



Addressing the Knowing–Doing Gap

To better serve education
policymakers' evidence needs

KIX LAC 2.0 WEBINAR

26 SEPTEMBER 2023

OUTLINE

1. Introduction: Understanding the knowing-doing gap
2. Policymaker evidence use & needs: what have we learned?
3. Widening the sources of evidence: why, what, how?
4. EO's Strategic Goals 2023-2028
5. Closing: an invitation to engage

Who are we?

An independent non-profit initiative in its 3rd year.

Vision: a world where the education of all children and young people is transformed by the best evidence.

Mission: 'To improve the learning of every child and young person by helping leaders access and use the best evidence to guide their national policies and plans'.

A **constructive disruptor:** It's not a lack of new evidence, but the inability to use what we know, that lies at the heart of the global education crisis.

Using a novel **Education Evidence Pathway** to bridge this 'knowing-doing' gap



A STRONGER EDUCATION KNOWLEDGE BRIDGE IS NEEDED

<https://education.org/white-paper>



Calling for an Education Knowledge Bridge

A White Paper to Advance Evidence Use in Education

September 2021



Five ways to bridge the knowing-doing gap

-  **1. Research generation:** Promote end use and user focus from the outset
-  **2. Synthesis:** Build the big picture including 'frontline' unpublished evidence
-  **3. Actionable guidance:** Answer the “so what?” of every synthesis – what does it mean for users?
-  **4. Enabling environment:** Build a culture of in-country evidence use
-  **5. Implementation:** Engage for and support change at scale

WHAT EDUCATION POLICY-MAKERS USE AS EVIDENCE

Review of 21 ed policy & planning documents, 2015-2019:

- 12 (57%) cited any sources
- 15% of the evidence sources (n=62) cited were locally generated evidence (African countries or SSA)
- 27% of these were regional
- Nearly all 12 policy documents with citations were created with an external partner, e.g. UN partner, WB, INGO, bilateral.

What policy-makers report:

- They rely heavily on government documents and data, including from other ministries
- They use what they can access quickly
- They only use sources they trust, find credible
- They don't use elite academic sources that don't speak to them

“Research reports are not readily available. Even when you find the evidence, it is written for everybody but a policy maker. It takes a lot of time to figure out what it means for decisions.”

“Much of the studies show a lack of alignment of donor funding with government transitions, often working on what were previous priorities.”

WHAT DO POLICYMAKERS WANT?

- Reports written for **decision-makers**, not researchers
- Analysis that is **forward-looking**, not backwards
- Studies matching **government priorities**, not donors’
- Sources they can **trust**, without vested interests
- Sources covering **“real world,” frontline contributions**, especially from own country/region
- Synthesized evidence that is **contextually relevant, with actionable guidance**
- **Easier access** to studies & reports
- **Tech tools** to allow better, quicker data and access to data
- **Partnerships with researchers & practitioners** with expertise MOE needs; Greater reciprocity.
- **Channels to hear what practitioners are working on**, how are they progressing, what are they learning.

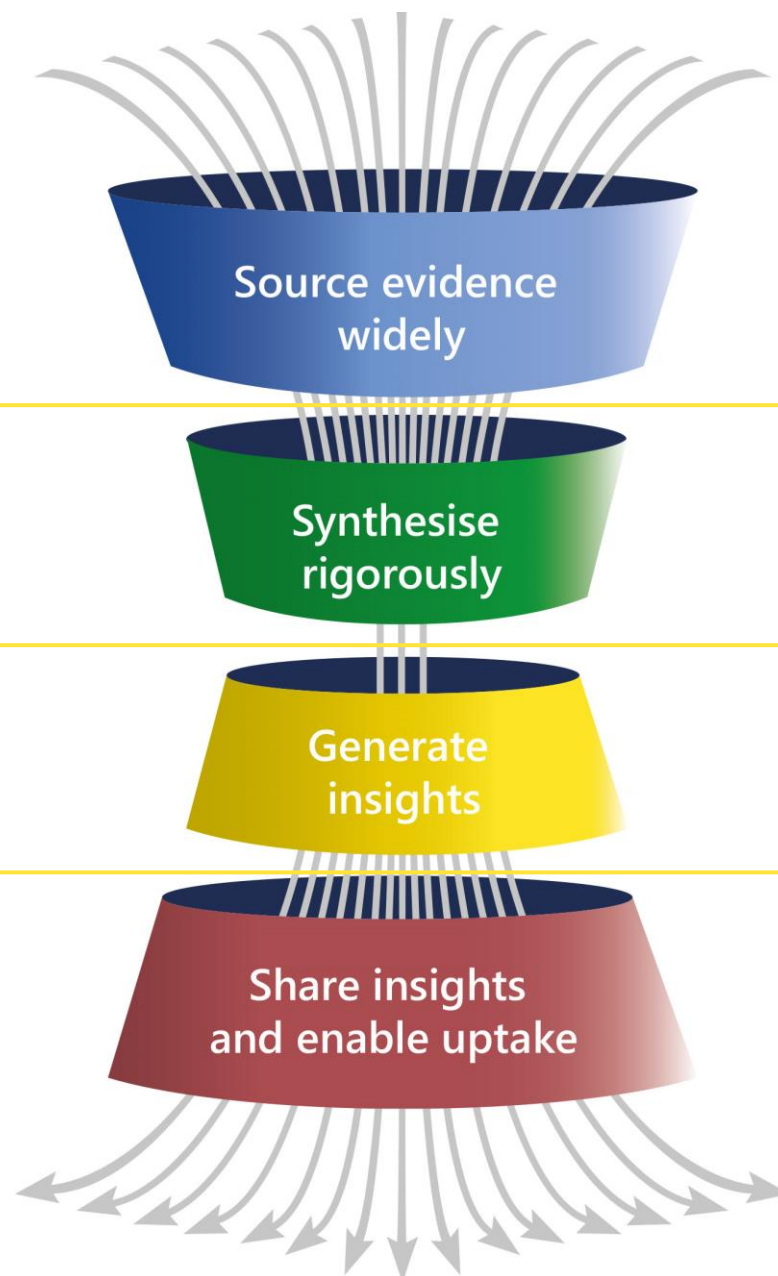
Our 'Education Evidence Pathway'

Source widely: Broader evidence base - not just academic research but local practitioners, government reports, NGO evaluations, etc.

Synthesise rigorously: Create a coherent picture from the mass of evidence and findings, appraising sources for quality, relevance & context, distilling key conclusions.

Generate insights: Plain-language actionable insights for national policies, plans & investments

Enable uptake: Long-term country-focused capacity building embedded within daily work of education leaders



BROADENING SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

Purpose of the International Working Group

To build on existing appraisal guidance for published research,

To develop a new, coherent, and intellectually rigorous system “non-traditional” sources to better serve education decision-makers,

To develop guidance to **classify, identify & access, and appraise** these sources, which include unpublished, locally generated, and practice-derived sources.

IWG Membership

- Global, regional & national level actors engaged in evidence ecosystem
- Engaged in various roles: policymaker, researcher, synthesiser, practitioner, or funder
- Senior representation from 27 organisations. Representation from 9 African countries

Targeted users of the IWG guidance

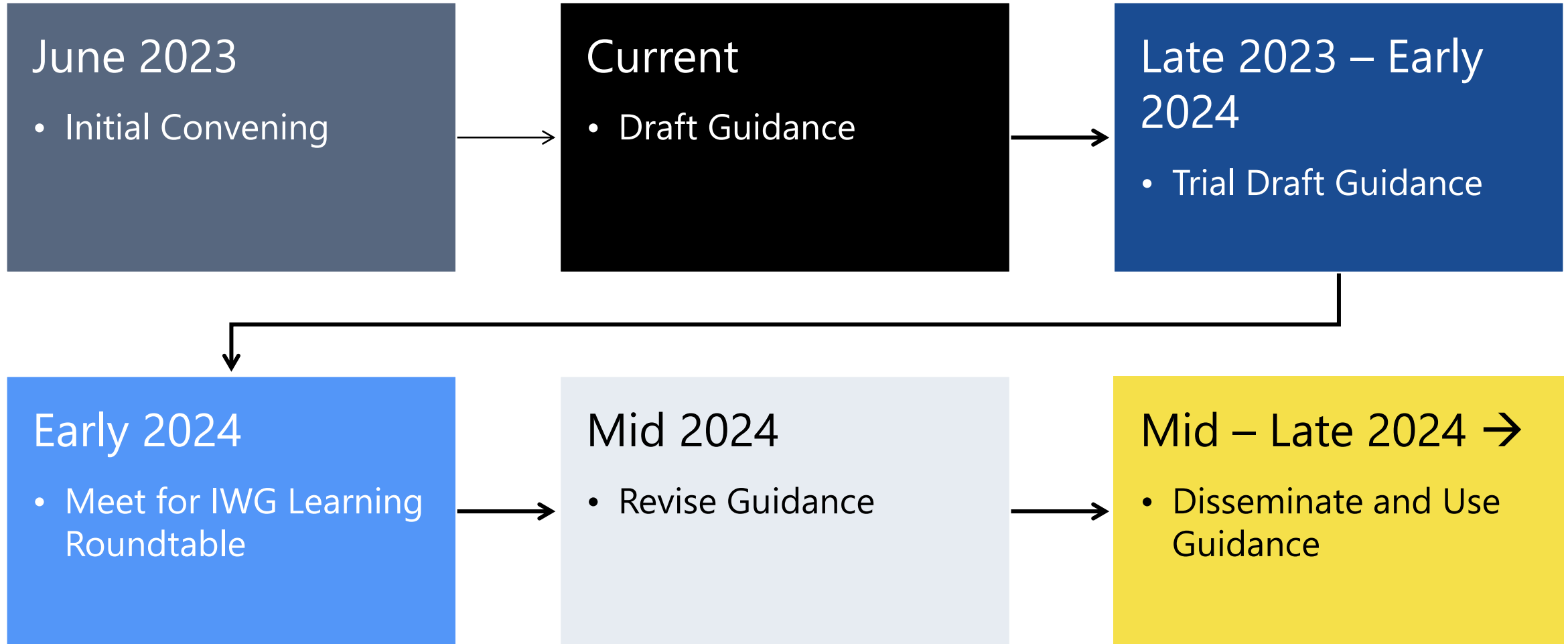
- Knowledge producers: researchers, synthesizers, practitioners, government analysts



KEY PRINCIPLES OF IWG

1. Shift the focus from the creator to focus on users & their needs
2. Interpretation must be within context
3. An expanded range of evidence enriches the quality of the evidence base
4. Question the published/not published and peer review criteria
5. Attend to credibility; trustworthiness of source as important to end-users
6. "Best available" includes affordable; accessible: language-accessible
7. There is power in combining research, practical applications, and real-life experiences

INTERNATIONAL WORKING GROUP TIMELINE





Strategy 2023-2028

Ready for
lift off!

STRATEGIC GOAL 1.

Establish an evidence synthesis gold standard for education system leaders



STRATEGIC GOAL 2.

Catalyse a transformation in the way education leaders work with evidence

STRATEGIC GOAL 3.

Lead a global movement to build an education knowledge bridge



Invitation to work together

1. Share guidance you are using. We want to build on the work of others, including in other sectors.
2. Provide feedback on draft IWG guidance.
3. Assist with dissemination and update among partners

Reach out at iwg@education.org

Visit us at www.Education.org