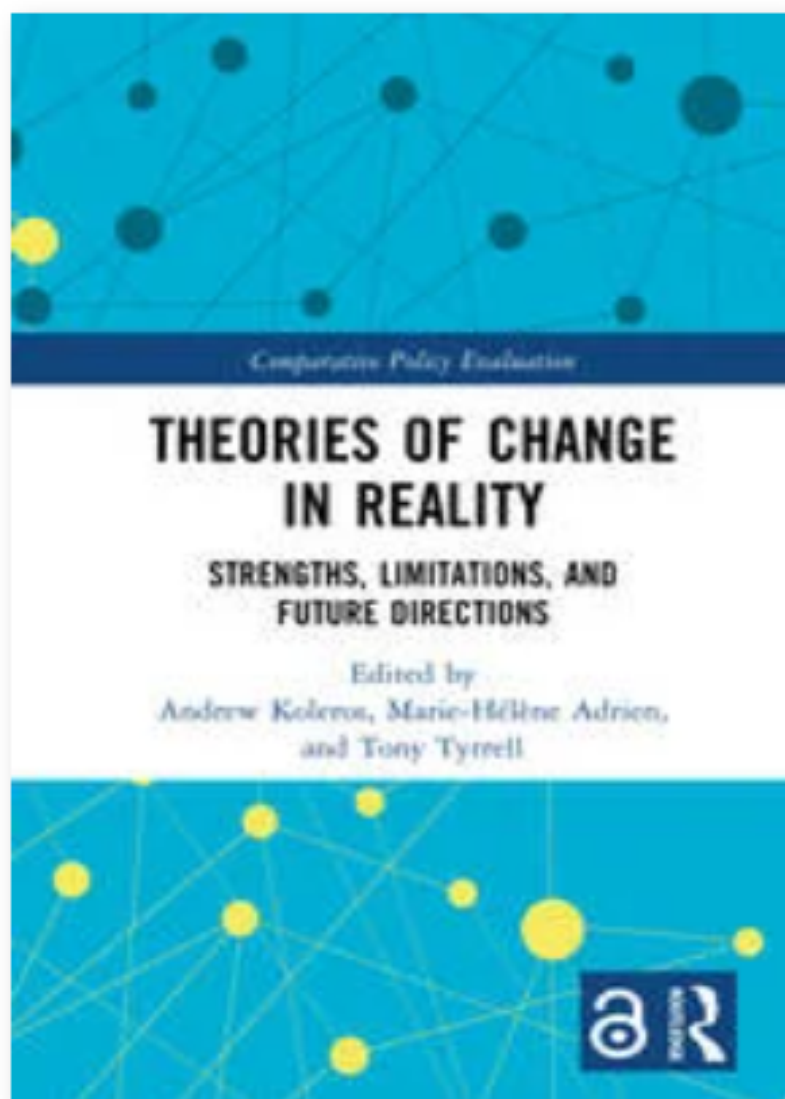


Keynote: Unveiling the Dynamics of Evidence Utilization: Lessons from 3ie's '*Balloon-Squeezing*' Approach

Dr. Marie Moland Gaarder
Executive Director, 3ie

June 6, 2024



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Book

Theories of Change in Reality

Strengths, Limitations and Future Directions

Edited By Andrew Koleros, Marie-Hélène Adrien, Tony

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1st Edition

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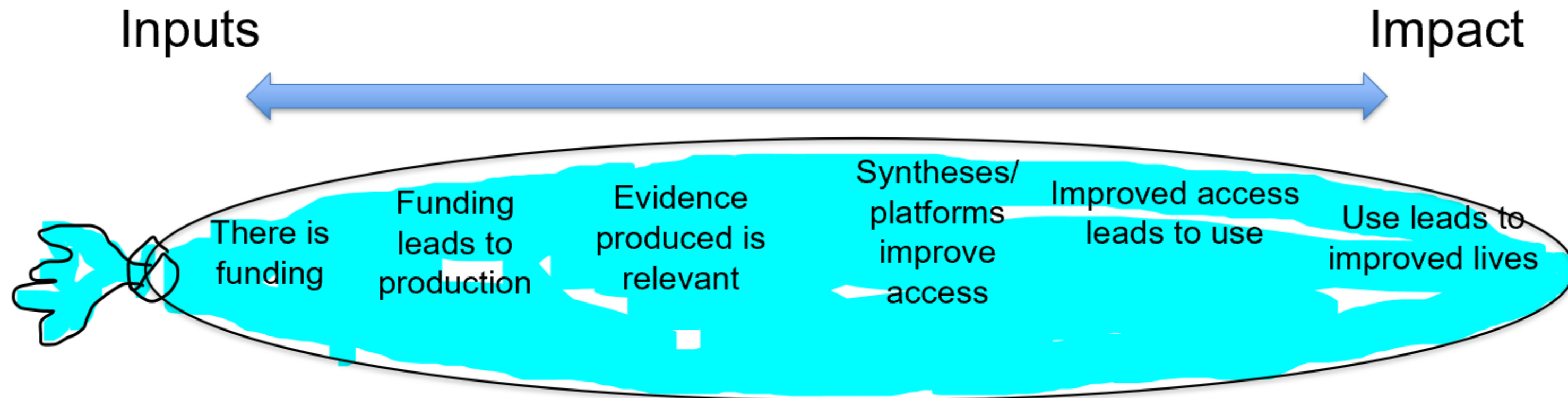
Pub. Location

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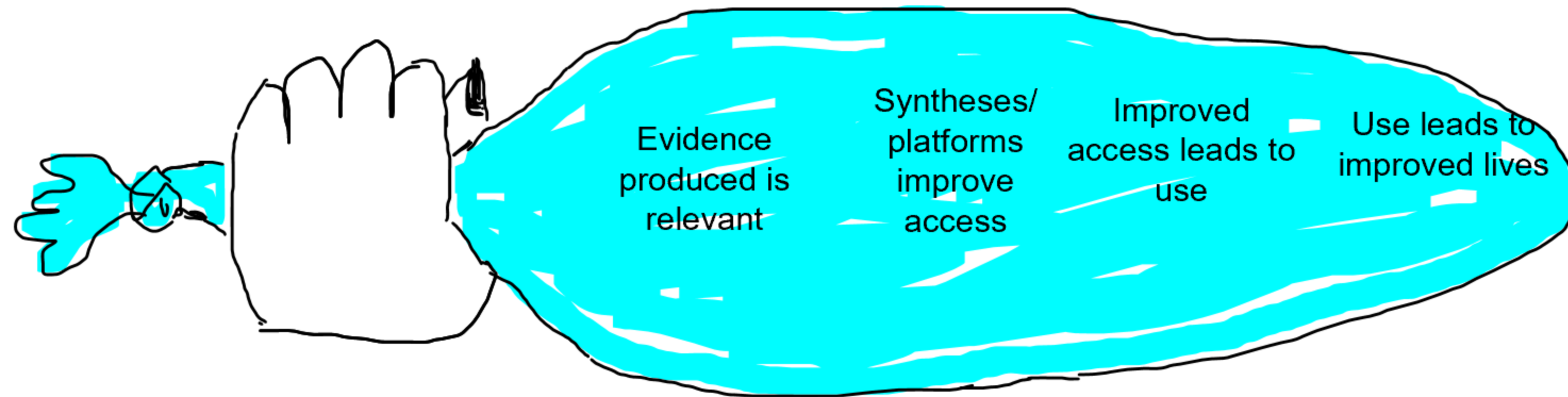
Routledge

3ie: A 'balloon-squeezing' approach to TOC



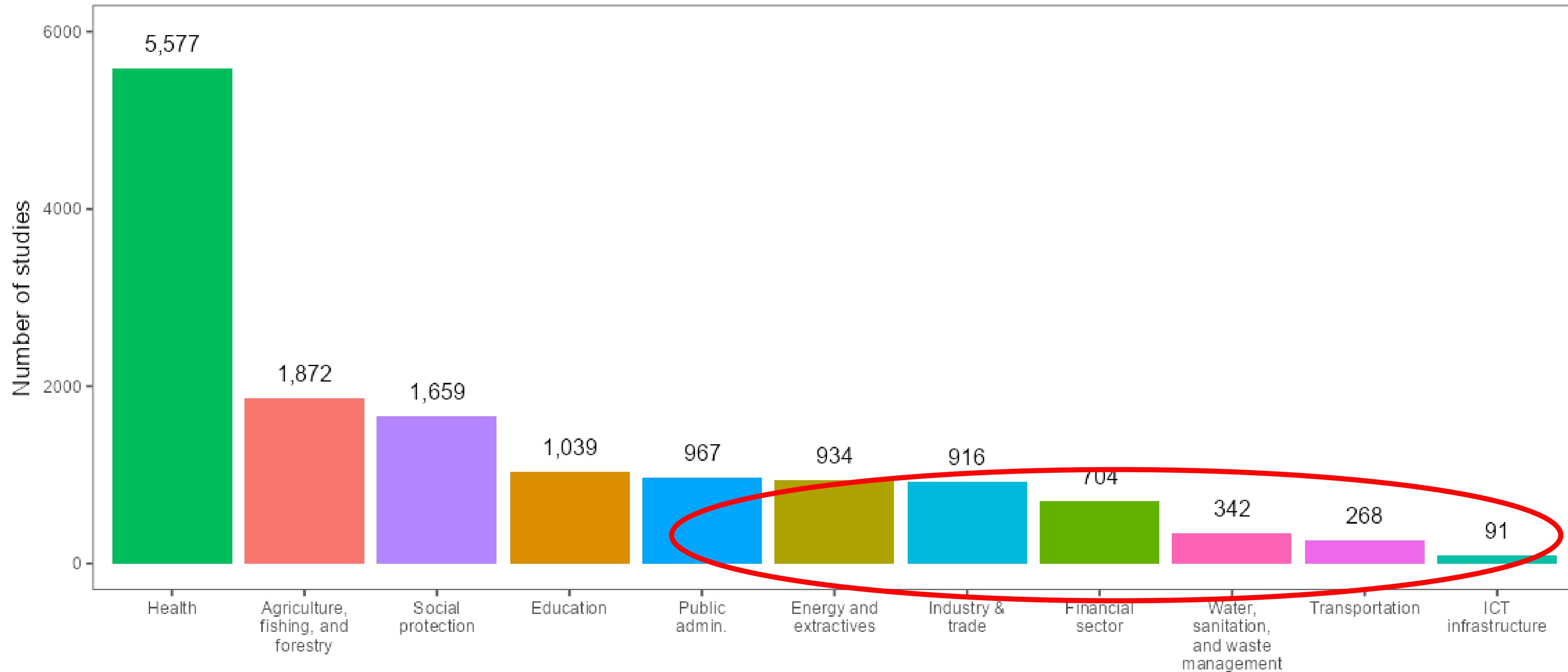
- When you squeeze a balloon, the air gets displaced within the balloon but doesn't leave it
- Air in the balloon = obstacles to using evidence to improve development policies/ programs
- Squeezing the balloon = test one of the underlying hypotheses

Squeeze 1: Funding leads to production



- Body of evidence has exploded (3ie's DEP > 13000 studies)
- # of institutions who are able to carry out impact evaluations has also multiplied
- **Squeeze one has been successful** though gaps still exist in many sectors, geographies, and for many outcomes

Impact evaluation studies by sector



Addressing health needs, the including...

Sexual and reproductive health and
rights in low- and middle-income
countries: An evidence gap map

Evidence Gap Map Brief, 2024



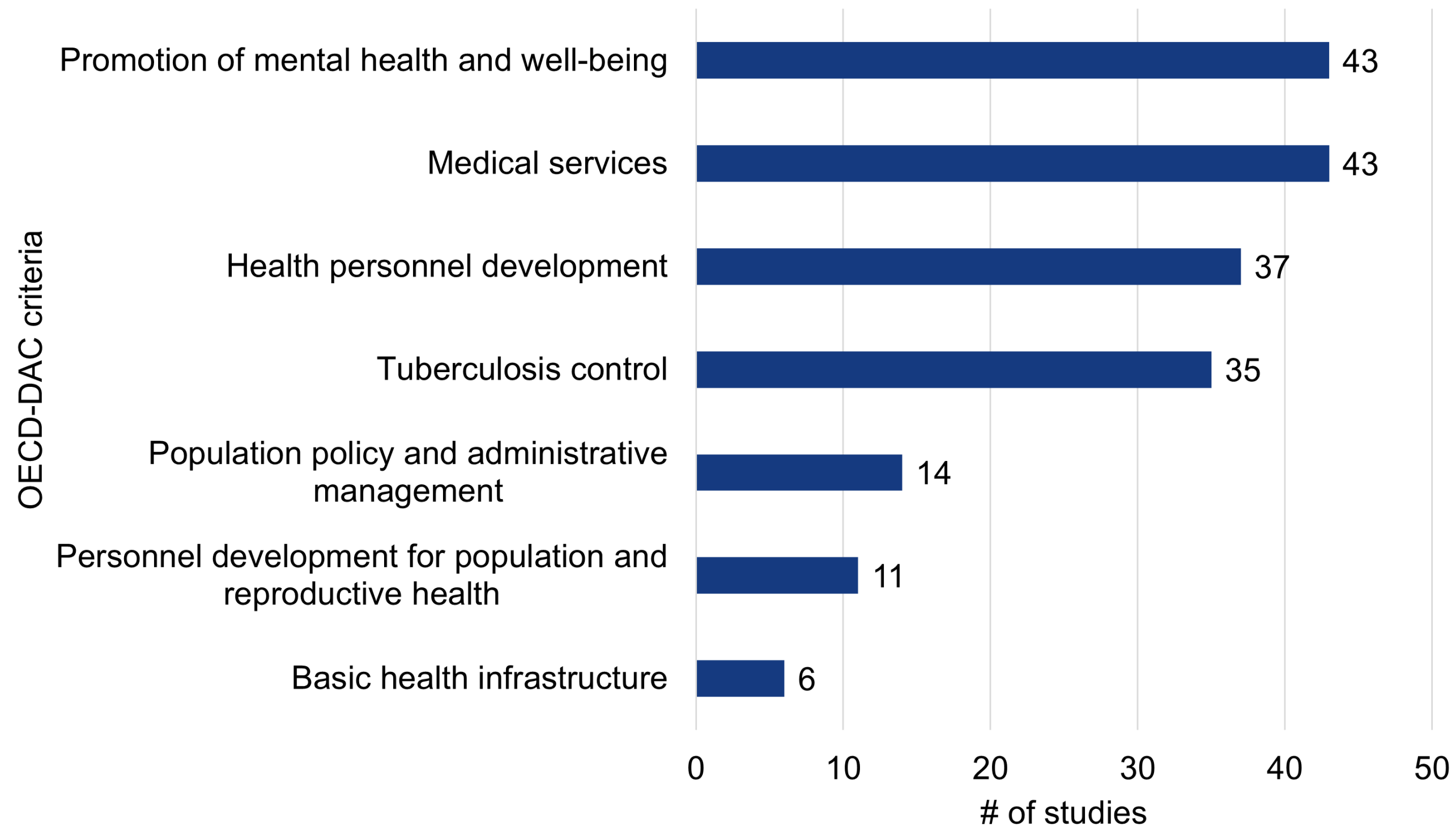
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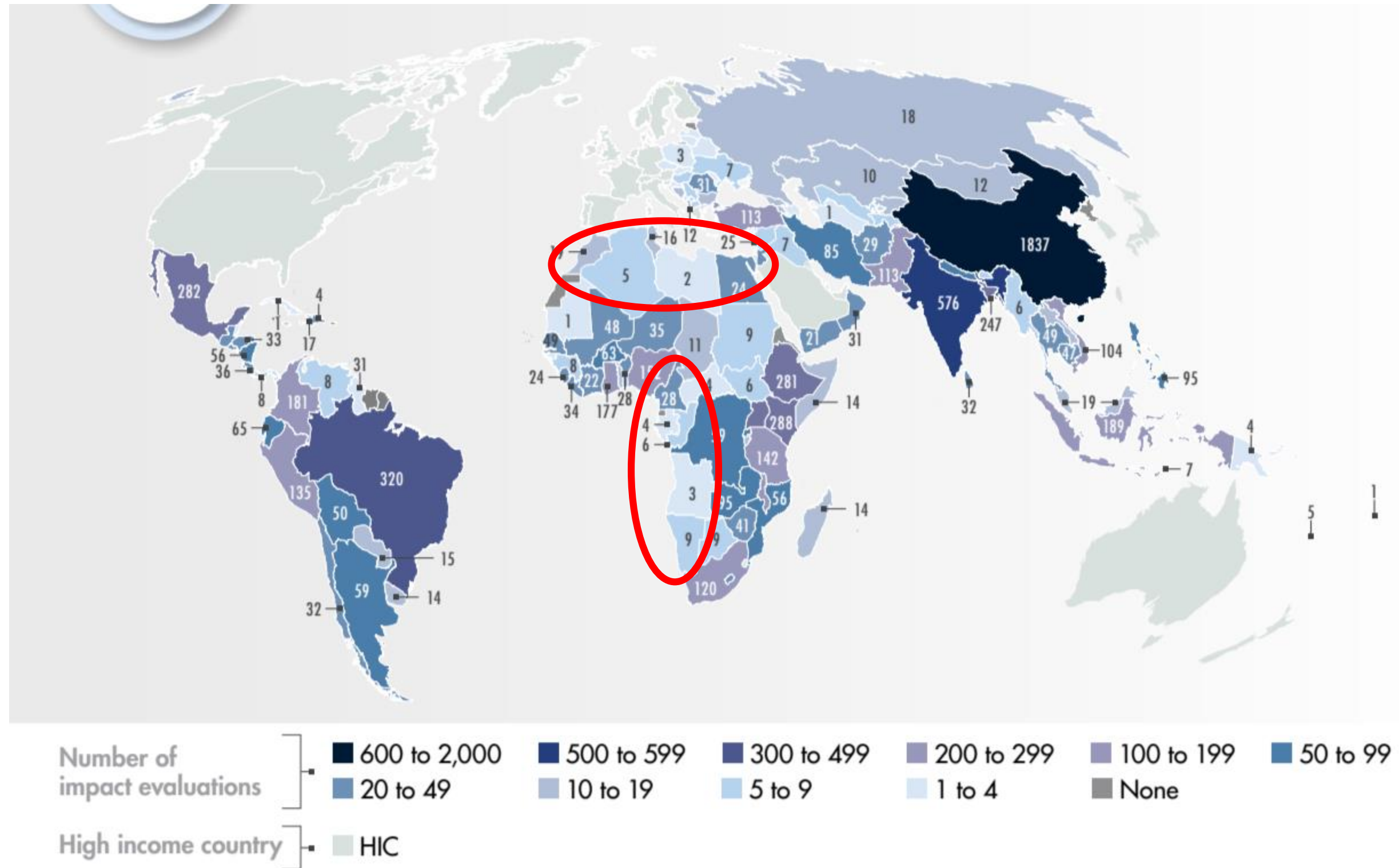
**The effects of food system
security and nutrition on**

The authors summarize the impact evaluations and systematic reviews of the effects of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) interventions in low- and middle-income countries. This map was commissioned by the German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval) with funding from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), and Co-Impact.

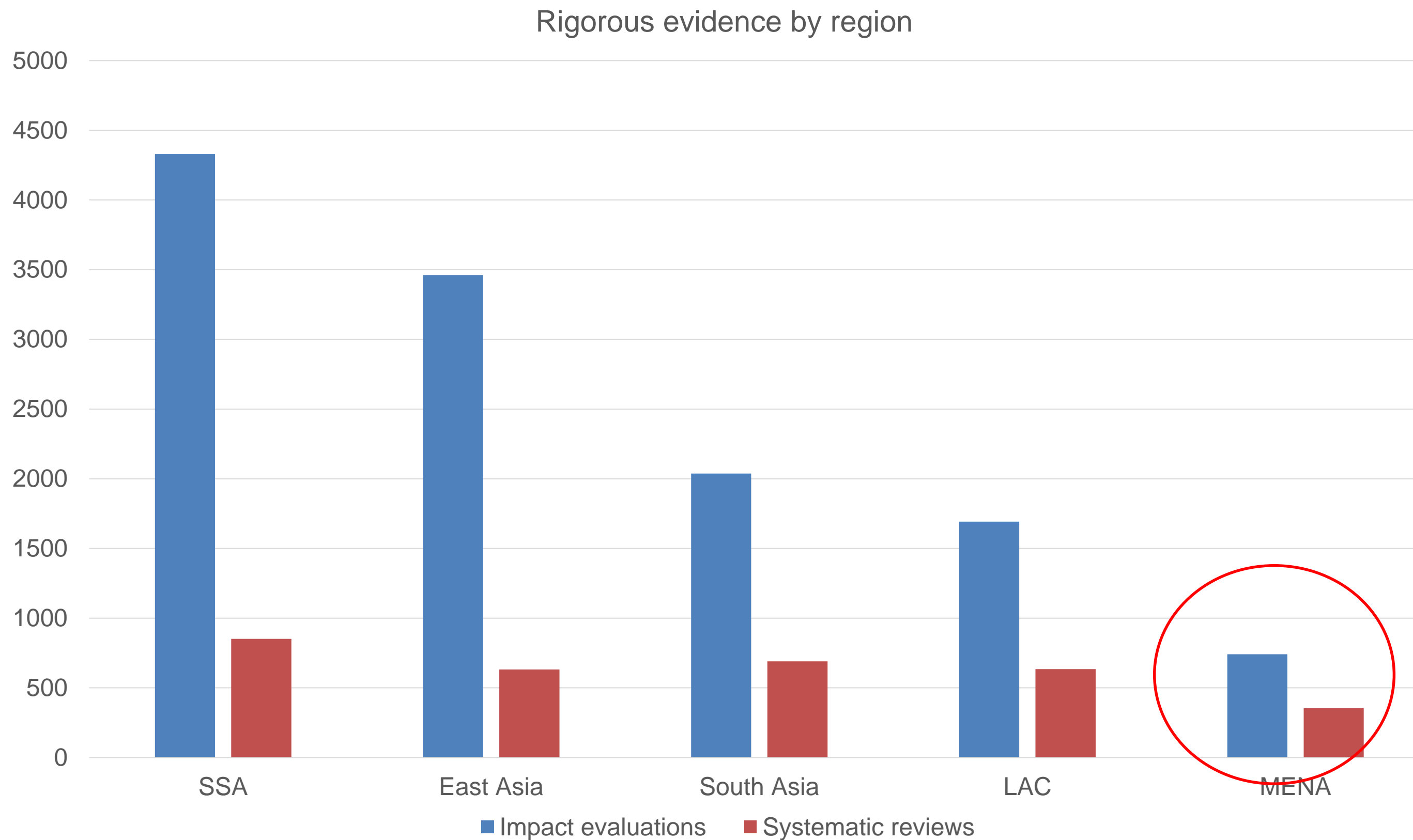
But outside of nutrition, HIV/AIDS and basic health care, the evidence becomes much more scarce



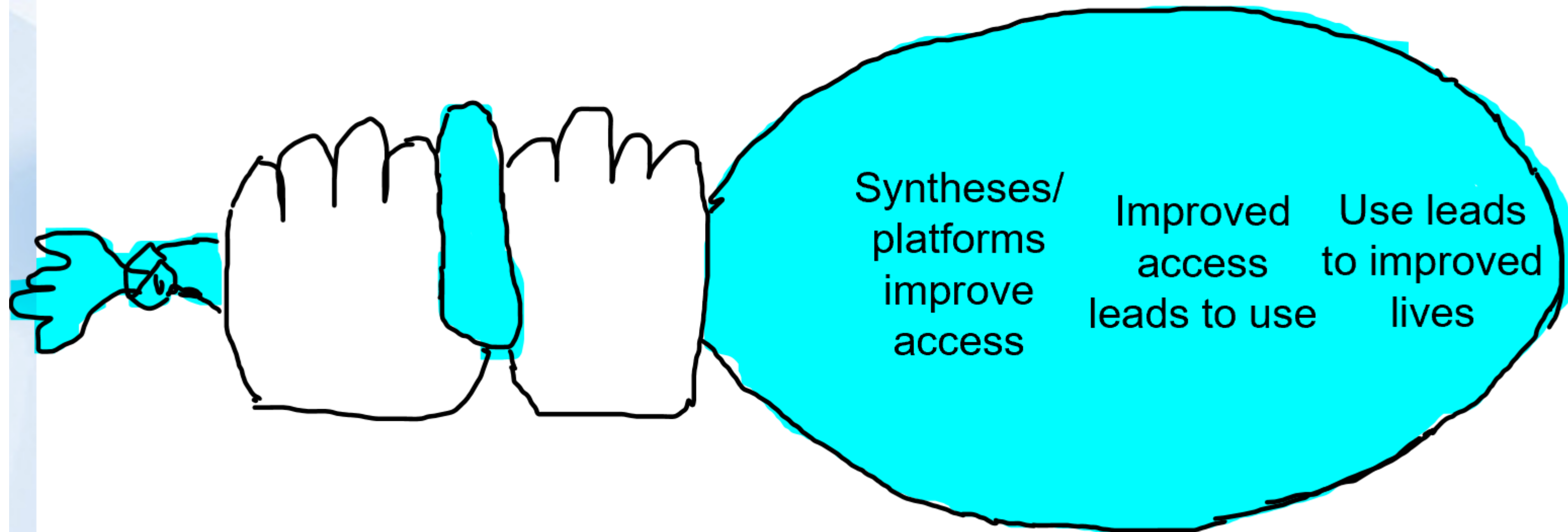
Wide diversity in terms of country coverage



Relatively little rigorous development effectiveness research in MENA



Squeeze 2: Evidence produced is relevant



- As the evidence field exploded, various shortcomings of the early crops of impact evaluations also became apparent
- 3ie has been playing an important role in pushing for improvements: theory-based evaluations, mixed-methods, TREE, cost-analysis, responsiveness and engagement with stakeholders and policymakers, unintended consequences, equity and diversity
- **Squeeze two is work in progress...**

Resources to improve quality and usefulness of IEs

<https://www.3ieimpact.org/evidence-hub/publications/learning-summary/using-contribution-analysis-measure-use-evidence-closed>

<https://www.3ieimpact.org/evidence-hub/publications/working-papers/measuring-cost-effectiveness-impact-evaluation>

<https://www.3ieimpact.org/evidence-hub/publications/working-papers/measuring-cost-effectiveness-impact-evaluation-what>

<https://www.3ieimpact.org/sites/default/files/2022/04/3ie-impact-evaluation-what-2022.pdf>

Transparent, Reproducible and Ethical Evidence (TREE)

3ie champions the research transparency and reproducibility movement as a means of understanding and mitigating challenges to the credibility of social science research, while also working toward stronger integration of ethical principles into practice. Through integration of TREE principles and practices in our research workflow, 3ie aims to ensure: (i) the rigor and credibility of research activities by asking demand-driven questions and mitigating intentional and unintentional scientific misconduct; and (ii) research activities follow foundational principles of research ethics: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice.



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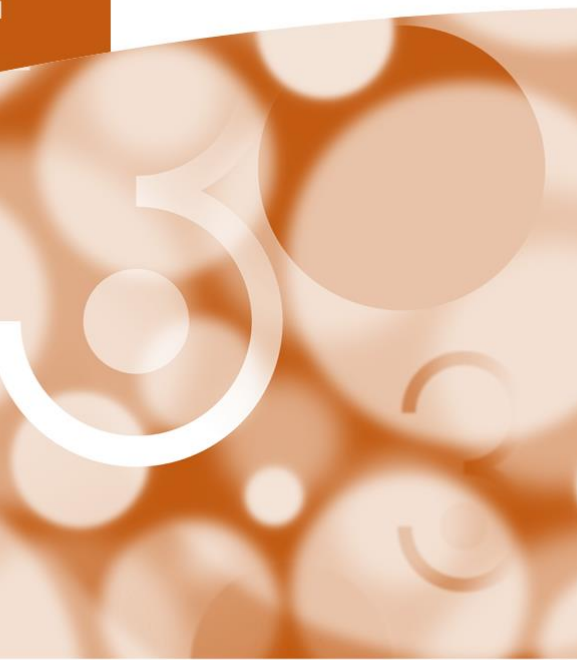
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Douglas Glandon

Measuring cost-effectiveness in impact evaluation

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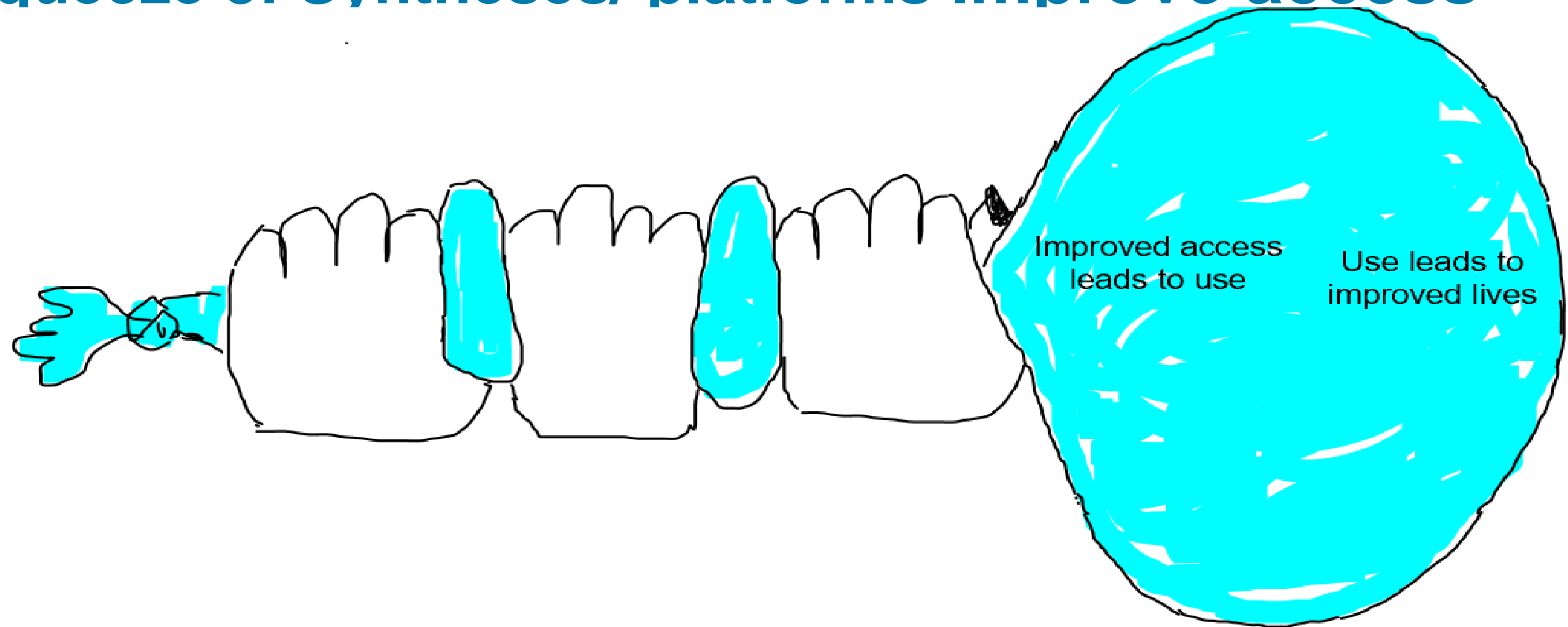
Learning brief
Multisector

USING CONTRIBUTION ANALYSIS TO MEASURE THE USE OF EVIDENCE IN CLOSED RESEARCH PROJECTS

April 2024

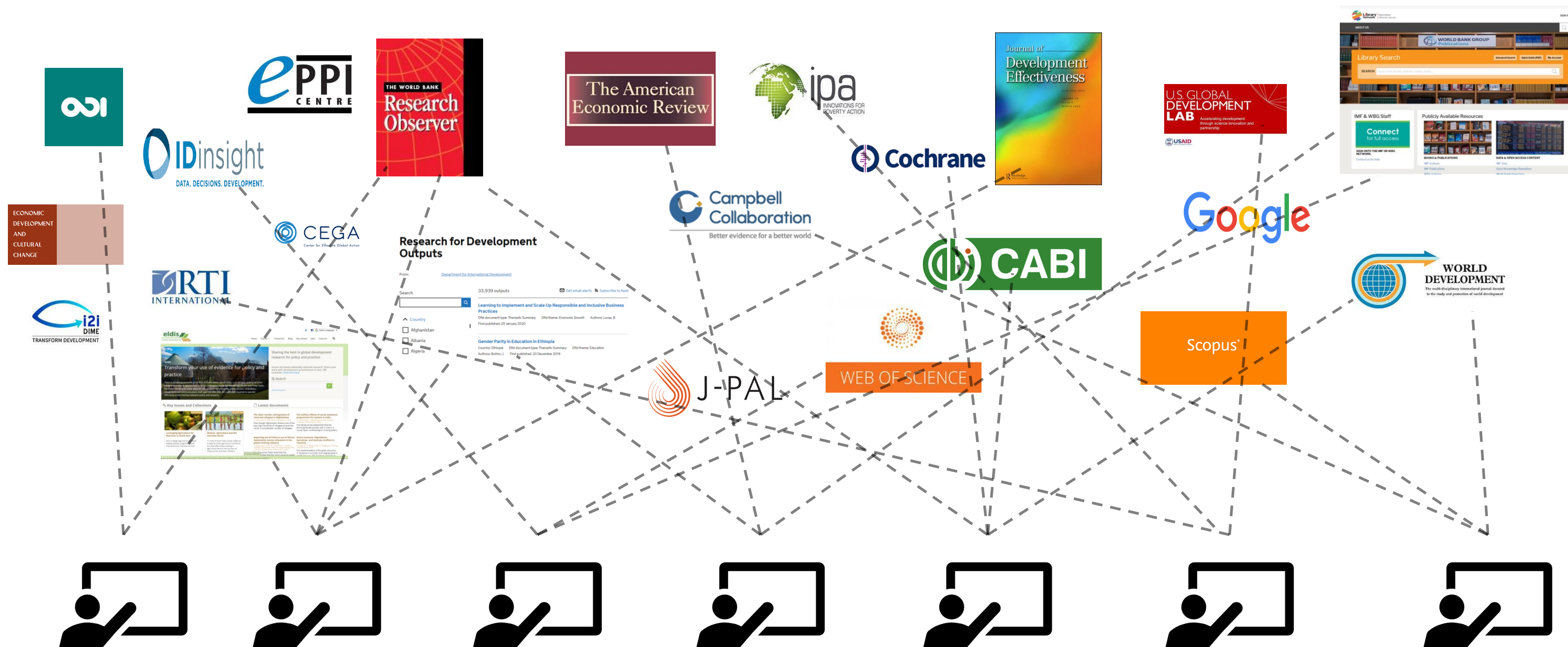


Squeeze 3: Syntheses/ platforms improve access



- Evidence rapidly available through DEP, EGMs, helpdesks, REAs....
- We are seeing a marked uptake and interest in such products from the donor and funding side as well
- **Squeeze three on the rise!** Access has increased dramatically, lowering further any barrier to use by decision-makers

The overwhelming evidence landscape



What if there was one place where...

3ie Development Evidence Portal

The Development Evidence Portal (DEP) is an expansive and growing repository of rigorous evidence on what works in international development. It contains high-quality impact evaluations, systematic reviews, and evidence gap maps and is the most comprehensive resource for this kind of evidence from low- and middle-income countries. We maintain this portal as a global public good and ensure it is updated frequently. We are committed to keeping it this way.

13368

impact evaluation
records

1122

systematic review
records

38

evidence
gap maps

About the DEP

Donate

See what's new

Not sure where to start? Try our [NEW search guidance tool!](#)

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Agriculture fishing
and forestry



Education



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extractives



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Health



Feedback

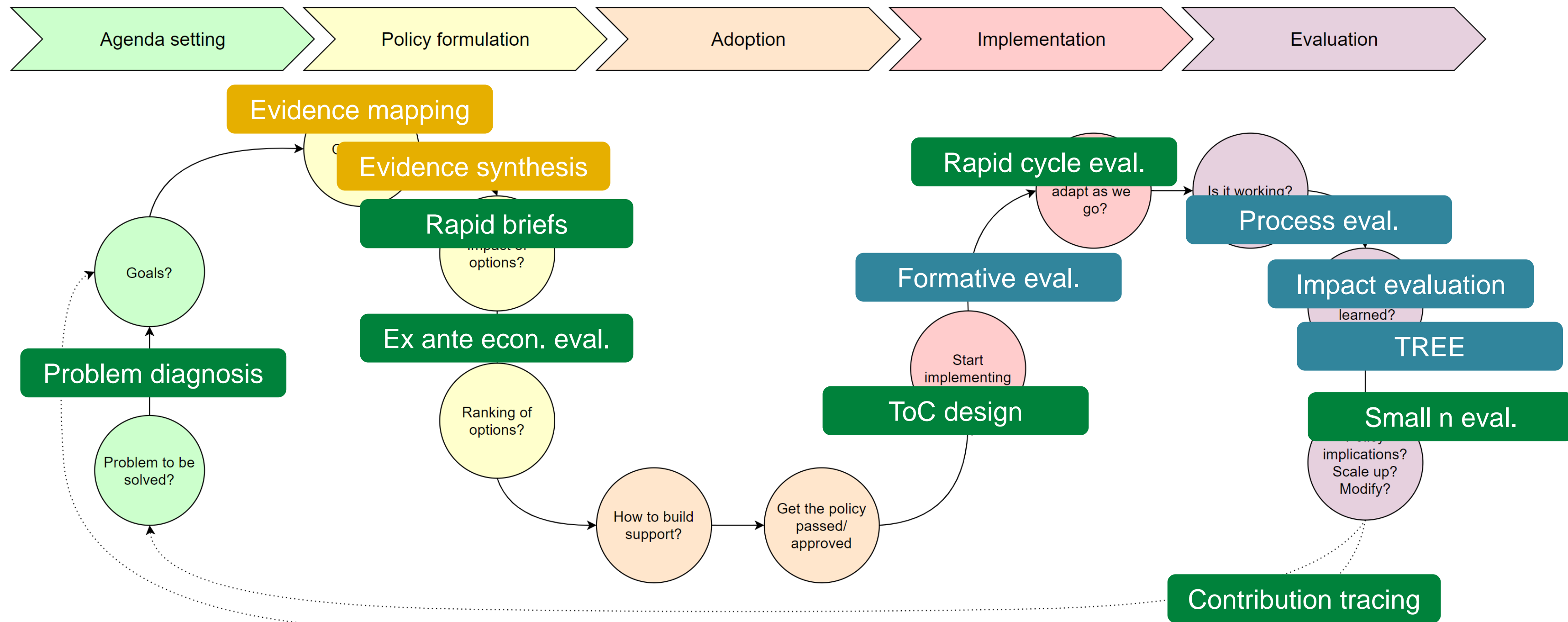


Squeeze 4: Does improved access lead to use and thereby to improved lives?

Incentives, culture and capacity for appropriate use

Evidence along the “decision-maker’s journey”

- ❖ Evidence needs vary across the program cycle; each step is an opportunity to add value
- ❖ Different questions require different types of analyses and evidence



Building a culture of evidence – why needed?

‘Professional success is still too often measured by project approval and disbursements, as opposed to learning from, acting on, and sharing of evidence [...]

Even when evidence generation is prioritized, decision-makers may overlook the methods that are most appropriate and relevant to answering specific policy questions.’

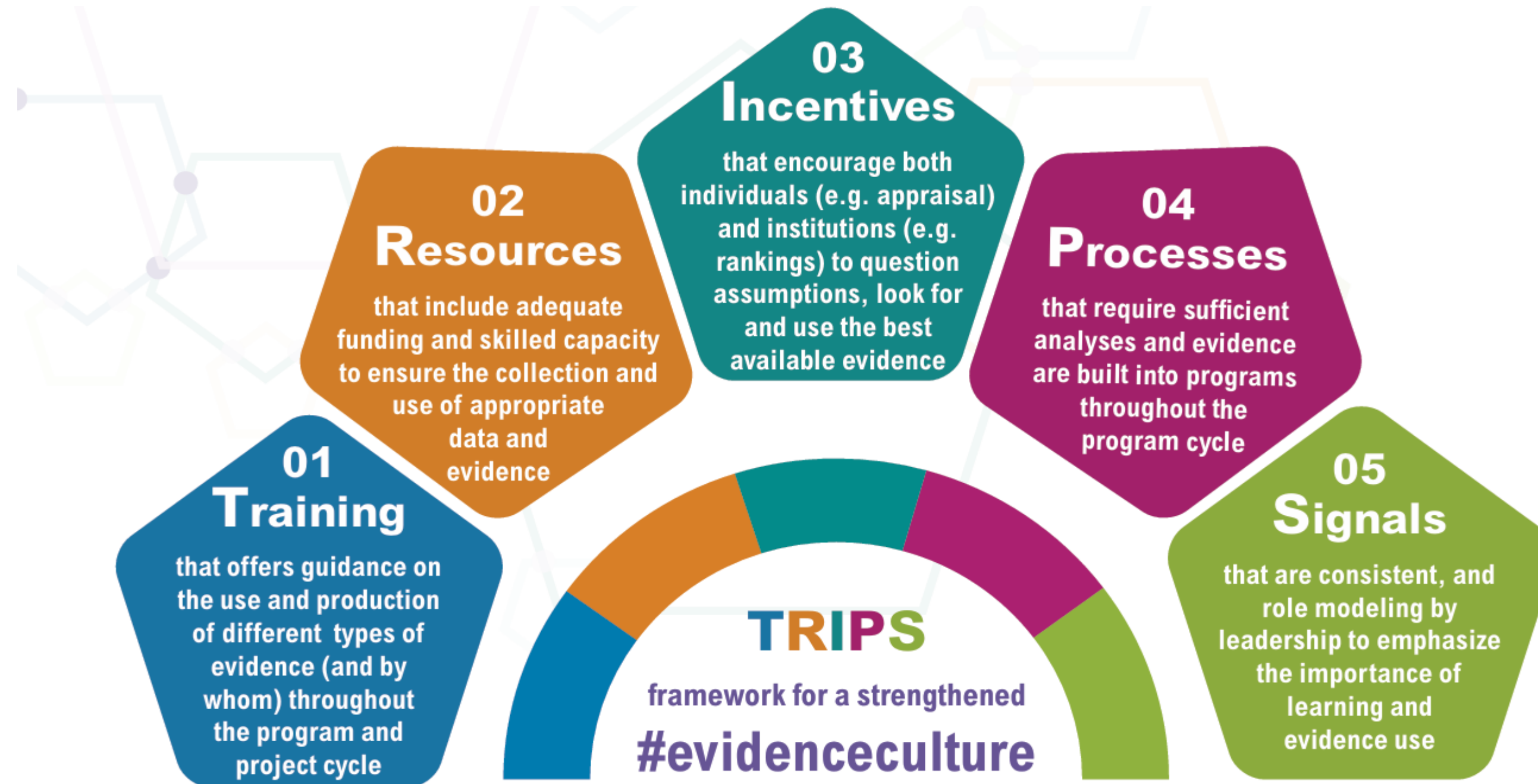
Working Group on New Evidence Tools for Policy Impact, CGD, 2020

Institutional Evaluations have strikingly similar conclusions (e.g. WBG, DEval, Norad, AFDB):

- ❖ Quality review and approval meetings often do not add value but just wave things through. There is a mindset of ticking the boxes and making it ‘look good’
- ❖ Success is measured by project approvals and disbursements of funds, not by results on the ground (which come at a time when most of those involved have moved on)
- ❖ Time and resources for monitoring and evaluation training and learning from evidence are not prioritized
- ❖ Without addressing and promoting a holistic evidence culture, single measures and requirements can easily become box-ticking exercises

TRIPS framework

<https://www.3ieimpact.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/TRIPS-guidance-note.pdf>



Source: In March 2022, 3ie's Marie Gaarder introduced the TRIPS framework to guide conversations around strengthening the evidence culture in international development organizations

FEATURE



Evidence Commitment

Strengthening the culture of evidence use

International
Initiative for
Impact Evaluation

KFW

USAID

Norad

UK International
Development
Partnership | Progress | Prosperity

use of appropriate evidence throughout the programming and development interventions.

ch factors contributing to a development problem are most severe;
drawing upon **systematic reviews of impact evaluations** to
of success;

the cost-effectiveness of proposed interventions against evaluated
alternatives.

4. conducting **evaluations useful for adapting during the lifecycle of a project** such as formative evaluation, process evaluation and A/B testing;
5. building the global evidence base by conducting **impact evaluations with cost analysis** where there are gaps in research; and
6. spurring innovation by **piloting and evaluating new approaches** to solving development problems.

We furthermore acknowledge that the consistent use of appropriate and rigorous evidence by organizations is fundamentally influenced by institutional barriers and levers. We will continue to strive to understand and address these including through training, resources, incentives, processes, and signals from the top, collectively known as TRIPS.





Thank You.



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TRIPS examples

❖ Training

- ✓ Learning month in USAID, knowledge week at the IDB

❖ Resources

- ✓ NORAD/MFA: National budget for 2023 explicitly stating that it is allowed and expected that evidence should inform aid and that evaluations can be funded as part of aid portfolios
- ✓ The UK treasury requires that all government departments set out their budget requests on an outcome basis – stating the evidence base and the planned evaluations
- ✓ Gov. of Mexico requiring federal social programs to have an evaluation plan in place to get gov. funding
- ✓ Funding available (easily) for the type of evaluations and evidence collection that is prioritized

❖ Incentives

- ✓ WBG: started professionalizing the M&E career stream
- ✓ IEG/WBG recommendations: make desired behavior easy to comply with/ default (e.g. explain why you are not adapting/reformulating regularly)
- ✓ Performance reviews and promotions tied to indicators related to effectiveness of programs

TRIPS examples

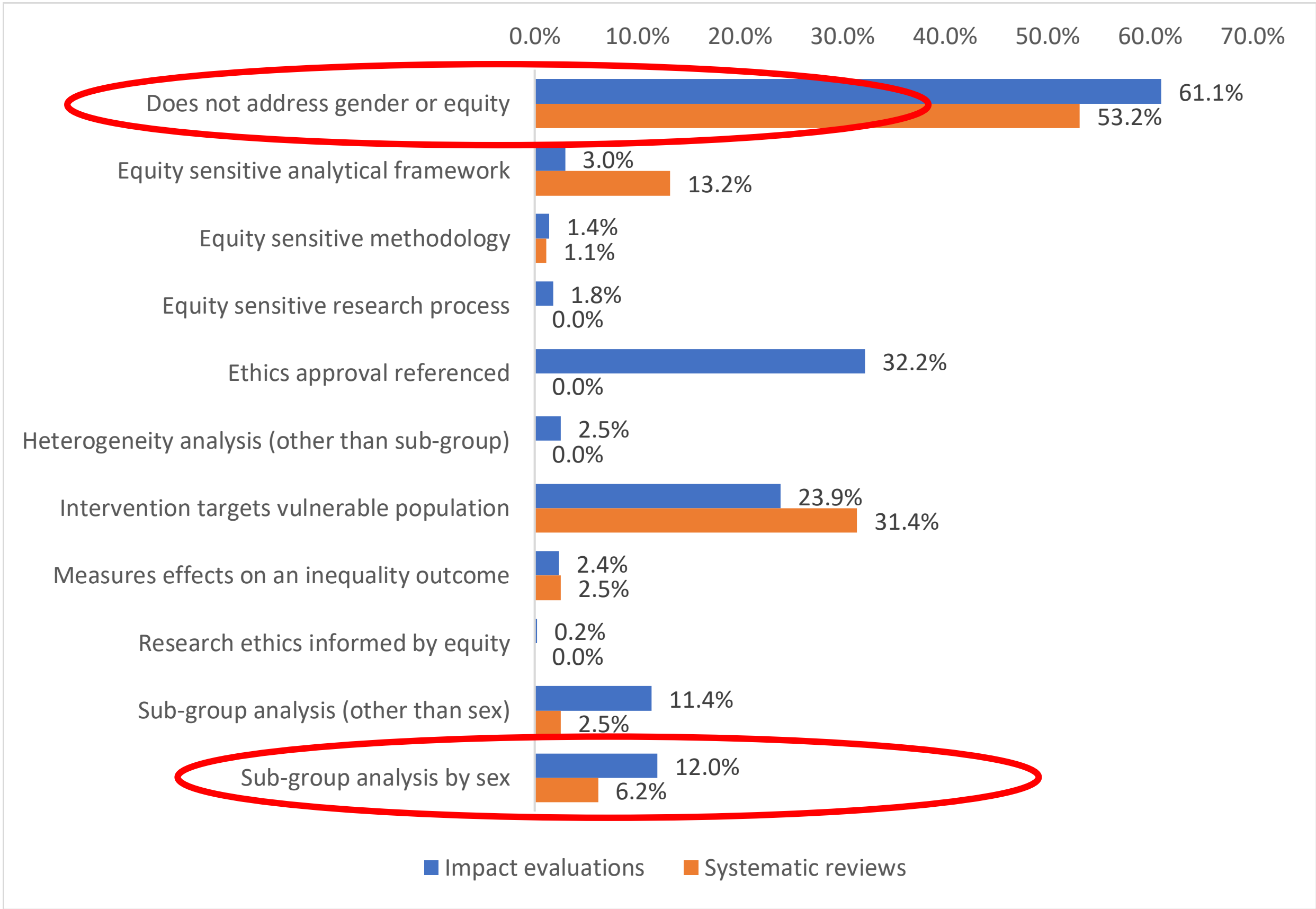
❖ Processes

- ✓ MCC: Ex/ante cost benefit analysis based on evidence required (by Congress) and decisional.
- ✓ IDB: Development Effectiveness Framework assessment with ratings. Programs with an insufficient score are not cleared for presentation at the Board (for approval).

❖ Signals

- ✓ IDB ***President signaling*** holistic focus on development effectiveness to the Bank's governors
- ✓ Norad ***Director General signaling*** evidence-use as his top priority '*Fakta har makta*'
- ✓ USAID: ***Assistant Administrator*** signing the *Global Evidence Commitment*

Figure 1: Equity considerations in IEs and SRs



Source: 3ie's Development Evidence Portal, accessed March 2022