DFAT's Policy Influence

A Realist Synthesis of 2017 Program Evaluations

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Policy Influence

Development happens through the policies and institutions of partner countries
Ways to influence policy

• knowledge brokering
• alliances or coalitions
• community organising
Ownership

1. The most successful policy influence came from policy problems that were locally identified and owned
Working politically

2. Understanding of the current political and institutional context and program flexibility are success factors
Fit for purpose

3. Policy influence needs to have something to offer that is relevant, appropriate and affordable for the context
Deliberate strategy

4. Having a deliberate strategy for policy influence is more effective than serendipity or a so-called ‘demonstration effect’

• policy dialogue;
• supporting policy implementation
• capacity development and technical assistance;
Relationships

5. Good relationships are critical in knowledge brokering
Realist Synthesis Method

1. Context – Mechanism – Outcome configurations
2. Interviews
3. Mid-range mechanisms
4. Systematic coding & sub-coding
5. Analysis
## Strengths and weaknesses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Looks at why</td>
<td>Evaluations often do not explain why</td>
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<tr>
<td>Considers all evidence</td>
<td>Sample not representative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provides something useful</td>
<td>Time consuming and Nvivo is unfriendly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-Range Theories and Mechanisms</td>
<td>Implementation issues drown out context findings</td>
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