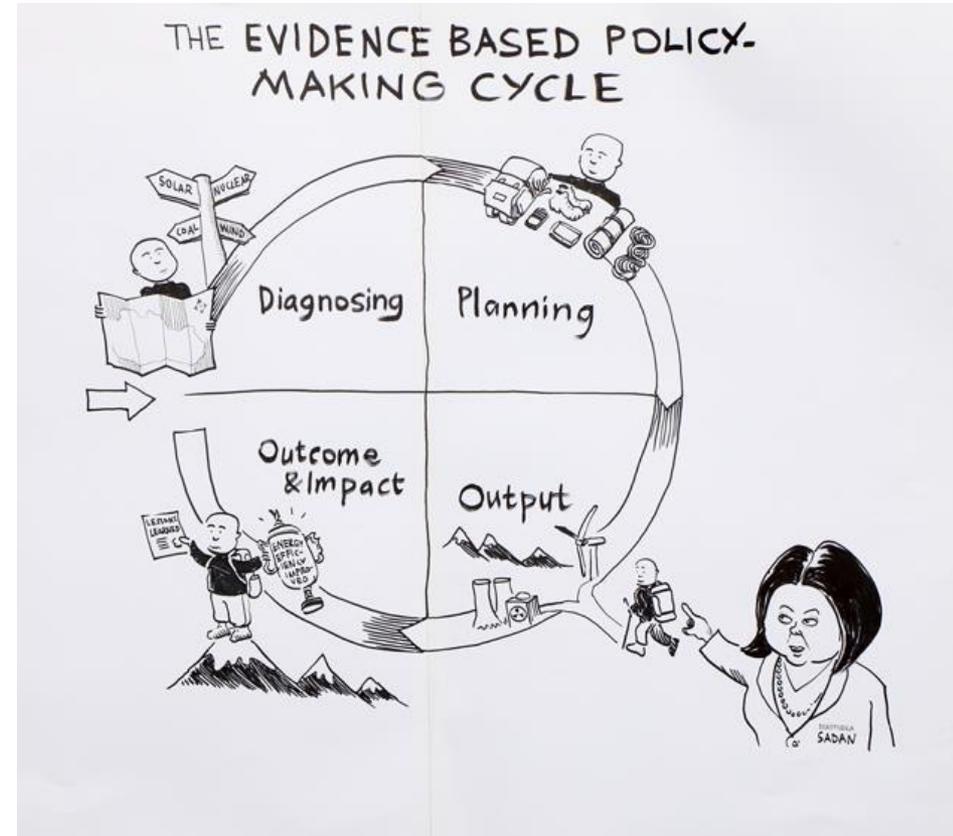


# Reflections on use of evidence by governments in Africa – building a conceptual framework

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# Draw from

- Experience of developing and running NES in SA, and experience of peers in Twende Mbele prog
- Performance culture survey in Benin, Uganda and SA undertaken by Twende Mbele (*separate presentation on this by Cara Waller*)
- Introducing research project - Evidence in Practice: Documenting and Sharing Lessons of Evidence-informed Policy Making and Implementation in Africa – 8 African case studies, book coming out next year  
'Policy Making in Africa: Reflections on Using Evidence'  
– *panel on it on Friday*

# What is EBPM/EIDM

‘Evidence-based policy making (EBPM) is a process that assists policy makers to make better decisions and achieve better outcomes. It is concerned with using existing evidence more effectively, commissioning new research and evaluation to fill gaps in the evidence base, and assisting the integration of sound evidence with decision makers’ knowledge, skills, experience, expertise and judgement.’ (Davies, 2011 p2).

# But what is the context

(Twende Mbele research, 328 respondents: SA- 104, Benin – 149, Uganda – 75  
Orange is over 40% of respondents)

Barrier	% of responses saying always/often		
	SA	Benin	Uganda
Resistance by management to transparent decision-making	27.9	35.6	33.3
Little respect for the use of evidence	27.9	30.9	34.7
Difficult to discuss performance objectively because of the hierarchy	38.5	40.3	42.7
Senior managers fear admitting mistakes or problems	54.8	49.0	46.7
Senior managers consider M&E as a means to control staff	44.2	43.0	37.3
Problems not seen as an opportunity for learning and improvement	40.4	45.0	46.7

**Problems not seen as an opportunity for learning and improvement**

Source: Goldman et al, Performance M&E Culture in South Africa, Benin and Uganda

# How do governments use evidence - comprehensive or bounded rationality

Factor	Comprehensive rationality	B o u n d e d rationality	Evidence from Perf Culture Survey for Benin, Uganda and South Africa
Policy makers' aims	Clear sense of policy-maker preferences,	Aims unclear	No evidence
Generation and understanding of information	Gather and understand all relevant information	Limited information	27-44% of managers say information required to understand not available. Around 60% say information system integrates information needed by managers, while 70% say learning is documented and used to improve future results
Make choices	Make choices based on that information	Unclear choices	Around 70% of managers report changes made to improve results, with around 62% saying evaluation recommendations are used to make changes in policies.

Centers for Learning on Evaluation and Results

*Source: Goldman et al, Performance M&E Culture in South Africa, Benin and Uganda*

# What is the context in Benin, Uganda and SA

- Comparative statistics from performance culture survey (will be chapter in the book)

# What can we see on supply of evidence in Benin, Uganda and SA

- SA/Benin/Uganda countries developed **national evaluation systems**, others being supported by Twende Mbele and WACIE in W Africa
- **Data** – surveys (CSOs), panel surveys eg Uganda and SA, linking up with SDGs, 6 monthly Cabinet retreats in Uganda build on performance information
- In terms of building on **existing evidence**
  - Some work on **systematic reviews**, partic in Health, Uganda - Makerere
  - Tested out models for **synthesis and rapid response** using synthesis – Uganda - Makerere, DPME,
- **Capacity development:**
  - Various countries training eg CLEAR DETPA, Harmattan School in W Africa, universities, ACE on SRs/rapid response
  - collaborative curriculum project of Twende Mbele

# What can we see on demand side

- **Cabinet** using evidence – eg Uganda, Benin, South Africa
- **Uganda** good example of using M&E evidence, some cases in SA
- Promoting an **evaluative culture**:
  - **senior decision-makers** eg Twende Mbele in Uganda/Benin, DPME in SA (300+), Vaka Yiko in Ghana (200+)
  - APNODE/CLEAR/Twende Mbele/AFIDEP – training legislatures in many countries
  - **Sharing of experience with** other African governments, notably through Twende Mbele African M&E partnership, with Latin America eg Mexico, Colombia

# What about use of M&E evidence?

- High proportion (around 70%) across the three countries indicated **learning is documented** and used to improve future results, similar proportion indicated changes are implemented.
- Around **61% of respondents felt M&E evidence was always/often being used** (58,4% in Benin, 63,5% in SA and 64% in Uganda).
  - Reverse is 40,1% in Benin, 49,3% in Uganda and 52,4% in South Africa indicated they never/rarely use evidence .
- Evaluation evidence rarely **used through programme cycle** (8-15% of respondents), majority of use **when evaluations are completed (32-47%)**. This potentially misses out on learning during the evaluation process itself.

*Source: Goldman et al, Performance M&E Culture in South Africa, Benin and Uganda*

# Encouraging use

Green is over 50%

Which of the following are proactively used to communicate information to stakeholders outside of the department?	% of respondents saying yes in		
	SA	Benin	Uganda
Evaluation reports shared publicly with external stakeholders	58	63	61
Website to share evaluation reports	45	53	49
Policy briefs published	39	41	36
Newspaper articles published to inform stakeholders	28	34	33
Academic journals	28	2	13

More work needed with **think tanks** as key interlocutors for the public

# Encouraging use through improvement plans

Components	Benin	Uganda	South Africa
Nos with improvement plans	None formally. But follow up study on use of evaluation findings provided information for improvement plan for 9 evaluations.	No improvement plans. However, recommendations sent to respective implementing agencies with targets to follow up uptake after 12 months	21
Nos where high degree of implementation (%)	6 / 9 (67%). In follow up observe significant changes from implementation of findings	Follow up shows between 10-30 % of evaluation recommendations have been taken up	9/16 have implemented >25% of recommendations, in 2 improvement plans incorporated into another evaluation.

Source: The emergence of government evaluation systems in Africa: The case of Benin, Uganda and South Africa

# Understanding the causal mechanisms so we can design processes better

Rationale for the research project 'Evidence in Practice: Documenting and Sharing Lessons of Evidence-informed Policy Making and Implementation in Africa'

# Barriers and facilitators to use of research

n refers to number of studies

Top 5 barriers to use of evidence	Top 5 facilitators of evidence use
Availability and access to research/ improved dissemination (n = 63)	Availability and access to research/ improved dissemination (n = 65)
Clarity/relevance/reliability of research findings (n = 54)	Collaboration (n = 49)
Timing/opportunity (n = 42)	Clarity/relevance/reliability of research findings (n = 46)
Policymaker research skills (n = 26)	Relationship with policymakers (n = 39)
Costs (n = 25)	Relationship with researchers/ info staff (n = 37)

Source: Oliver et al. BMC Health Services Research 2014, 14:2  
<http://www.biomedcentral.com/1472-6963/14/2>

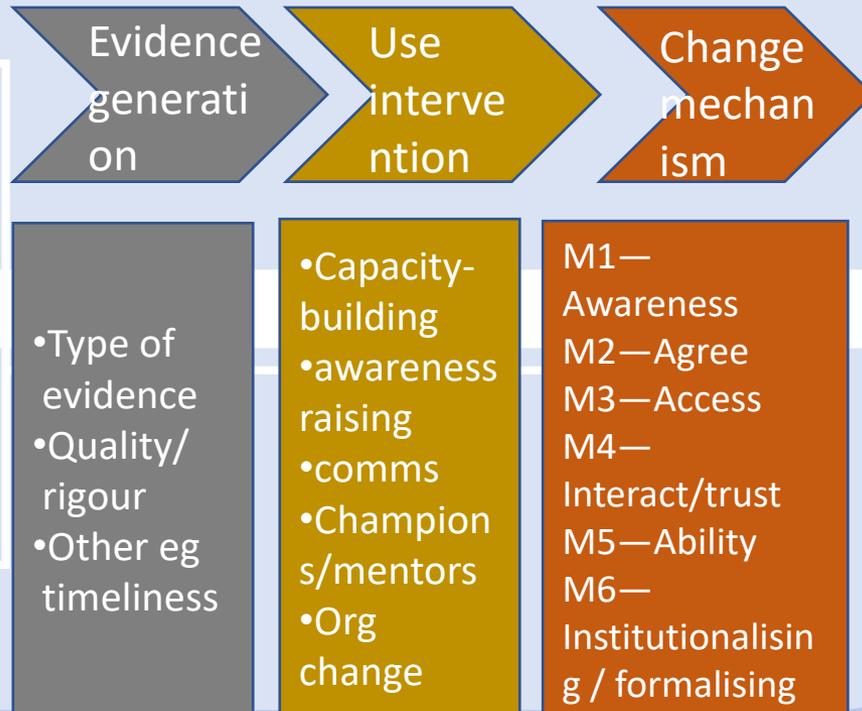
# Analytical framework for the book

## CONTEXT

**External dimension:** Macro-context; intra- relationships with state/non-state agents

**Internal dimension:** culture; organizational capacity; management; and core resources

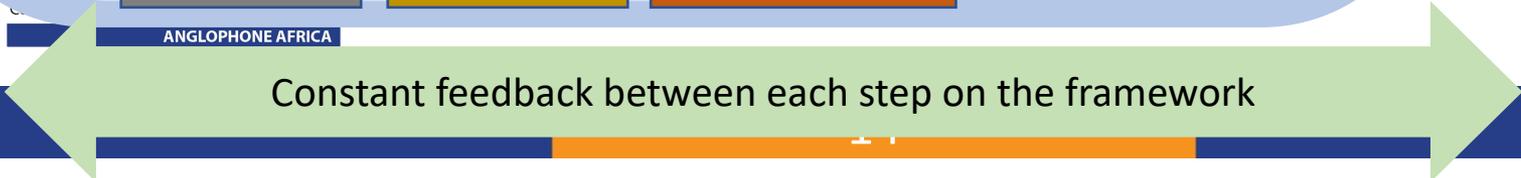
**Demand for evidence**  
- Institutionalised in system eg (NEP)



Individual / organisational / systems change



ANGLOPHONE AFRICA



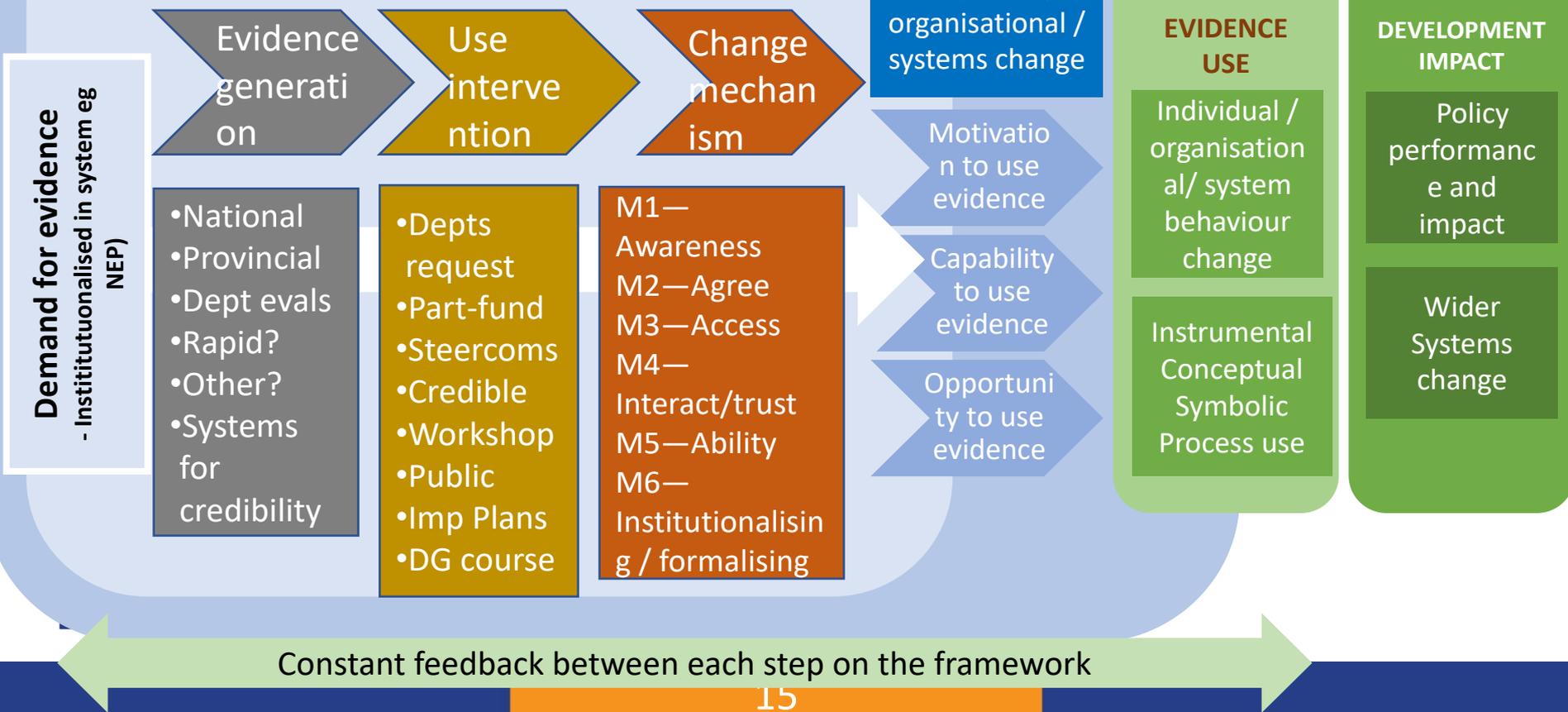
Constant feedback between each step on the framework

# Example – SA National evaluation system

## CONTEXT

**External dimension:** Macro-context; intra- relationships with state/non-state agents

**Internal dimension:** culture; organizational capacity; management; and core resources



# 8 case studies – we will hear from 3 tomorrow

- Ghana – civil society evidence in water and sanitation sector (tomorrow)
- Uganda – evaluation of public procurement systems
- Uganda – centre for rapid synthesis at Makerere University
- Kenya – citizen engagement in development of Wildlife Conservation and Management Act
- West Africa – use of research evidence in tobacco taxation for ECOWAS (tomorrow)
- Benin – evaluation in the evolution of agricultural sector policy (tomorrow)
- SA – use of evidence by Dept of Basic Education
- SA – use of evidence in violence against women and children sector

**Next year I'll be able to tell you the results**

# Thank You

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## Further sources:

[The emergence of government evaluation systems in Africa: The case of Benin, Uganda and South Africa](https://aejonline.org/index.php/aej/article/view/253) <https://aejonline.org/index.php/aej/article/view/253>

Evaluation<sup>2</sup> – Evaluating the national evaluation system in South Africa: What has been achieved in the first 5 years? (forthcoming in African Evaluation Journal)

Book: Policy Making in Africa: Reflections on Using Evidence (Routledge, early 2020)