

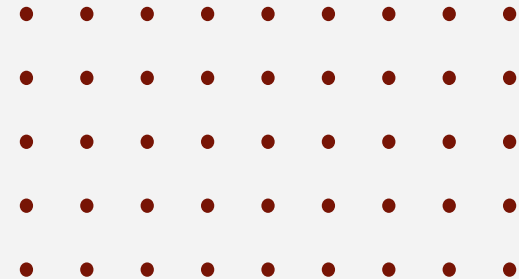


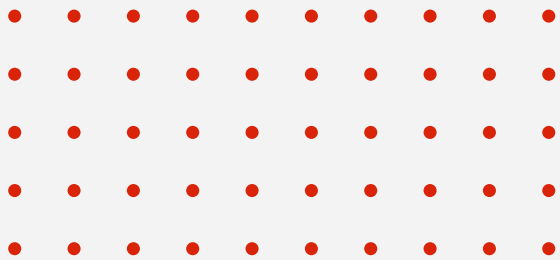
*Robust, Relevant and Empowering*

# Participatory Impact Assessment and Learning Approach (PIALA)

PIALA workshop at the DeGEval Conference  
21 June 2023, Stuttgart

**Adinda Van Hemelrijck**





In the next 90'  
you will learn about:

- The basics of PIALA:
  - What it is and can be used for
  - The added value it can bring
- How PIALA is applied in real world contexts (balancing rigour, inclusiveness and feasibility)

01

# The basics of PIALA



# What is P-I-A-L-A ?

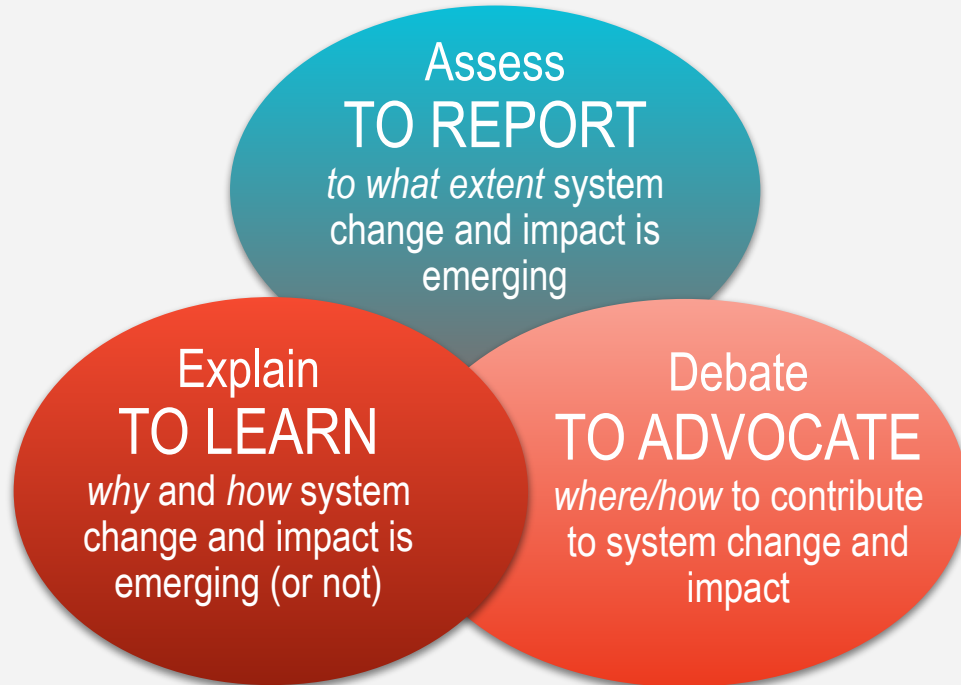
It's an **APPROACH** for combining methods (not a particular method)  
to **ASSESS** for learning and increasing value (not just to evaluate/judge)  
of progress and contribution towards **COLLECTIVE IMPACT** as system change  
(beyond attribution / individual impact)  
using **PARTICIPATORY** processes to co-generate knowledge (not to extract data)





# Multiple types of methods and evidence to serve **multiple** purposes

Approach or model  
for combining **multiple  
types of methods  
and evidence**  
to rigorously **assess**,  
**explain** and **debate**  
system change and  
impact



# PIALA seeks to address the three major challenges of evaluation in a complex world



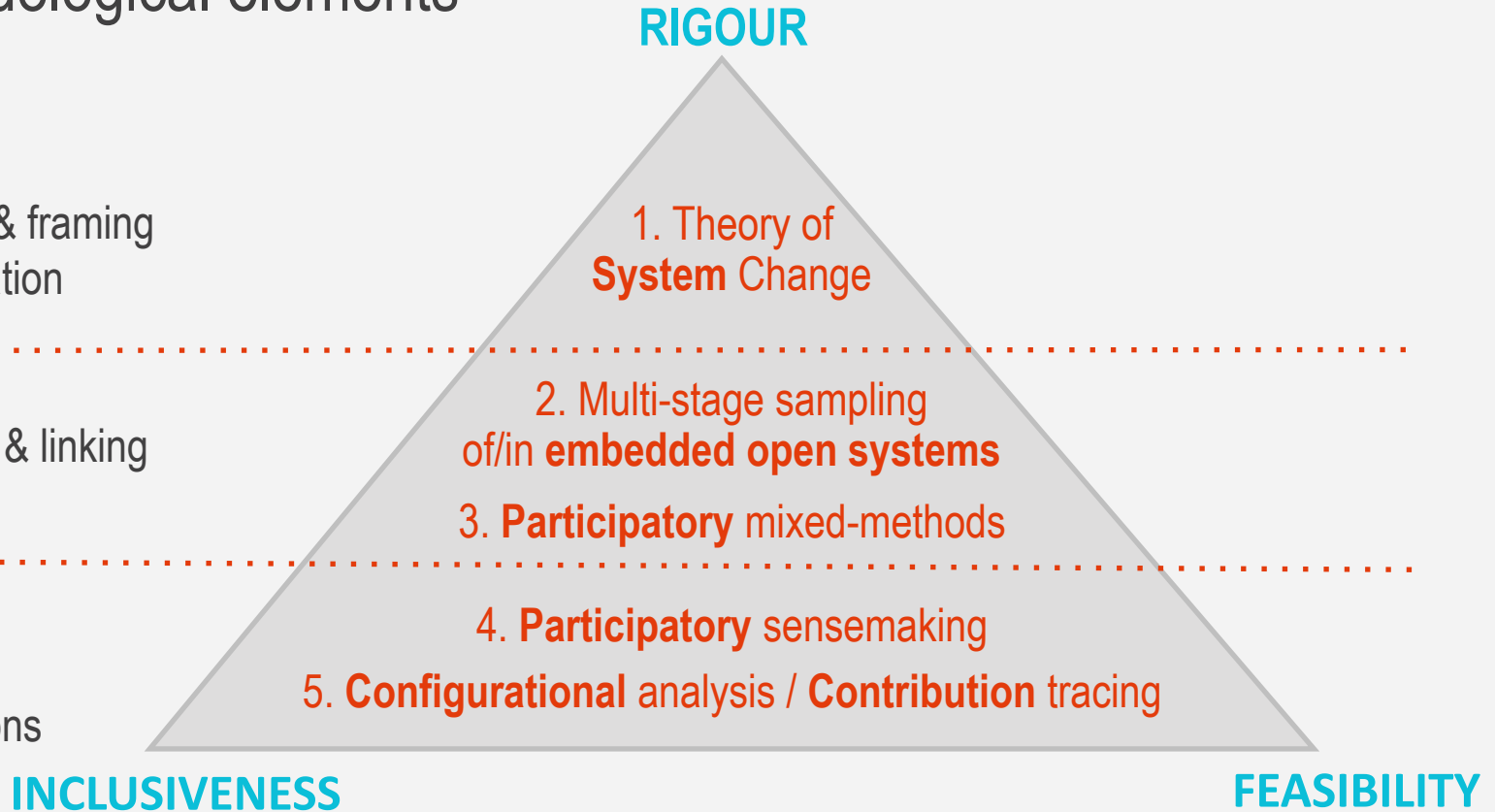
- **The methodological challenge**  
How to ensure rigour in assessing causality in complex environments where isolated cause-effect relations hold no sway
- **The validity challenge**  
How to avoid **bias** or **dominance of a single truth** in making value judgements of 'contribution to impact' in complex environments
- **The utilisation challenge**  
How to generate multiple types of evidence and for multiple uses and users that help to see through complexity

# 5 adaptive methodological elements

Phase 1:  
Focusing & framing  
the evaluation

Phase 2:  
Collecting & linking  
the data

Phase 3:  
Analysing  
contributions



## 2 design principles

### 3 quality standards

#### **RIGOUR**

Quality of thought in methods and processes avoiding the dominance “single truths” while ensuring consistency and responsiveness

Evaluate  
**systemically**

Enable **meaningful**  
**participation**

#### **INCLUSIVENESS**

Inclusion of all stakeholder priorities, views and perspectives (using local understandings a GEDSI

#### **FEASIBILITY**

Generating credible and useful evidence with available resources and capabilities in given contexts and cultures

# Robert Chambers' concept of inclusive rigour

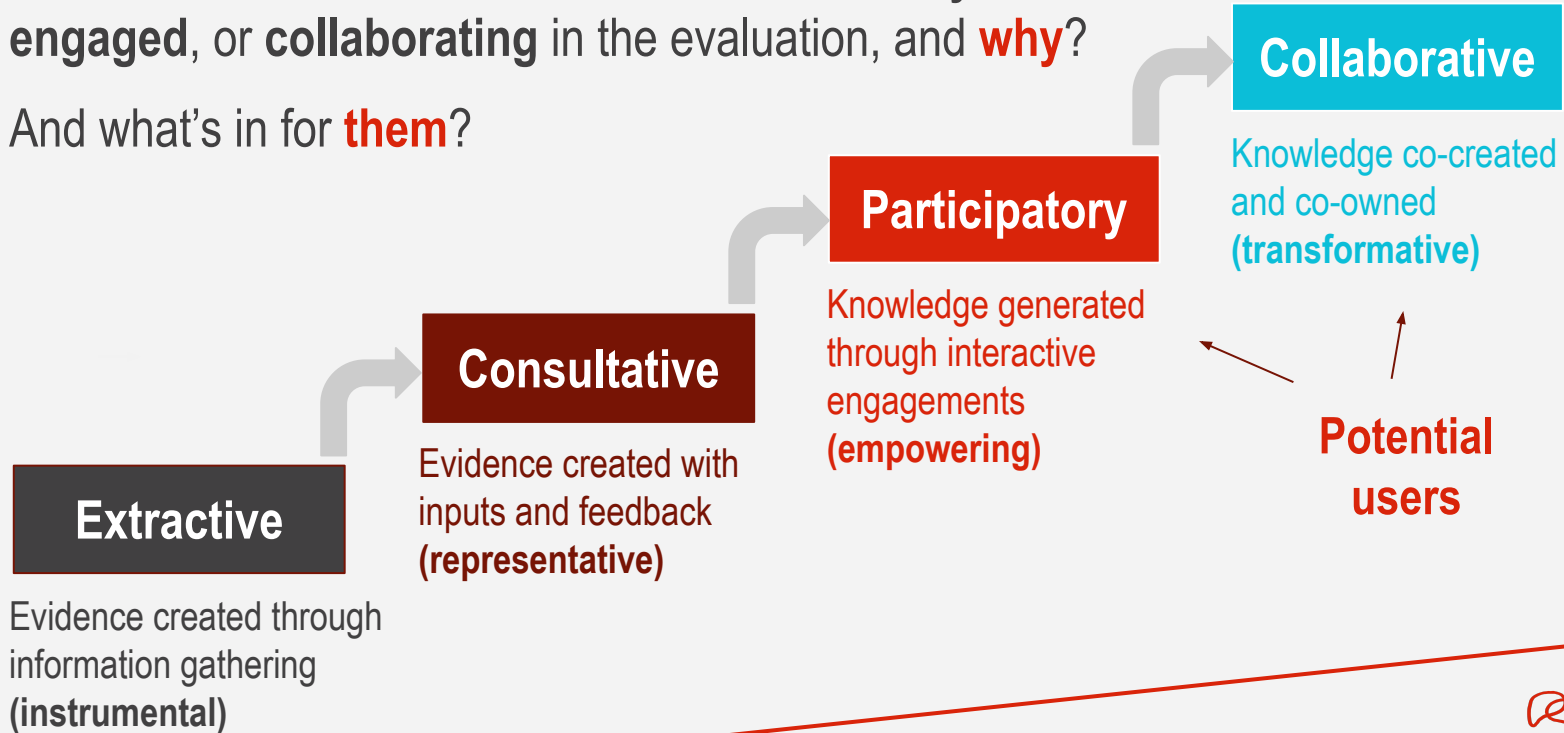
Chapter 4 in [Can We Know Better?](#) (2017: 96-97, 105-109) describes how PIALA pioneered the concept of 'inclusive rigour' at scale

*“Rigour is a strange omission (in participatory approaches), perhaps even a blind spot. Except for Developmental Evaluation (Patton, 2011), it is not in the index of any of the books cited, nor others which I have consulted, nor in the title of any of the IDS Bulletin articles. To varying degrees these latter mention the superordinate canon of participation but do not stress reflexivity (to ensure inclusive rigour). That is, though, **significantly recognised in PIALA**, as part of what should be **a wave of the future.**”*

# Normative ladder to enable meaningful participation

**Who** should be interviewed, consulted, actively engaged, or collaborating in the evaluation, and **why**?

And what's in for **them**?



# Inclusive and meaningful participation implies recognising that...

- Reality and its changes are complex, therefore requires **multiple perspectives** and **multiple ways of learning/knowing**
- Evaluators/researchers too have **preconceived ideas and biased views** of the world
- **All viewpoints count**, in particular those of impacted groups
- The object (impacted groups) becomes the subject (action groups) of analysis when it affects **their reality**
- Participation and collaboration is an exercise in the **delegation of rigour and power** and requires gendered **'Thinking and Working Politically'** (TWP) to ensure **voice, ethics** and **safety**

*“Bridging the gap between TWP and evaluation usefulness is, in part, a **technical challenge** (that is, one of methods), but it is also a **political challenge**.”* Chris Roche (DLP, 2020)



# 10 design sliders

**More inclusive and participatory approach**

**More extractive and isolating**

## Phase 1: Focusing and framing

1. Scale:	Few system cases		Many system cases
2. Scope:	All system actors & components		Few system actors & components
3. Engagement in design:	All potential users		Experts only

## Phase 2: Collecting and linking data

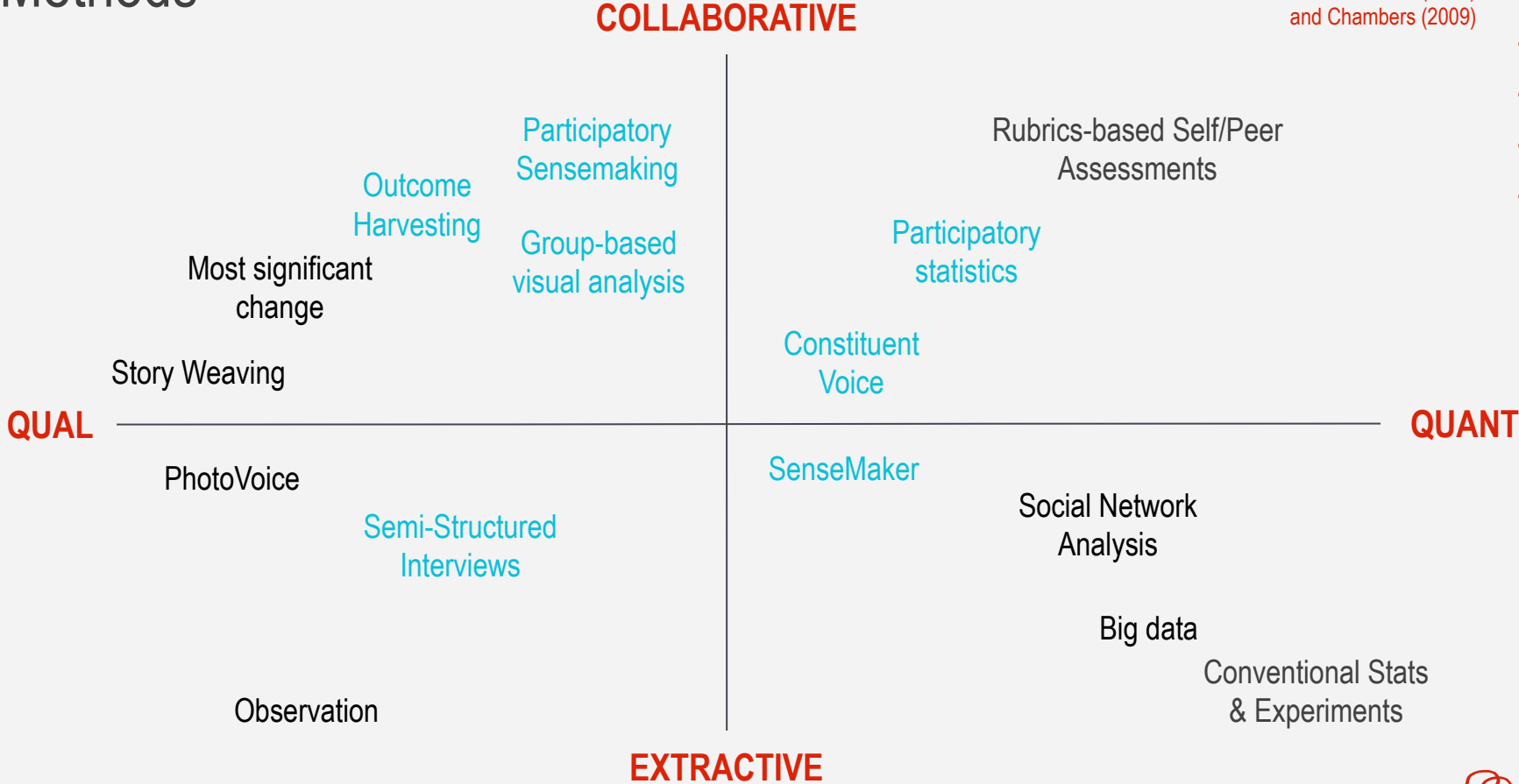
4. Counterfactual:	Hypothetical 'control' case		Comparable 'control' cases
5. Mixed Methods:	Overlapping methods		Complementary methods
6. Mixed Processes:	Participatory processes		Extractive processes
7. Sampling of/within systems:	Purposive sampling and snowballing		Random (table-top) sampling

## Phase 3: Analysing and making sense of evidence

8. Focus of analysis:	Systemic-ness (depth)		Significance (breadth)
9. Data entry & analysis:	Integrated		Separate
10. Engagement in analysis and sensemaking:	Up- & downstream stakeholders		Experts only

# Methods

Visualisation based on Holland (2013)  
and Chambers (2009)

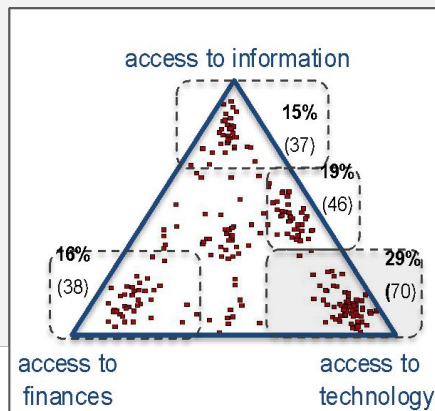




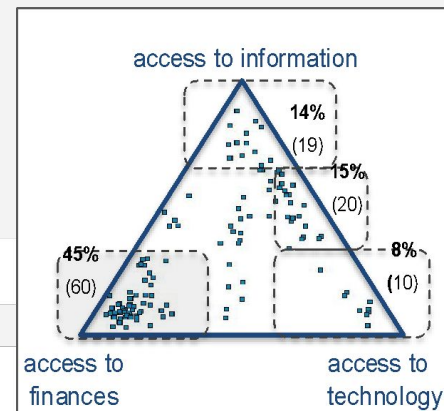
# SenseMaker and Mass-storytelling



The change in your story was influenced by ...



Experiences about positive changes (240 stories)



Experiences about negative changes (132 stories)



# Participatory Sensemaking



Sensemaking in Myanmar: Importance of location, facilitation and group composition to ensure **voice**, **ethics** and **safety**

# Understanding power dynamics



Evaluation of VAWG in markets in Port Moresby (PNG)



Evaluation of Local Governance in Myanmar

# Where is PIALA situated?

Overview table based on  
Van Hemelrijck (2013)

	SIMPLE	COMPLICATED	COMPLEX
QUESTION	To what extent did it work?	To what extent did it work for whom, in what contexts, and why?	What mechanisms triggered the change for whom, in what contexts, how and why?
PURPOSE	Measuring distributed impact to inform policy and funding decision making	Explaining distributed impact to inform programme strategy design and funding	Understanding emergent system change and impact for adaptive program management, collaborative learning and empowerment
IMPACT DEFINITION	<b>Attributable effect of an intervention</b> (e.g. of a new vaccine)	<b>Intended and unintended, direct and indirect effects of a set of interventions</b> (e.g. farmer field schools)	<b>Transformative system change and impact</b> shifting values, mental models, structures and behavioural patterns (e.g. Covid-19)
APPROACH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>(Quasi-)Experimental approaches</b> (Mill's method of difference)</li> <li>• <b>Statistical approaches</b> (Mill's method of agreement)</li> </ul>	<b>Theory-based and case-based mixed methods approaches</b> (logical inference in contribution and config analysis)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Realist and developmental approaches</b> using combined methods and MRT (process tracing to assess <b>generative causation</b>)</li> <li>• <b>Participatory approaches</b> (democratic evaluation, empowerment evaluation, PIA)</li> </ul>



# When is PIALA useless?

- When you believe participation is too messy and evaluators can be 100% objective
- When you want to assess a simple cause-effect relationship in a purely scientific way
- When you want to use a single design based on a particular methodology (e.g. RCT, SenseMaker, MSC)
- When you want to evaluate a humanitarian programme in chaotic contexts of violent conflict and insecurity



02

How PIALA is  
applied in real world  
contexts



# Two Contrasting Examples

## Global Developmental Leadership Program (2008-2023)

Evaluation of DLP's influence on development policy and practice through research promoting TWP/DL.

- International research initiative (launched in 2008)
- Third phase (2019-2023) managed by DFAT, BU and LTU, with research conducted by 20 locally embedded research partners in 7 countries in the Indo-Pacific
- Developmental evaluation process using PIALA

75,000 Euros

## Roots & Tubers Improvement and Marketing Programme in Ghana (2007-2014)

Evaluation of RTIMP's impact on food and income security as a result of improved R&T livelihoods through commodity chain dev.

- Gov programme (2007-2014) financed by IFAD
- Three components: production, processing, and marketing
- Country-wide participatory impact evaluation commissioned to inform the next Ghana Agricultural Sector Investment Programme (GASIP)

230,000 Euros

# Phase 1: Framing and Focusing

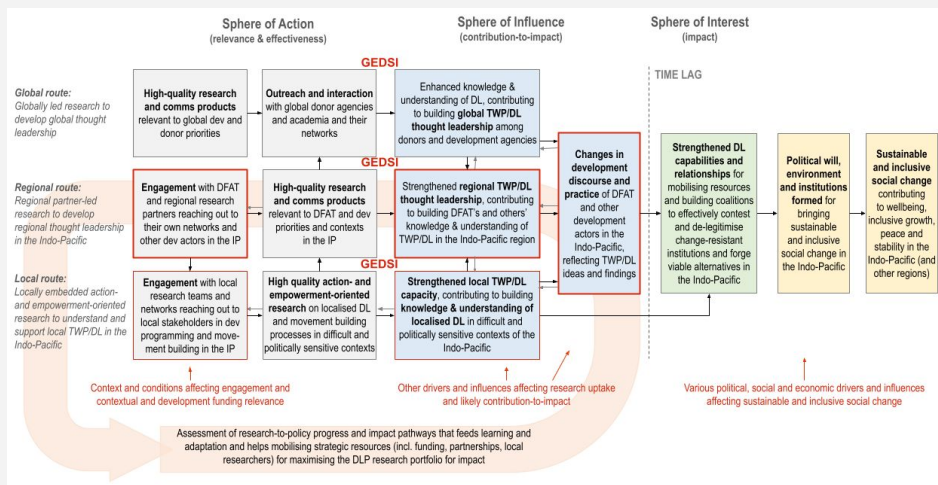
Reach agreement on the required **scale**, **scope** and **level of engagement in design** to meet the agreed **evaluation purposes**:

- **For learning:** More in-depth analysis of the interaction of system actors and components in a few (outlier) cases with the highest learning value, selected together with potential users/learners (e.g. strategic partners, community mobilisers...)
- **For accountability:** Enough and representative cases that enable you to draw conclusions about progress and contribution to system change and impact for the entire programme, with a focus on main the main actors and components of interest, selected in consultation with the main constituents that require accountability (e.g. funders, citizens...)
- **For advocacy:** Convincing cases to generate the insights and arguments to advocate for policy change and investment in specific system components/actors, selected in consultation with key users (e.g. research partners, activists...)

1. Scale:	Few system cases	—————	Many system cases
2. Scope:	All system actors & components	—————	Few system actors & components
3. Engagement in design:	All potential users	—————	Experts only

# Framing and Focusing of the DLP evaluation

- **Purposes:** substantiate DLP's 15-year legacy and capture lessons and insights for future DL research
- **Scale:** few local + one regional TWP/DL research-to-policy pathways
- **Scope:** focus on relevance, GEDSI and impactful engagement (i.e. conditions and results of research uptake and influence) for both research producers and research users
- **Engagement in design:** the sponsor group including UoB, LTU, DFAT and research teams (mostly PIs)

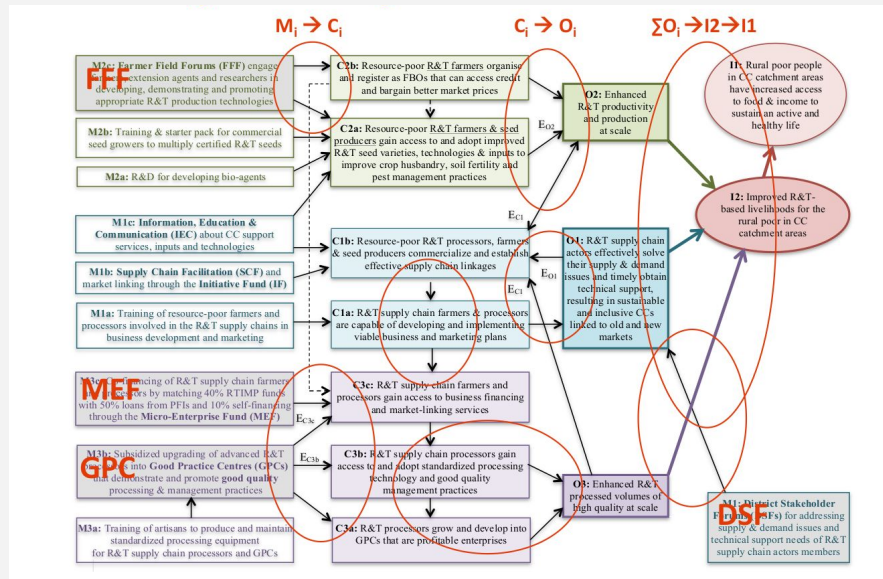


1. Scale:	Few system cases		Many system cases
2. Scope:	All system actors & components		Few system actors & components
3. Engagement in design:	All potential users		Experts only



# Framing and Focusing of the RTIMP evaluation

- **Purposes:** accountability, learning and advocacy
- **Scale:** all commodity supply chain systems, country-wide
- **Scope:** all three program components and all local, regional and national system actors, but focus on four key mechanisms
- **Engagement in design:** sponsor group including IFAD, GoG, research and implementation partners



1. Scale:	Few system cases		Many system cases
2. Scope:	All system actors & components		Few system actors & components
3. Engagement in design:	All potential users		Experts only

## Phase 2: Collecting and Linking Data

Based on the **agreed scale and scope** related to the **agreed purposes**, and taking into account **'evaluability'** of the 'system' cases, identify the most appropriate:

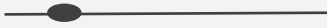


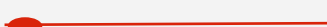
- cross- and within-case **sampling approach**
- counterfactual approach
- set of methods balancing **participatory vs extractive data collection** processes, thinking of whose voices need to be included and involved to meet the purposes

4. Counterfactual:	Hypothetical 'control' case	_____	Comparable 'control' cases
5. Mixed Methods:	Overlapping methods	_____	Complementary methods
6. Mixed Processes:	<b>Participatory processes</b>	_____	<b>Extractive processes</b>
7. Sampling of/within systems:	<b>Purposive sampling and snowballing</b>	_____	<b>Random (table-top) sampling</b>



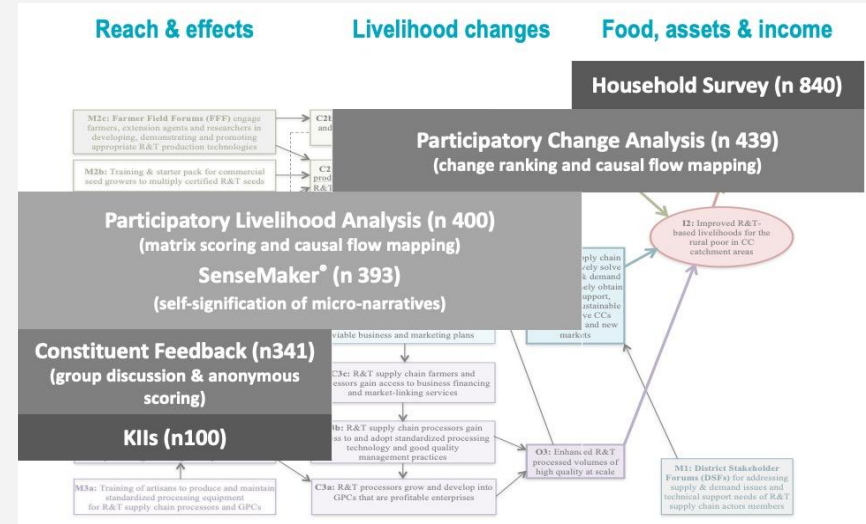
# Collecting and Linking Data in the DLP evaluation

- **Purposive multi-stage sampling:**
  - 3 local and 1 regional TWP/DL pathways
  - 52 stakeholders (24 research producers and 28 research audiences/users)
- **Hypothetical counterfactual** based on a comparison of up- and downstream uptake and influence across the three DLP phases (2008-2013, 2014-2018, 2019-2023)
- **Developmental evaluation** process using **overlapping methods** such as **Constituent Voice** and Process Tracing, cross-checked and cross-validated with **multiple stakeholder groups and sources**

4. Counterfactual:	Hypothetical 'control' case		Comparable 'control' cases
5. Mixed Methods:	Overlapping methods		Complementary methods
6. Mixed Processes:	Participatory processes		Extractive processes
7. Sampling of/within systems:	Purposive sampling and snowballing		Random (table-top) sampling


# Collecting and Linking Data in the RTIMP evaluation

- **Multi-stage cluster sampling:**
  - Random sample of 30 commodity supply chain
  - Ransom sample of 900 households
  - Quasi random sample 800 supply chain stakeholders
  - Purposive sample of 100 national stakeholders
- **Embedded counterfactuals** where mechanisms were immature or absent
- **Partially overlapping and mostly participatory methods** mapped onto the ToC



4. Counterfactual:	Hypothetical 'control' case		Comparable 'control' cases
5. Mixed Methods:	Overlapping methods		Complementary methods
6. Mixed Processes:	Participatory processes		Extractive processes
7. Sampling of/within systems:	Purposive sampling and snowballing		Random (table-top) sampling

# Embedded counterfactuals in the RTIMP Evaluation



		Contribution Claim of RTIMP Component 3				Contribution Claim of RTIMP Component 2				Contribution Claim of RTIMP Component 1			Contributions of RTIMP Components 1, 2 & 3	
		Enhanced Processing (O3)				Enhanced Production (O2)				Enhanced Market-Linking (O3)			Improved Livelihoods (I2)	
		DSF	FFF	GPC	MEF	FFF	Evidence Strength	Evidence Strength	Evidence Strength	DSF	Evidence Strength	Evidence Strength	O1+O2+O3 → I2	Evidence Strength
				(M3c)+C1a+M3b → C3c	(M3b)-C3c → C3b → O3									
Tano North (Apesika)	(CZ)	1	1	1	1	3	6	5	5	5	4	4	5	5
Techiman	(CZ)	1	1	1	1	4	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	5
Gomoa East	(SZ)	1	1	1	0	2	5	3	5	5	4	4	5	6
Assin South	(SZ)	1	1	1	1	3	4	4	6	5	4	3	4	4
Birim Central	(CZ)	1	1	1	1	3	3	4	5	5	4	3	4	5
Nkwana South	(NZ)	1	1	1	0	3	4	5	5	4	5	3	5	5
Upper West Akim	(CZ)	1	1	1	1	2	4	4	5	5	4	3	5	5
Ashanti Mampong	(CZ)	1	1	1	1	3	4	5	5	5	5	3	5	5
West Gonja (Damongo)	(NZ)	1	1	1	0	3	4	5	5	4	5	3	5	5
Abura Asebu Kwamankese	(SZ)	1	1	1	1	3	3	5	5	6	3	3	5	4
Nanumba North	(NZ)	1	1	N/A			N/A		5	5	5	3	5	5
East Gonja	(NZ)	1	1	N/A			N/A		4	3	5	3	5	5
Central Gonja	(NZ)	1	1	N/A		2	3	5	5	4	5	2	5	5
Subum	(CZ)	1	1	1	0	3	4	5	4	4	5	2	3	5
Adansi South	(CZ)	1	1	1	1	2	4	5	4	3	4	2	3	5
Ahafo Ano South	(CZ)	1	1	1	0	2	2	4	5	4	5	2	5	5
Kintampo South	(CZ)	1	1	N/A			N/A		4	4	3	2	5	5
Wa East	(NZ)	1	1	0	0	2	2	5	4	5	5	2	3	5
North Davi/ Kpando	(SZ)	1	1	1	0	2	2	6	2	3	5	2	5	5
Agona East	(SZ)	0	0	1	0	2	3	6	4	4	4	2	6	6
Pru	(CZ)	0	0	N/A			N/A		2	2	4	2	5	5
Ho Municipal	(SZ)	1	1	0	0	3	2	5	5	5	5	3	5	5
Tano North (Dua Yaw Nkwana)	(CZ)	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	3	3	4	2	3	5
Wassa Amenfi West	(SZ)	0	0	N/A		1	2	5	4	4	5	1	6	5
Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly	(CZ)	0	0	N/A		1	1	4	1	1	4	1	4	4

## Some findings...

### Impact:

- Significant R&T-based livelihood improvement in **52% supply chains** (weak/no improvement where RTIMP mechanisms were dysfunctional).
- 15% HHs** moved up to >\$2/day as a result of R&T livelihood improvements.
- 61% HHs** had invested in R&T but not gained profits >\$4/day.

### Explanation:

- Insufficient market in **88% supply chains** due to weak market linking and innovation (RTIMP mechanisms were functioning well in the other 12%)

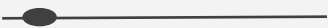

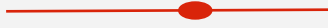
# Phase 3: Analysing and Making Sense

- Decide on **integrating data in the within-case analysis** where samples and methods overlap and data collection happens quasi simultaneously
- Decide on the **desired depth and breadth of within-case and cross-case analysis**, based on the agreed evaluation purposes and the available evidence for sampled 'system cases'
- Decide on the **level of engagement in analysis and sensemaking** based on:
  - the **extent** of stakeholders' participation in earlier phases
  - the **utility** for them to participate in analysis and sensemaking
  - the **resources and capabilities** available to organise and facilitate meaningful engagement taking into account **voice, rights, ethics** and **safety**

8. Focus of analysis:	Systemic-ness (depth)	_____	Significance (breadth)
9. Data entry & analysis:	Integrated	_____	Separate
10. Engagement in analysis and sensemaking:	Up- & downstream stakeholders	_____	Experts only




# Analysing and Making Sense in the DLP evaluation

- Fully **integrating data analysis** focused on **depth of within-case** analysis for learning and legacy, with a ‘lite’ cross-case comparative analysis to explore the extent to which case study findings apply to the wider portfolio
- **Collaborative engagement of up- and downstream stakeholders** (research producers and users) in cross-case analysis and sensemaking

8. Focus of analysis:	Systemic-ness (depth)		Significance (breadth)
9. Data entry & analysis:	Integrated		Separate
10. Engagement in analysis and sensemaking:	Up- & downstream stakeholders		Experts only

# Analysing and Making Sense in the RTIMP evaluation

- Full **depth and breadth** of within-case and cross-case analysis with **integrated data analysis** for accountability, learning and advocacy
- **Participatory engagement of:**
  - **Impacted groups** in **group-based diagnostics** and in **23 local sensemaking workshops** (>60% of 640 pax) and **1 national sensemaking workshop** (>30% of 110 pax)
  - **Upstream stakeholders** in **local and national sensemaking**

8. Focus of analysis:	Systemic-ness (depth)		Significance (breadth)
9. Data entry & analysis:	Integrated		Separate
10. Engagement in analysis and sensemaking:	Up- & downstream stakeholders		Experts only

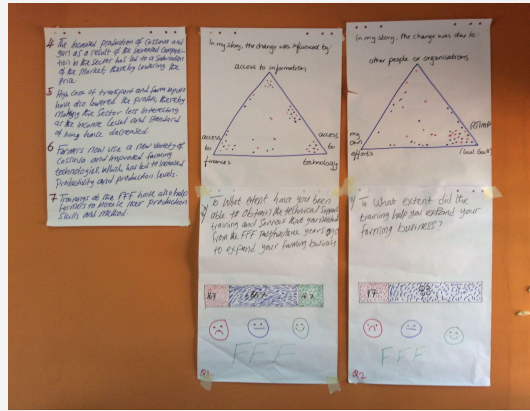
# Analysing and Making Sense in the RTIMP evaluation



Before final analysis and reporting is done.

Participants:

- make sense of the evidence
- assign value to the contributions made to impact
- identify key issues needing more effort.





# Questions for clarification?



03

From trade-offs to  
win-wins



# Two Cases for Breakout Team Assignments

## Empower Youth for Work (EYW) Programme in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Pakistan and Indonesia (2016-2021).

Evaluation of programme outcomes and contribution to the socio-economic empowerment of youth.

- Global Oxfam programme implemented in very remote areas in 2 regions per country.
- Three components: youth agency, economic opportunities, and enabling environment.
- Youth participated in the design, implementation and sensemaking.

95,000 Euros

## Local Inclusive Governance for Climate Resilience in the Dry Zone of Myanmar (2011-2014).

Evaluation of the effectiveness and sustainability of local citizen Membership Organisations (MOs) in building livelihood and community resilience.

- Oxfam innovation project implemented in 64 villages in two townships
- Three components: MO governance, relations with gov and PS, and community risk & vulnerability mngt
- MO members participated in the design, implementation and sensemaking as **co-researchers**.

40,000 Euros



# Thank You

Do you have further questions?

[adinda@collabimpact](mailto:adinda@collabimpact)  
[www.collabimpact.org](http://www.collabimpact.org)



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