
A STRONGER EDUCATION KNOWLEDGE BRIDGE IS NEEDED

https://education.org/white-paper
Five ways to bridge the knowing-doing gap

1. **Research generation:** Promote end use and user focus from the outset

2. **Synthesis:** Build the big picture including ‘frontline’ unpublished evidence

3. **Actionable guidance:** Answer the “so what?” of every synthesis – what does it mean for users?

4. **Enabling environment:** Build a culture of in-country evidence use

5. **Implementation:** Engage for and support change at scale

*See the interactive digital paper [here](#)
Review of 21 ed policy & planning documents, 2015-2019:

- 12 (57%) cited any sources
- 15% of the evidence sources (n=62) cited were locally generated evidence (African countries or SSA)
- 27% of these were regional
- Nearly all 12 policy documents with citations were created with an external partner, e.g. UN partner, WB, INGO, bilateral.

What policy-makers report:

- They rely heavily on government documents and data, including from other ministries
- They use what they can access quickly
- They only use sources they trust, find credible
- They don’t use elite academic sources that don’t speak to them
“Research reports are not readily available. Even when you find the evidence, it is written for everybody but a policy maker. It takes a lot of time to figure out what it means for decisions.”

“What do policymakers want?

• Reports written for decision-makers, not researchers
• Analysis that is forward-looking, not backwards
• Studies matching government priorities, not donors’
• Sources they can trust, without vested interests
• Sources covering “real world,” frontline contributions, especially from own country/region
• Synthesized evidence that is contextually relevant, with actionable guidance
• Easier access to studies & reports
• Tech tools to allow better, quicker data and access to data
• Partnerships with researchers & practitioners with expertise MOE needs; Greater reciprocity.
• Channels to hear what practitioners are working on, how are they progressing, what are they learning.”

“Much of the studies show a lack of alignment of donor funding with government transitions, often working on what were previous priorities.”
Our ‘Education Evidence Pathway’

Source widely: Broader evidence base - not just academic research but local practitioners, government reports, NGO evaluations, etc.

Synthesise rigorously: Create a coherent picture from the mass of evidence and findings, appraising sources for quality, relevance & context, distilling key conclusions.

Generate insights: Plain-language actionable insights for national policies, plans & investments

Enable uptake: Long-term country-focused capacity building embedded within daily work of education leaders
BROADENING SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

Purpose of the International Working Group

To build on existing appraisal guidance for published research,
To develop a new, coherent, and intellectually rigorous system “non-traditional” sources to better serve education decision-makers,
To develop guidance to classify, identify & access, and appraise these sources, which include unpublished, locally generated, and practice-derived sources.

IWG Membership

➢ Global, regional & national level actors engaged in evidence ecosystem
➢ Engaged in various roles: policymaker, researcher, synthesiser, practitioner, or funder
➢ Senior representation from 27 organisations. Representation from 9 African countries

Targeted users of the IWG guidance

➢ Knowledge producers: researchers, synthesizers, practitioners, government analysts
KEY PRINCIPLES OF IWG

1. Shift the focus from the creator to focus on users & their needs
2. Interpretation must be within context
3. An expanded range of evidence enriches the quality of the evidence base
4. Question the published/not published and peer review criteria
5. Attend to credibility; trustworthiness of source as important to end-users
6. “Best available” includes affordable; accessible: language-accessible
7. There is power in combining research, practical applications, and real-life experiences
INTERNATIONAL WORKING GROUP TIMELINE

June 2023
• Initial Convening

Current
• Draft Guidance

Late 2023 – Early 2024
• Trial Draft Guidance

Mid 2024
• Revise Guidance

Mid – Late 2024
• Disseminate and Use Guidance

Early 2024
• Meet for IWG Learning Roundtable
STRATEGIC GOAL 1.
Establish an evidence synthesis gold standard for education system leaders

STRATEGIC GOAL 2.
Catalyse a transformation in the way education leaders work with evidence

STRATEGIC GOAL 3.
Lead a global movement to build an education knowledge bridge
1. Share guidance you are using. We want to build on the work of others, including in other sectors.

2. Provide feedback on draft IWG guidance.

3. Assist with dissemination and update among partners

Reach out at iwg@education.org
Visit us at www.Education.org