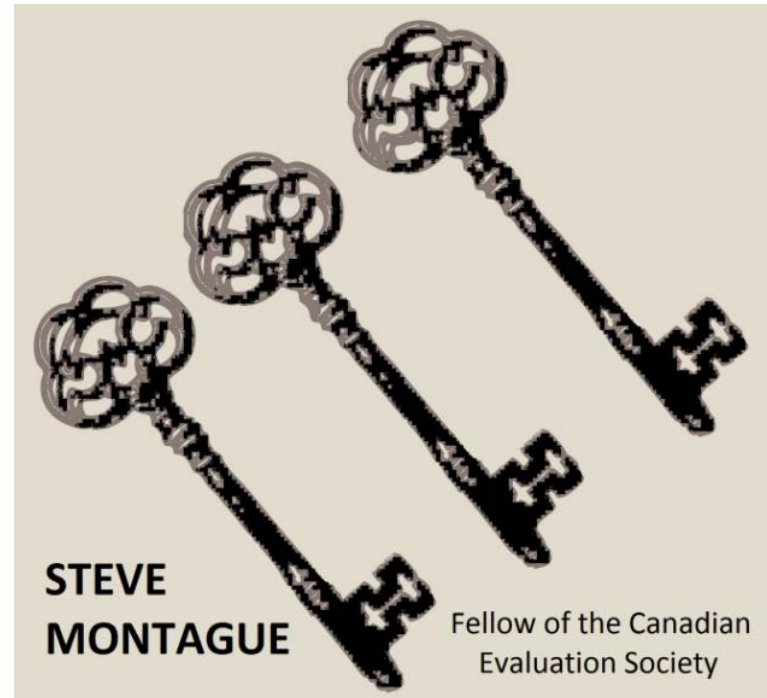


Three Keys to Better Evaluation

May 7, 2015



The Problems

- Evaluation often not relevant to policy
- Done in a silo separate from other functions (e.g. separate from corporate management)
- ‘Follow the money’ follies
- Nature abhors a vacuum – so do policy-makers
- Fools rush in

Limited Solutions

‘Big ticket’ evaluation

Scorecards and ‘key’ performance indicators

Methods driven thinking

Way Forward

- ✦ Clarify the evaluand
- ✦ Tailor the approach
- ✦ Position evaluation as a learning function

Clarify the Evaluand

- What info is sought by the evaluation?
- Why ? Who wants to know this information?
- What do you need to measure to obtain this information?
- When and how will the info be used?
- Critical issues for –
 - **Beneficiaries** – to get the information they want
 - **Commissioners of the evaluation** – can you clarify the evaluand to all parties?
 - **Evaluators** – do you start the task by checking what the evaluand is?

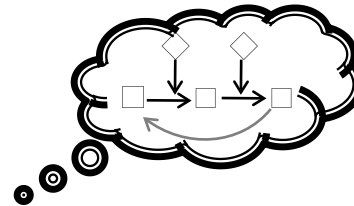
Tailor the Approach – 3 Keys



Issues



Use of Theory



Evidence



Issues



- **LESS:** Aggregates, averages, summary, efficiency–effectiveness and simple minded “value for money”
- **MORE:** Relevance and addressing how we value what works (to what extent) for whom in what conditions and why?

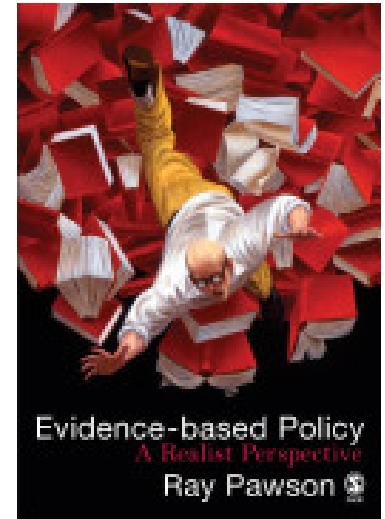
Evaluation Orientation, Typical Issues and Key Approaches

	Proactive	Clarificative	Interactive	Monitoring	Impact
Orientation	Synthesis	Clarification	Improvement	Checking / refining / accountability	Learning / accountability
Typical Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a need for the program? • What do we know about this problem that the program will address? • What is recognized as best practice in this area? • Have there been other attempts to find solutions to this problem? • What does the relevant research or conventional wisdom tell us about this problem? • What do we know about the problem that the program will address? • What could we find out from external sources to rejuvenate an existing policy or program? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the intended outcomes and how is the program designed to achieve them? • What is the underlying rationale for this program? • What program elements need to be modified in order to maximize the intended outcomes? • Is the program plausible? • Which aspects of this program are amendable to subsequent monitoring or impact assessment? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is this program trying to achieve? • How is this service going? • Is the delivery working? • Is delivery consistent with the program plan? • How could delivery be changed to make it more effective? • How could this organization be changed so as to make it more effective? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the program reaching the target population? • Is implementation meeting program benchmarks? • How is implementation going between sites? • How is implementation now compared with a month ago? • Are our costs rising or falling? • How can we fine-tune the program to make it more efficient? • How can we fine-tune the program to make it more effective? • Is there a program site which needs attention to ensure more effective delivery? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the program been implemented as planned? • Have the stated goals of the program been achieved? • Have the needs of those served by the program been achieved? • What are the unintended outcomes? • Does the implementation strategy lead to intended outcomes? • How do differences in implementation affect program outcomes? • Is the program more effective for some participants than for others? • Has the program been cost-effective?
Key Approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs assessment • Research synthesis (evidence-based practice) • Rearview of best practice (benchmarking) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluability assessment / evaluation framework • Logic development • Ex-ante 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action research • Developmental • Empowerment • Quality review • Process evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process evaluation • Component analysis • Devolved performance assessment • Systems analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectives-based • Needs-based • Goal-free • Process-outcome • Realistic • Performance audits

Source: Adapted from: Owen, John (2006) Program Evaluation Forms and Approaches, Third Edition

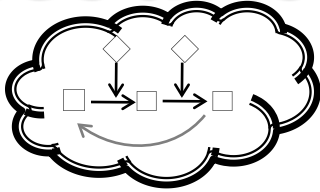
Realist Evaluation Questions

1. Program theories – how is the program supposed to work?
2. Reasoning and reactions of stakeholders – are there differences in the understanding of the program theory?
3. Integrity of the implementation chain – is the program theory applied consistently and cumulatively?
4. Negotiation and feedback in implementation – does the program theory tend to bend in actual usage?
5. Contextual influences – does the program theory fare better with particular individuals, interpersonal relations, institutions and infrastructures?
6. History of the program and relationships with other policies – does the policy apparatus surrounding the theory advance or impede it?
7. Multiple, unintended, long-term effects – is the theory self-affirming or self-defeating or self-neutralizing?



Source: Pawson, R. (2006) Evidence-based Policy A Realist Perspective Sage Publications 2006

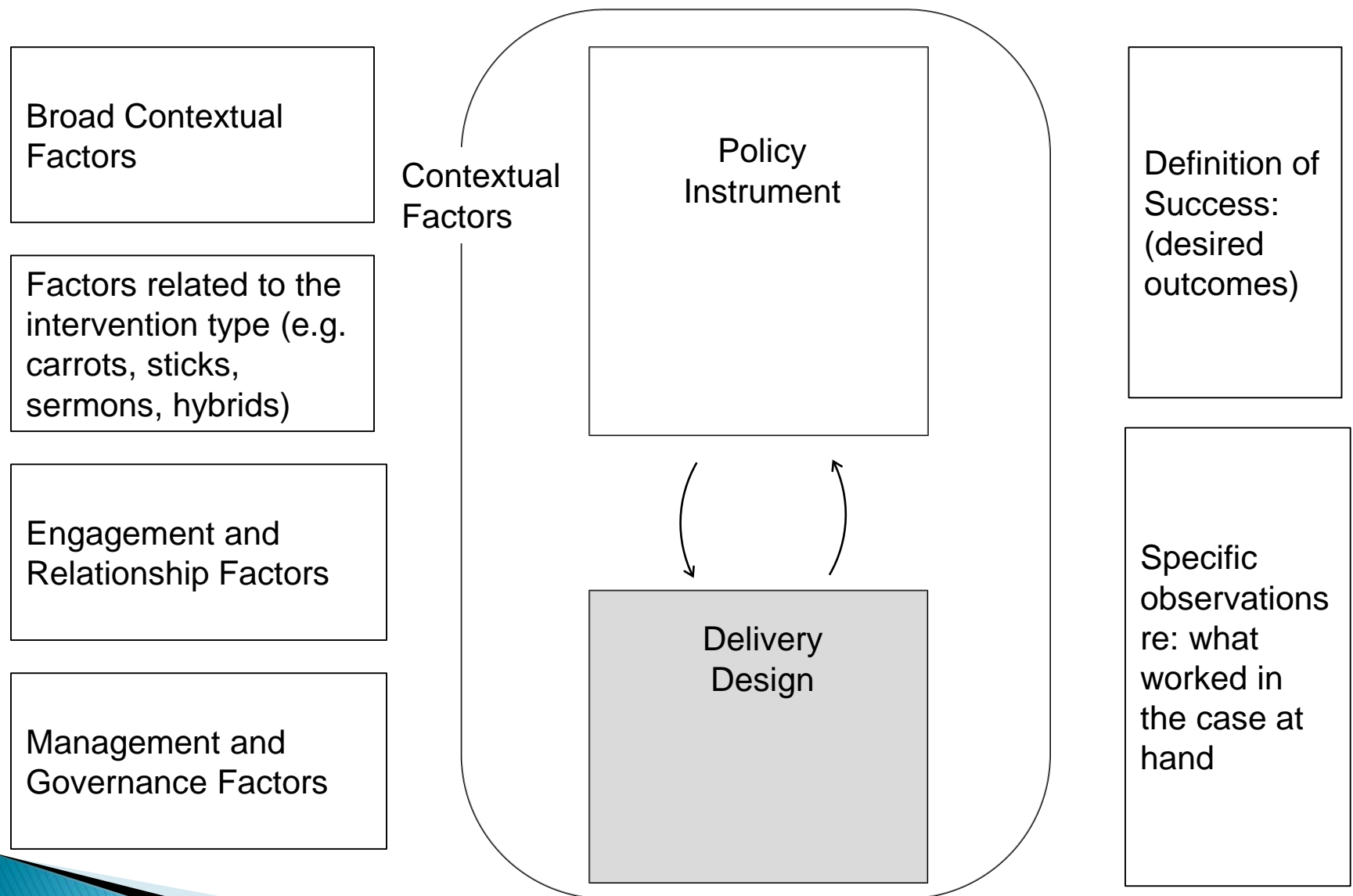
Results logic



- **LESS:** Linear, one-way, unexplained, context-absent box and wire diagrams
- **MORE:** 'Situated', described, systems oriented models describing theories of implementation as well as theories of change with key actors

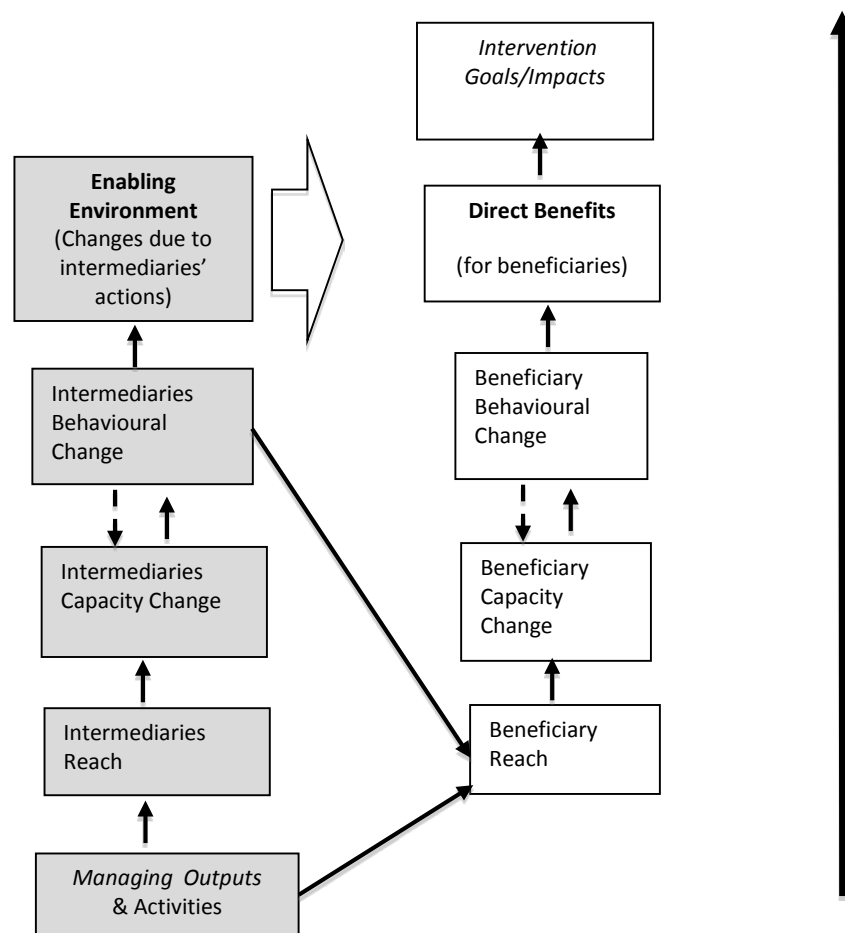


Basic Framework for Assessing What Works in Policy, Programs and Delivery



Source: Montague S., Checklists for Context, Policy and Program Delivery: Helping to Assess What Works (2013)
<http://www.pmn.net/wp-content/uploads/Checklist-for-Context-and-Policy-Instruments.pdf>

Enabling Environment to Impact Pathway



Source: Mayne, J. and Johnson, N. *Using Theories of Change in the Agriculture for Nutrition and Health CGIAR Research Program* (mimeo 2015)

Basic Framework for Assessing What Works in Policy, Programs and Delivery

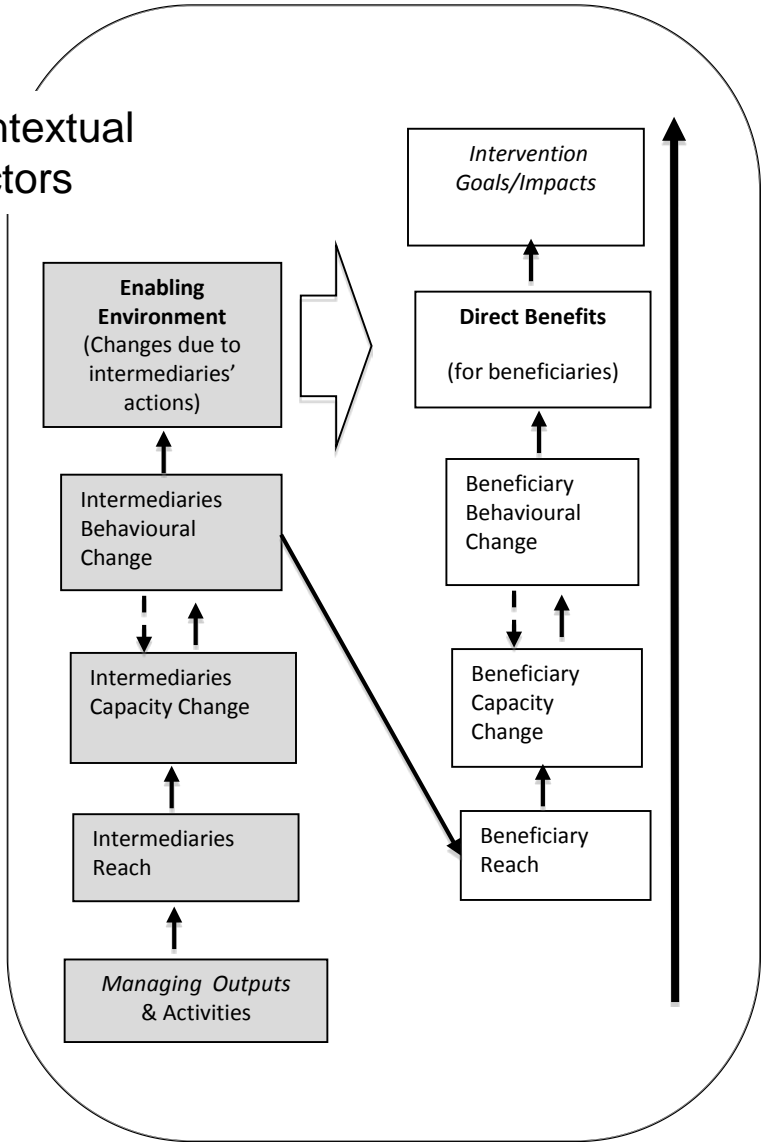
Broad Contextual Factors

Factors related to the policy instrument (carrots, sticks, sermons)

Engagement and Relationship Factors

Management and Governance Factors

Contextual Factors



Definition of Success:
(desired outcomes)

Specific observations re: what worked in the case at hand

Source: Montague S., Checklists for Context, Policy and Program Delivery: Helping to Assess What Works (2013)
<http://www.pmn.net/wp-content/uploads/Checklist-for-Context-and-Policy-Instruments.pdf>

Lines of Evidence



- **LESS:** ‘Standardized’ approaches ranked by pre-determined hierarchies of ‘value’...and approach ‘worship’...in studies conducted by cloistered ‘experts’.
- **MORE:** Flexible, adapted and integrated measures and approaches fundamentally guided by issues and results logic (theories of change and implementation) and drawing on a diversity of sources and perspectives using networks and communities as active participants.
- **MORE:** Meta-accumulation and applied use of knowledge

Position Evaluation as a Learning Function

Evaluation

- Lens and language *for learning*
- Integral to *a//* public management functions
- *A//* public policy instruments considered

Evaluators

- Facilitator, Educator
- Synthesist–Analyst
- Critical friend

The Complex Evaluation 'Mental Model'



Think like a **gardener**..... *not* a mechanic

...Peter Senge 1999

Conclusions

In order to address current limitations, evaluation must:

- See itself as more than an independent 'function' – it can be a 'lens' for public management
- Engage, engage, engage – evaluation is a team sport
- Integrate:
 - Approaches
 - Stakeholders
 - Processes
- Evaluators act as facilitators, educators and 'critical friends'
- Cultivate (rather than engineer) the process