

Dealing with Values in the Evaluation of Large Scale Programs

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*Meeting Hearts and Minds through
Program Clarification*

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The Evaluation Setting

- Implementation of alternative curriculum in a primary school
- Background
 - Alternative curriculum underpinned with a strong set of values
 - Separate stream
 - Specially trained teachers
 - Contestation about introduction
 - Crisis point reached
 - Parent groups divided
 - School council unable to function
 - Department of Education required policy direction
- Evaluation foci
 - How the program was introduced
 - Compliance with Department guidelines



Issues about Local Policy and Program Clarity

- School approached by community group in 2000
- Concerns
 - Rushed introduction
 - limited community consultation
 - Little consideration given to staffing, resources, curriculum and reporting compliance
 - No formal School Council decision to adopt the program other than 'in principle'
 - Lack of evidence of mapping compliance against Department curriculum standards
 - Poor communication to staff and parents



System Policy Issues

Policy developed in response to local developments

- Policy on *Specialised pedagogical and methodological approaches to education* introduced in 2000
 - (at the same time as the school was considering the new stream)
- New Departmental policy on *Provision of specialised curriculum approaches* introduced in 2006
 - (when local problems began to emerge and more schools wanted to introduce the stream)
- Confusion about curriculum policy interpretation at the school level
 - (Multiple policies; different school contexts)

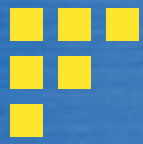


Broad Evaluation Recommendations

- Local Governance
 - Clarify roles and responsibilities of key school community groups
 - Clarify governance operations and processes
- Communication
 - Provide information about policies and specifics of implementing them (eg. resources, charges, balance of different curriculum streams)
- Departmental support
 - Strengthen specialised curriculum policy that requires schools to provide:
 - evidence of school community support
 - evidence of mapping a proposed specialised curriculum against Departmental standards
 - detailed implementation plans
 - Assist schools to develop local responses to policy implementation

Evaluation of Large-Scale Interventions

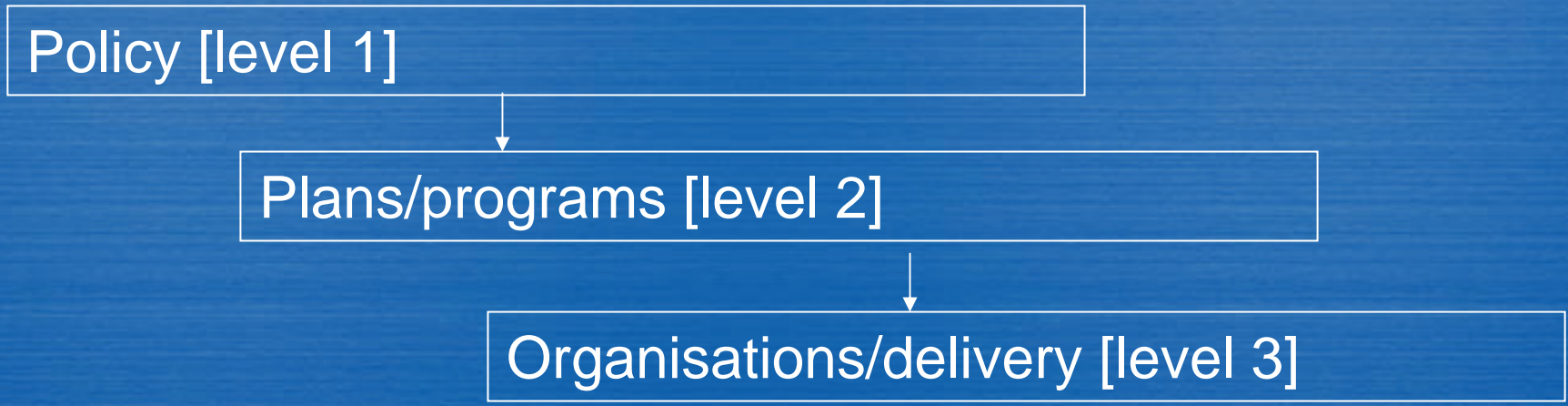
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Cascading Levels of Delivery: multi-level multi-site interventions

Typical key players:

- Policy makers
- Planning and program staff
- Organisations responsible for delivery.





- Issue: large separation between policy and ultimate outcomes
- Naïve accountability driven policy evaluation questions difficult/impossible to answer
e.g. has the policy led to expected outcomes for beneficiaries

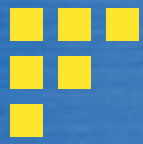


Evaluation can assist by involving key players to

- see policy provision from a systems point of view.
- understand the nature of cascading interventions, and
- contributions of logic elements to achieve outcomes.

Key role for program clarification as tool to:

- enlighten key players
- refine and add key elements in policy delivery



Example: Evaluation of International Development Program

Key players:

- Commonwealth agency
- Universities
- Student support units

Evaluation finds:

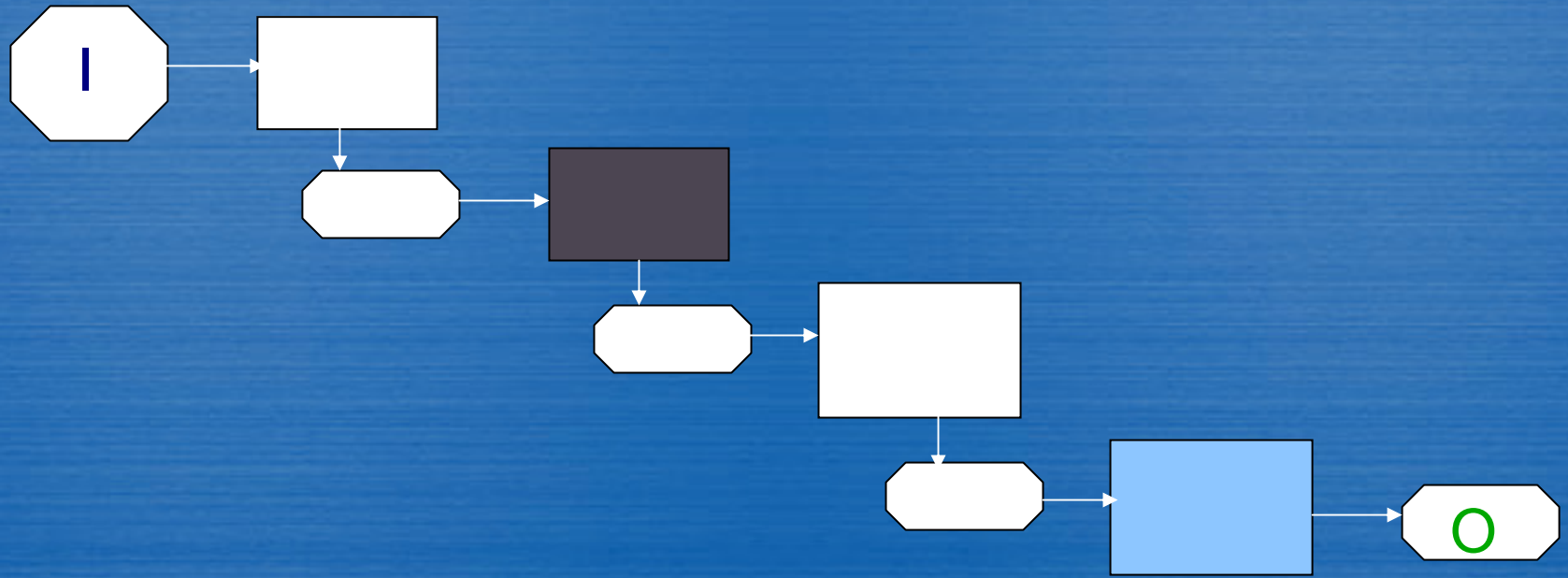
- values largely aligned but
- strong accountability-up perspective by policy-makers

Evaluation recommends:

- Retaining the program
- Introducing more symmetry to accountability
- Modifying and adding to logic (e.g. re-orientation)



Example: Evaluation of International Development Program





Example: School Improvement Program

Key players:

- Central policy managers
- Regional director
- Private program provider
- Regional schools as deliverers

Evaluation finds:

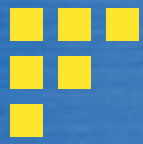
- values not aligned
- issues about credibility of provider, and
- add on-value of intervention

Evaluation recommends:

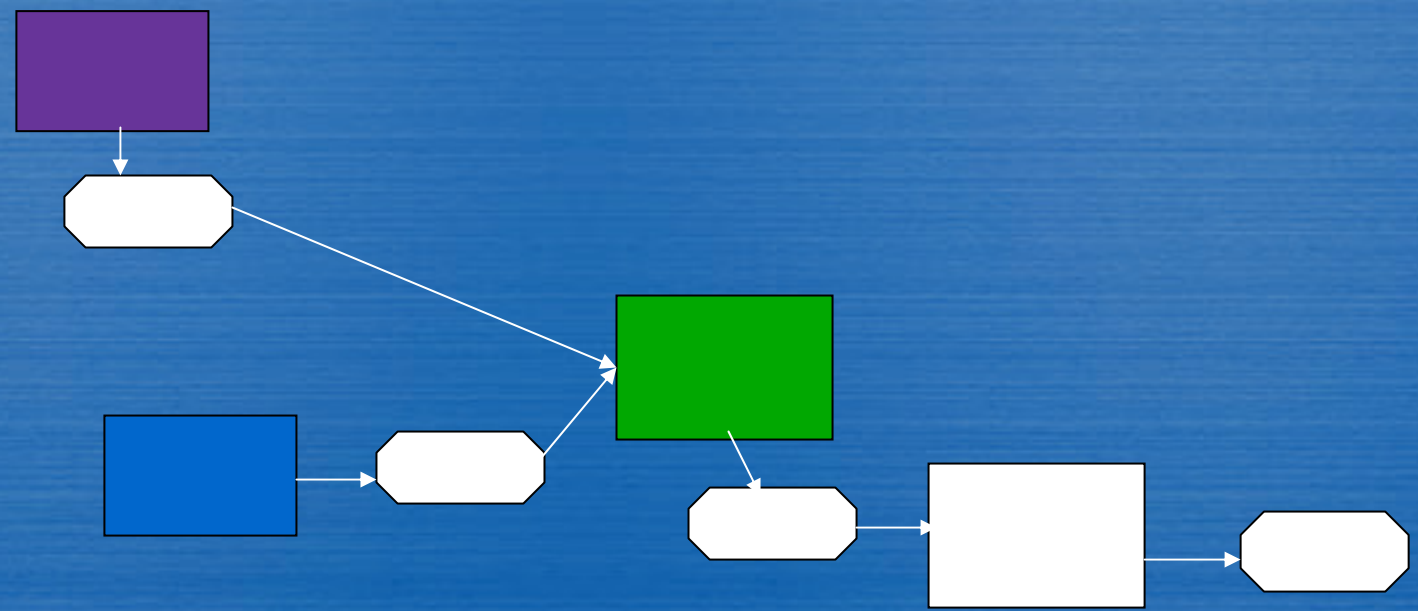
- cessation of program roll-out

Then:

- some key players engaged in salvaging exercises, e.g. modularisation of program.



Example: School Improvement Program





Hypothesis about Policy/Program Interface

Systems will be more effective if there is alignment of:

- value positions across key players, and
- levels of position

Non-alignment likely to lead to policy failure in terms of ultimate impact.



*Strategic Approach to Evaluating Whole-
of-Government Interventions*

Rick Cummings



Logical Basis for Evaluation

Focus	Underlying logic
Project or program	Linear or iterative
Series of projects or programs	Comparative, systems approach
Policy or strategy	Complexity



Strategic Change Framework

Planning	Implementation	Evaluation
Consultation	Dedicated resources	Framework
Logic Framework	Allocation of responsibility	Monitoring
Political commitment	Management process	Periodic evaluation



The Importance of Good Policy/Program Design

- Careful planning & implementation of strategies
- Explicit policy framework
- Shared explicit values
- Steering committee
- Funded administrative assistance
- Balanced commitment
- Overall commitment to monitoring and evaluation



Considerations for Evaluation

- Develop/clarify policy framework and the underlying values
- Develop/clarify evaluation framework using logical models and evaluation planning tools
- Explore value positions and their influence on stakeholders
- Manage stakeholders expectations carefully



Discussion Questions

1. How can evaluators best identify and describe the variety of values which usually underpin large scale policy?
2. How might evaluators assist agencies to develop big picture policy which is able to be evaluated?
3. How might long term impact or issues of sustainability be evaluated?