Measuring and Evaluating Determinants of Public Administration Productivity

Bureaucracy Lab
Development Impact Evaluation | Global Governance Practice
October 22-25, 2019, Brussels, Belgium
Power Up!
Practical considerations in IE design
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Objectives

1. Ambitious Impact Evaluations (IEs) have a panoply of goals

1. **Designing** novel approaches to widespread policy challenges
2. **Implementing** potentially several approaches simultaneously
3. Designing implementation to permit policy evaluation
4. Learning what works in *this* context and why
5. Trying to learn how *generalizable* results are and why

- Trying to meet all goals challenging
- Try to identify challenges that exist in many settings, not just this one
- Try to design interventions that could be replicated in other settings
- Collect lots and lots of data
  - On why things work, not just whether they work. Mechanisms help us think about generalizability
  - Stakeholders’ predictions at project start: What will work and why? How big predict effects will be?
2. Timeline & Outputs

- Different planning horizons:
  - Budget cycles
  - Electoral cycles
  - Academic dissemination timelines

- Pressure to show “it” works. Now.

- Output Timeline
  - Short-run outputs (3–6m): Summary/Analysis of baseline data. Pilot intervention
  - Medium-run outputs (6–18m): Midline results / mid-course correction
  - Longer-run outputs (18–30m): Final report / Policy note / Academic paper
All participants are stepping outside their comfort zone (exciting!). Building a team with trusting relationships is crucial.

Nevertheless, institutionalize project to protect it when individuals move on.

Ex1, Bureaucratic churn: Field experiment with Pakistani tax administration fell apart after head of tax admin removed.

Ex2, Political churn: Field experiment with procurement authority in Amazonas, Brazil fell apart after secretary of finance replaced after election.

Ex3, Bureaucratic churn: Field experiment over 3 years worked with 5 different heads of procurement regulator. Rebuilding relationship each time

=> Codify project in MOU so that successors have something to look back on
4. Team

- Ambitious IEs require a deep symbiosis
  - Researchers deeply embedded in implementing agency
  - Officials deeply embedded in research team

- Ambitious IEs require coordination among several parts of implementing agency
  - Crucial to have support from top of agency to coordinate and provide broad guidance
  - Equally crucial to have input from mid-level and front-line staff for details of IE design and implementation

- Ambitious IEs require researchers and officials to work together on all stages of evaluation: Intervention design, implementation, data gathering, analysis
5. Communication

- Ambitious IEs create large teams to work together. Keeping everyone on the same page is crucial.

- 3 Working groups
  1. Steering Committee: top management and reps from other groups. Give overall guidance, troubleshooting to project. Make big decisions.
  2. Technical Committee: Mid-level/front-line staff, research team. Hash out design details, oversee implementation/evaluation.
  3. Research team: Research team (including officials when possible/necessary). Detailed work on IE.

### Meeting Frequencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Design/Startup</th>
<th>Implementation/Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Steering Committee</td>
<td>monthly</td>
<td>quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Committee</td>
<td>biweekly</td>
<td>monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research team</td>
<td>weekly</td>
<td>biweekly</td>
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</tbody>
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6. Managing Logistics

- Implementing an intervention is often a logistical challenge, especially if rollout is staggered/randomized.
- Punjab: Turned out departments didn’t track implementation of part of one treatment to offices -> had to survey the offices to find out when/if received that treatment component!
- Process tracking is key here. Who did what, when, who knew etc.
- Field coordinators (research staff embedded full/part time in implementing agency) are indispensable here.