IMPLEMENTING EVIDENCE TO ACTION FRAMEWORK

A PRACTITIONER'S GUIDE

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Melbourne Centre for Cities

About the Project

The Evidence to Action (E2A) Project at the Melbourne Centre for Cities, University of Melbourne was commissioned by Fondation Botnar, a Swiss Philanthropic organisation committed to improving the health and wellbeing of young people in urban environments. The project promotes the value of evidence building and learning for driving systemic change through programmatic and policy action at all levels of urban planning and governance.

Implementing evidence to action framework: A practitioner's guide is a resource for Fondation Botnar's implementing partners to apply the E2A Framework and build evidence systematically to inform action. It offers guidance through clearly defined processes, essential steps and practical tools for generating and mobilising evidence in urban environments and create change from local to global and contribute to young people's wellbeing in intermediary cities.

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The E2A Practitioner's Guide is the result of an ongoing collaboration between the Melbourne Centre for Cities at the University of Melbourne and Fondation Botnar. The project was managed and delivered at the Melbourne Centre for Cities and developed in collaboration with Fondation Botnar senior staff, involving interviews with third parties not affiliated with these institutions.

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For more information visit research.unimelb.edu.au/cities

Evidence to Action (E2A) project: The journey

The conceptual phase of the Evidence to Action (E2A) project commenced in 2019 at Fondation Botnar's head office in Basel, Switzerland with a conversation among a diverse group of professionals converging around the question of evidence building. The group agreed on the importance of systematically gathering evidence from grassroots action and highlighted the critical need for embedding learning in the project cycle to achieve this, including redefining determinants of success in complex urban environments. This led to the development of a discussion paper on evidence building and eventually the design of the E2A Framework as an approach to evidence building and learning in collaboration with the Melbourne Centre for Cities at the University of Melbourne.

The opportunity of applying the E2A framework soon emerged through Fondation Botnar's first multi-city flagship program, the *Healthy Cities for Adolescents* program. Simultaneously, conversations on credible evidence gathering emerged at the World Urban Forum 2019 in Abu Dhabi, that have continued at World Urban Forum 2022 held at Katowice, Poland. Thought leaders from the philanthropic sector called for action for development of strategies to move away from traditional outcome/outcome-based measurement of success towards evaluative learning informed by the perspectives of the communities from their socio-cultural contexts on what counts as positive change, reflecting on their lived experience. The E2A Framework emphasises learning about context, power dynamics and cultural milieu, and documenting what worked and what did not work in a project intervention for shaping change.

These conversations from local to global among thought leaders and practitioners inspired the creation of the Evidence to Action Framework. The framework encourages the development sector to think outside the box and assist practitioners and researchers to seek alternatives to the traditional definitions and measurements of success and failure in projects.

The first edition of the E2A Conceptual Framework was released in 2020 and the framework was tested through Fondation Botnar's *Healthy Cities for Adolescents* and the *OurCity Initiative*. This work continued the pace of its progress in spite of the difficulties of the COVID-19 pandemic and eventually led to the creation of the second edition of the E2A Conceptual Framework and informed the Practitioner's Guide. It is now designed to capture the learnings and recommendations from the Fondation Botnar's project partners who apply this framework.

Staying true to their commitments, throughout the evolution of the framework, the authors have maintained a focus on learning from the rich narratives of diverse voices of the development sector through different forms of interactions. We thank everyone who has contributed to the journey being our critical friends, sharing ideas, solutions and feedback while highlighting the need for innovation. We hope that the E2A Framework project enables the continuation of these conversations, from local to global, inspiring transformative action across the development sector.

Joyati Das
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Melbourne Centre for Cities

2019 to 2020
Development of conceptual framework: discussion paper, expert committee, E2A Conceptual Framework Edition 1

March to July 2021
Webinars: validation from experts and practitioners, Community of Practice

August 2021 to April 2022
Test and pilot phase: Senegal, India, Romania

July 2022 and February 2023
E2A Conceptual Framework Edition 2

July 2022 to February 2023
Practitioner's Guide to launch implementation in cities

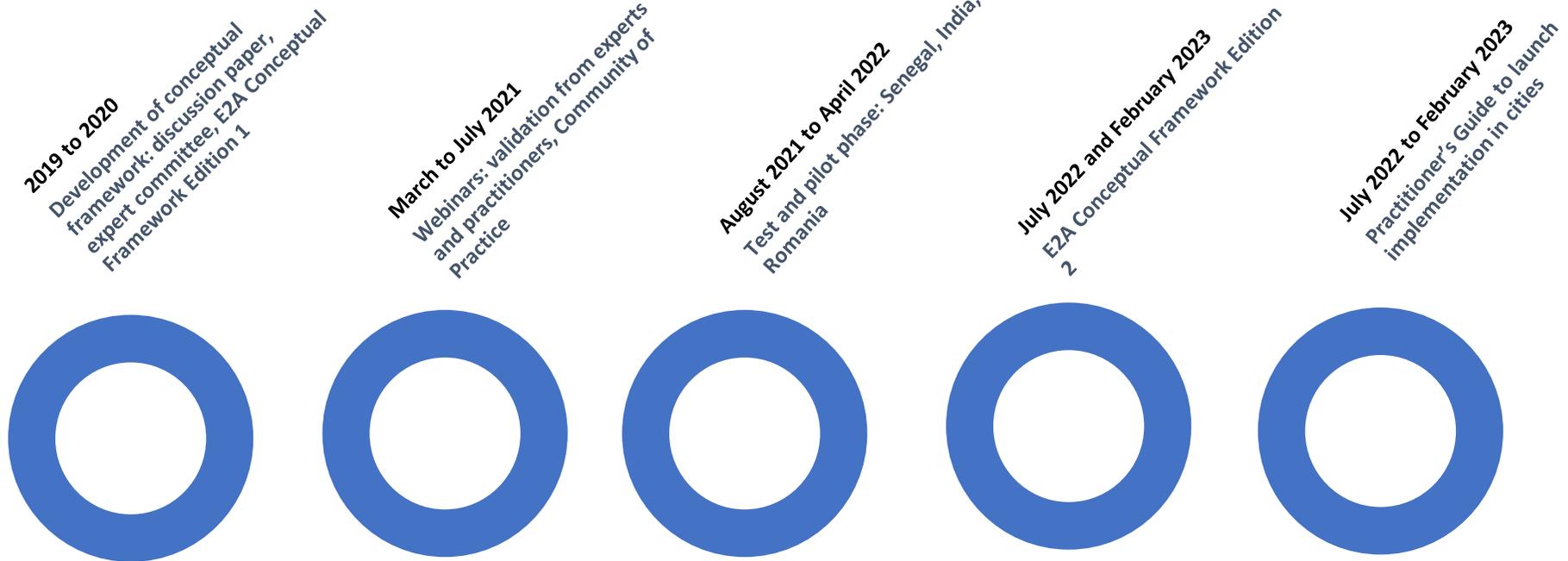Figure 1. E2A journey from concept to action

List of Acronyms

AI   Artificial Intelligence

E2A   Evidence to Action

MEL   Monitoring Evaluation and Learning

MSC   Most Significant Change

M&E   Monitoring and Evaluation

PEA   Political Economy Analysis

PAR-L   Participatory Action Research and Learning

UNCRC   United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Contents

About this Guide

The Evidence to Action (E2A) Practitioner's Guide is a resource for Fondation Botnar's implementing partners to apply the E2A Framework for evidence building for Fondation Botnar's cities portfolio.

It offers guidance through clearly defined processes, essential steps and practical tools to enable evidence building in urban environments from local to global where Fondation Botnar seeks to create change. It is important for the implementing partners to read E2A Conceptual Framework Edition 2, and understand the core elements of the E2A Framework and the research design strategies involved before planning for its implementation. It is expected that this guide will enable practitioners, local-level project teams and their learning partners to consider the E2A Framework as a meta-learning overlay with an action research and learning approach to build and map evidence of change and impact across the diverse intermediary cities.

This guide was developed in consultation with several program partners during a test and pilot phase. These included the *Healthy Cities for Adolescents* Program in Senegal and India, and with the *OurCity Initiative* project in Cluj, Romania. Furthermore, key elements of the final draft of the guide, including tools for mapping context and change, patterns of change, and impact, were shared with stakeholders in a Global Evidence Building Workshop that took place in Delhi, India, in 2022. Feedback, suggestions and validations obtained from this wide range of stakeholders from Fondation Botnar's implementing partners, development experts, M&E professionals, data scientists and researchers informed the development of this Practitioner's Guide.

This guide is intended for practitioners based at organisations implementing Fondation Botnar-funded projects, including program/project designers and implementers, M&E teams, learning officers and external learning partners, including local universities and research organisations.

Guide structure and how to use it

This guide is divided into two parts. The first section of Part I presents a brief overview of the E2A Framework and outlines the purpose and value of the framework. It explains *what the framework is* and *what it is not*. The second section of Part I of the Practitioner's Guide outlines how evidence building and learning can be embedded in the project cycle. It explains how a participatory action research and learning (PAR-L) cycle can be integrated with project cycles while applying the E2A Framework as a meta-learning overlay for Fondation Botnar's cities portfolio. It then outlines the key steps to follow when applying the PAR-L cycle to the project cycle.

Part II presents a narrative on how to apply the E2A Framework. In it, the first section explains the purpose of the key elements of the framework. Following this, it presents key considerations for operationalising the E2A Framework at the three levels of engagement for evidence building: local, meso, meta. Next, it includes a suite of data-gathering and analysis tools in the form of tables. These tables are to be used by evidence-buildings teams at the different levels of engagement for systemic evidence building and learning across all Fondation Botnar cities portfolio. The guide discusses the essentials for implementing the E2A Framework, including the use of digital tools for data management. The guide concludes with an annex that presents sample use cases of two digital tools used during the test and pilot phase – *SenseMaker®* (Senegal and India) *and Rural Senses* (Cluj, Romania).

This guide explains how the E2A Framework should be used as a meta-learning tool to map systemic change over time. This is achieved through integrating the PAR-L cycle with the project cycle to enable participatory evidence building and learning across the Fondation Botnar cities portfolio. Accordingly, this guide outlines processes, key steps and practical tools that are to be used together by the project teams and the learning partners while also ensuring participation of key stakeholders, including young people.

The processes, key steps and tools explained in this guide are suggestive rather than prescriptive. This means they can be tailored to fit the requirements of different projects in diverse city contexts. However, it is essential that any customisations are done in consultation between the project teams and the learning partners while also including young people at key stages of the process. When localising the tools, they should be

translated to local languages where needed. Specific questions for mapping context, aspirations and perceptions of change, patterns of change and the impact of change must be co-developed by practitioners and learning partners.

Also, it is important to understand the conceptual underpinnings of participatory evidence building and learning as well as learning cycles before launching the evidence-building process and the E2A Conceptual Framework Edition 2 should be used as a key reference document.

Evidence to Action Conceptual Framework
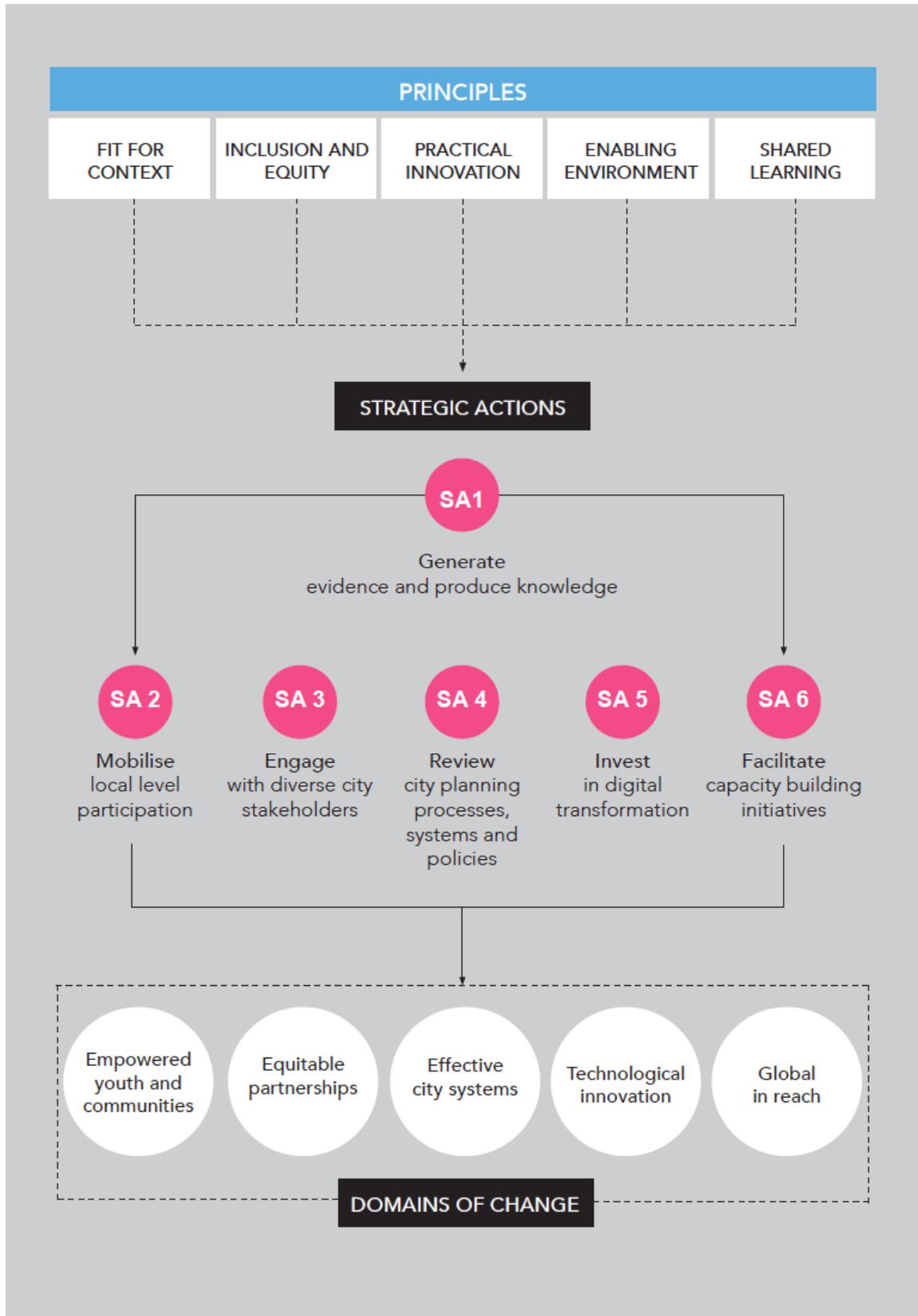
Figure 2. E2A conceptual framework

PART I: Evidence to Action Framework

Introduction

The Evidence to Action (E2A) Framework is a product of collaboration between University of Melbourne's Connected Cities Lab (now Centre for Cities) and Fondation Botnar, a Swiss philanthropic foundation, committed to improving the health and wellbeing of young people in urban environments.

Fondation Botnar recognises the value of learning in driving systemic change, and is committed to cultivating and nurturing learning both within and outside of the organisation to influence programmatic and policy action. The framework is presented as a meta-learning tool and includes an action research strategy for mobilising evidence to action about 'what works' (or what does not work) across the Fondation Botnar cities portfolio, to support young people's wellbeing in intermediary cities.

The framework presents key concepts, theories and case studies that have informed the framework. It offers high-level guidelines for operationalising the framework, adopting a participatory action research approach to evidence building to inform action. The E2A Framework proposes principles essential for inclusive and sustainable development to achieve Fondation Botnar's objective of 'cities fit for young people', outlines a set of strategic actions to launch a learning agenda at the project level, as well as recommends key domains of change to serve as a common instrument for mapping systemic change across all programs in intermediary cities. It concludes with key learning questions that can guide program evaluations and progress the foundation's learning agenda.

The E2A is anchored in Fondation Botnar's strategy and commitment to transforming city systems towards promoting sustainable development and the wellbeing of young people in cities. The E2A Framework aims to enhance organisational learning processes in order to progress Fondation Botnar's journey of becoming a change maker at the local, national and global levels. It is a portfolio level tool that establishes standardised processes for evidence building and learning across all Fondation Botnar cities portfolio projects.

Fondation Botnar considers learning to be essential to program design and implementation, and to support transformative action enabling positive change in intermediary cities. At the

project level, knowledge building is an investment in local capacity building. This is an important component of enabling local voices to be at the forefront of development initiatives, as well as ensuring the sustainability of a project. At the organisational level, learning is considered fundamental to the ongoing refinement of the foundation's objectives and arenas and to achieving the aspiration of moving from a 'grant maker to change maker'.

Developing the E2A Framework involved three research methods: a case study scan, academic literature review and primary interviews. These methods sought to draw lessons from leading urban development practitioners and existing approaches to knowledge and evidence building for action, across a range of cities in the Global South.

The E2A Framework:

1. is a meta-learning tool that:

   o generates knowledge and learning based on the lived experiences of practitioners and young people

   o captures observed change from diverse city stakeholders about a city's context and identifies people's aspirations of change

   o maps systems change in diverse urban environments over time focusing on people, policies and programs

2. centres participatory practices that ensure inclusion of the voices of diverse city stakeholders including young people and other marginalised communities

3. is flexible and can be tailored to fit the requirements of diverse projects and contexts

4. can be overlayed on any project cycle to establish processes of evidence building to inform action for sustained change

5. is a guideline only that allows room for customisation, being exploratory, and testing new tools and processes that enable efficient evidence building.

Key themes

Several key themes emerged from the research process and they have shaped the understanding of the core pillars of the E2A Framework. Each key theme has a corresponding learning theme that will shape the E2A research agenda. These learning themes are connected to the domains of change, indicating the shift that is desired or expected within each domain as the outcome of Fondation Botnar's activities. These themes include:

1. health and wellbeing (central to the mandate of Fondation Botnar, wellbeing needs to be understood as multi-dimensional and impacted by factors such as access to resources and opportunities)

2. inclusion and equity (fair and just distribution of opportunities is needed to ensure young people's wellbeing, regardless of physical ability, gender, religion, sexuality, age or any other critical aspects of identity)

3. voice and participation (investing in opportunities for voice and participation, particularly of young people, is key to producing the evidence needed to enhance their wellbeing)

4. city systems (effectively translating evidence into action in urban environments requires a systems approach and a deep understanding of local governance, cultural and power systems and structures that shape the city)

5. partnerships (establishing meaningful collaborations among diverse stakeholders for collective action to promote sustained change)

6. capacity building (important for all stakeholders to understand what evidence is needed to help drive change, as well as how to access and apply evidence)

7. digital technologies and innovation (innovative digital technologies can empower marginalised populations, facilitate community participation in planning, influencing decision-making and speed up the processes that create cities fit for young people).

Aim, purpose and value of the E2A Framework

The E2A Framework provides a comprehensive strategy for embedding learning and reflexivity throughout Fondation Botnar programs. It outlines an approach that facilitates dialogue, builds connections across urban stakeholders, and establishes participatory processes of action research and learning, with the aim of empowering young people with knowledge that enables action for positive change and creating more equitable cities.

The E2A Framework *aims* to:

- overlay a meta-learning tool using evidence to action cycle in parallel with the project cycle to map and document systems change across the Fondation Botnar cities portfolio

- contribute to local-to-global advocacy and policy agenda-setting using evidence for action

- encourage and enable the use of different types of innovative technologies for evidence building and learning to inform actions and to ensure social inclusion for marginalised communities in cities where Fondation Botnar's projects are being implemented to address pressing urban issues

- support the continued refinement of Fondation Botnar's programming approaches and goals that aim to transform urban environments

- enable Fondation Botnar to deliver on its goal to be a learning organisation by centring evidence from grassroots during its strategy refinement processes.

The *purpose* of the E2A Framework is to:

- provide clear guidelines to establish evidence-building and learning processes across the Fondation Botnar cities portfolio to enable systemic change in urban environments

- enable Fondation Botnar and diverse program staff to make informed decisions on project funding allocations, monitoring and reassessing projects, as well as a tool for development practitioners, and research and policy staff at the local-level to drive evidence-building agendas in cities

- serve as a common instrument for mapping systemic change across all programs in Fondation Botnar intermediary cities. This is intended to support the launch of an organisational learning agenda across all Fondation Botnar city projects and initiatives, to generate evidence of what works and what does not.

The E2A Framework offers distinct value as listed below:

- The uniqueness of the E2A Framework lies in its focus on bridging the often-seen knowledge disconnect between research and practice by institutionalising a process of collaborative data collection, learning and evidence building that informs Fondation Botnar's interventions across diverse cities. Stepping away from the traditional approaches of viewing development interventions and knowledge generation as separate processes, the framework integrates learning with doing in a way that ensures not only that programs are informed by evidence but also that programs generate credible evidence for shaping local and global development agendas.

- The framework begins assembling building blocks for a bridge between research and practice in its role as a meta-learning tool focused on observing change from practice to address the unknowns and complex issues emerging in complex urban environments.

- The E2A Framework plays a pivotal role in mapping systems change and outcomes. Standardised data collection ensures affecting policy changes to inform the strategic orientation of programs and also the organisation at large.

- Program success lies in understanding what works and what does not in diverse urban contexts and identifying the patterns of positive change that are transferable in varying degrees across cities, programs and projects.

- Credible evidence will allow communities to hold power holders to account with evidence collected and validated by diverse city stakeholders.

- Practitioners need resources and ongoing processes that can allow learning about outcomes in line with E2A domains of change and build an understanding of systemic change at the city level. Urban development projects operate in dynamic, complex and volatile environments. Embedding collective learning as a routine activity and

documenting lessons from previous and ongoing programming interventions, including mistakes and good practice, helps in continuous refinement and adaptation.

- The E2A Framework will potentially inform new methods of program design and evaluation, reshaping organisational policies and accountability mechanisms at all levels of engagement in urban development.

Section 1: The E2A Framework

Principles, strategic actions and domains of change

Principles

Five principles provide the core framing of the E2A Framework that guides strategic and programmatic decision-making across the Fondation Botnar 'Cities' portfolio. They operate as reinforcing concepts of human rights that work in synergy to build towards sustained change. Each is expanded on below.

Fit for context

This principle refers to the importance of developing evidence and interventions that are grounded in the issues and voices of local communities, with particular attention to marginal, vulnerable or excluded groups. By applying this principle to projects, practitioners ensure they are learning about the critical issues affecting the local city context and are seeking solutions that resonate with partner groups.

Inclusion and equity

This principle refers to the necessity of ensuring access to opportunities, with equal rights and participation for all, particularly the most marginalised. Keeping in mind the concerns of intersectionality, this means investing in skills, enabling platforms of engagement, technologies, capacity building and programming that, especially, aims to empower young urban dwellers that might be marginalised or excluded for overlapping reasons (e.g., across gender, caste, class or religion) within their unique context.

Practical innovation

This principle recognises the bottom-up, community owned, everyday ways that local actors, businesses and communities are drivers of technological innovation and change within their own unique context. However, it also engages with the catalytic potential of large-scale investments in sophisticated technologies such as AI, particularly in aspects like processing data on a wider scale and assisting in the consolidation of knowledge and information for action at different levels: local, national and global.

Enabling environment

This principle refers to the importance of understanding the levers and contextual realities in each city that shape the opportunity context for interventions. This entails recognising that there is no one solution that works for every city. This principle also refers to the importance of establishing platforms, partnerships or policy changes that can enable systematic and structural change.

Shared learning

This principle refers to the fundamental importance of establishing local programs that aim to generate evidence that can be shared across multiple jurisdictions and scales. While recognising the necessity of remaining grounded in a local context, and driven by the priorities of local communities, this principle also indicates the value of maintaining strong links with wider national, regional and international communities as a route to sharing evidence of change and impact.

Strategic actions

The six strategic actions outlined represent good development practices that can enable learning, co-creation and knowledge development. Any of these strategic actions might be considered entry points for city programs to launch an action and learning agenda.

SA1. Generate knowledge and document evidence to advocate for justice, equity and rights of young people, thereby shaping a global inclusion agenda. Investing in systems of knowledge exchange within and across cities can generate powerful global lessons, as well as build capacity locally. This requires working with knowledge partners to engage in an ongoing process of data gathering, documentation and dissemination, facilitating global learning across a range of cities and conditions.

SA2. Mobilise local-level participation, especially young people, to ensure projects are co-led with empowered local communities for sustainability. Ensuring participation of local partners and grassroots groups in diagnosing city priorities, building evidence and designing strategies for action is critical. The objective is to ensure local knowledge and information – and locally generated solutions that are fit for context – inform the program design.

SA3. Engage with diverse city stakeholders to build equitable partnerships, generating knowledge and a shared vision of the desired sustained change. Large-scale transformation

needed to support sustainable citywide development requires collaboration between diverse stakeholders including young people and marginalised groups, and the formation of citywide networks, which can unite around shared goals to enhance wellbeing.

SA4. Review city planning processes, systems and policies to generate evidence of local government to promote equity, social inclusion and strengthen accountability. Advocating for policy change to ensure more responsive, proper, inclusive and accountable governance processes for all urban residents is integral to launching long-term, sustainable programs for citywide impact.

SA5. Invest in digital transformation to enable democratisation of technology, resulting in access, innovation and scale. Investing in strategies that are built on mundane technologies, ensuring equitable access to technology, and enabling innovations that emerge out of lived experience is key to achieving the democratisation of technology and innovation.

SA6. Facilitate capacity-building initiatives to support young people, decision-makers and knowledge partners to act collaboratively as catalysts for change, and to share learning locally and globally. A key requirement for long-term sustainability is to build the capacity of communities and stakeholders to identify development priorities, participate in development activities, generate the evidence needed to drive change, support advocacy, and share lessons locally and globally. Facilitating capacity-building initiatives is a cross-cutting action and outcome.

Domains of change

The E2A Framework includes five domains of change that represent key desired outcomes, and that can help deliver on Fondation Botnar's objectives, actions and goals to create cities fit for young people. It is expected that monitoring and evaluation guided by these domains can generate a reflexive learning process for Fondation Botnar and its partners on the strategies, processes and outcomes that have been most successful in generating sustained change.

Empowered youth and communities

This domain refers to meaningful participation – especially of young people and vulnerable groups – in program design, citywide planning, agenda-setting and decision-making. This

domain seeks to capture the capacities, strategies and processes established and applied through which young people are empowered to act as agents of change and leaders and engage with city platforms to enhance voice and participation.

Learning theme: participation

This domain is focused on building learning on how we can ensure genuine and meaningful participation of young people in identifying issues and solutions about the change they want to see in their city.

Equitable partnerships

This domain refers to the establishment of consortia and cross-sectoral partnerships – including with young people and vulnerable groups – that operate with mutual respect and on equal terms. This domain seeks to capture strategies, processes and outcomes for building strong relations and trust across urban stakeholders. This domain seeks to capture if and how good governance systems have been established to promote equitable relationships where each voice is valued for its contribution, however big or small, influential or insignificant.

Learning theme: inclusion

This domain is focused on building learning on how we can build inclusive processes to cultivate distributed decision-making across all levels.

Technological innovation

This domain refers to the delivery of evidence-based, scalable and locally grounded strategies built on innovation to address complex urban problems that shape wellbeing outcomes. This domain seeks to capture the capacities, strategies and processes established to ensure inclusive access and use of innovative technology, ideas and networks for transformative change. This domain generates evidence about the availability of technology and the creation of networked smart communities, to ensure practical knowledge and reach of information is accessible to all, irrespective of citizen status and community.

Learning theme: leveraging technology

This domain is focused on building learning on how we can leverage technological innovation to create change.

Effective city systems

This domain refers to the systemic and sustainable transformation of urban policies, planning and programs to create cities fit for young people. This domain seeks to capture capacities, strategies and processes that are effective in driving change and are linked with achieving sustainable and inclusive youth-friendly cities. This involves documenting promising practices that result in formal or informal structural changes and create connections between diverse groups – especially between young people and policymakers informing urban decision-making.

Learning theme: governance

This domain is focused on building learning on how we can work towards good governance.

Global in reach

This domain refers to establishing and strengthening learning and knowledge-building processes, which can inform reflection and action from the local to global level. This domain seeks to capture capacities, strategies and processes set up for building knowledge and reflection that can be shared to inform changes in policy, planning and practice.

Learning theme: shaping agendas

This domain is focused on building learning on how we can shape agendas.

Section 2: Operationalising the E2A Framework

Promoting an action research and learning agenda

Complex urban environments present unique challenges that require an ongoing learning approach integrated into the project intervention cycle. Practitioners are required to be exploratory and adaptive in their approach.

The E2A Framework was developed to promote programmatic flexibility and continuous adaptation based on a reflexive process of learning from programs and projects. Fundamental to cultivating spaces and practices of learning is establishing a strong relationship between practice and research.

> Fundamental to cultivating spaces and practices of learning is establishing a strong relationship between practice and research.

The E2A Framework begins assembling building blocks for a bridge between research and practice in its role as a meta-learning tool focused on capturing change from practice to address the unknowns and complex issues emerging in complex urban environments. Practice informs research, which can in turn support actions on the ground and inform national and global policies. Promoting such action research and learning-centric agenda within development practice begins with unlearning the established assumptions and biases within and about knowledge production and evidence-building processes. This requires dedicated resources that includes experts in action research and learning.

Evidence becomes knowledge through the act of knowing that can only be performed by people, or more specifically by stakeholders within the urban context, both individual and collective. People translate evidence into knowledge, informing policies and programs through their decision-making. This critical role of people can

> People translate evidence into knowledge, informing policies and programs through their decision-making. This critical role that people play can be leveraged to create positive change by promoting shared learning within complex urban landscapes.

be leveraged to create positive change by promoting shared learning within complex urban landscapes. By ensuring the inclusion of people on the ground in evidence-building processes, the framework centres their knowledge to inform programmatic and policy action to ensure the wellbeing of young people in cities.

Research is instrumental to systematically facilitate this process of knowledge production and learning. Several theories from diverse disciplines were considered to learn about the approaches that can form the conceptual underpinning of the approaches of evidence building. It is underpinned by a philosophy of constructivism and involves the use of a multi-method data collection and analysis approach to embed a 'learning by doing' philosophy across diverse urban programs and projects funded by Fondation Botnar. Reflection and learning with the notion of evaluative practice will be promoted throughout the project cycles.

Action research and learning design

Action research approaches bring researchers and their clients together to:

1. define the research problems and themes that are to be investigated
2. design a research and evaluation methodology to investigate these issues
3. collect and reflect on the findings
4. develop an action plan to address the issues identified

The action research process involves an ongoing cycle of reflection, planning and action to deal with emerging issues of a situation. To realise this process, the E2A Framework draws from the school of constructivism to define a unique criterion specific to the dynamic and complex environment of towns and cities. This philosophy proposes knowledge building as a dynamic reflexive process within project cycles, building evidence *on what works and what does not work* in urban environments and drawing on learning from grassroots action as well as initiatives from experienced agencies and academic institutions engaged in urban issues.

Given the complexities of urban issues, and the constructivist approach adopted to apply this framework, an abductive research design is used. Applying the abductive approach to analysis will allow the prioritisation of lived experiences from the field.

An abductive approach begins with a partial theory about a phenomenon being examined. This partial theory informed by knowledge that already exists with the people involved in the research. As data is collected, this initial theory is refined through a combination of inductive and deductive methodologies. An abductive approach to the analysis will allow prioritisation of lived experiences from the field.

The E2A Framework will adopt multi-method data collection and analysis prioritising qualitative methods and abductive approach in the research design. Qualitative research methods make meaning out of the actions that lead to outcomes, building a story of change instead of attempting to measure something intangible using quantitative tools.

The E2A Framework will adopt a multi-method approach, prioritising qualitative methods in the research design. Qualitative research methods make meaning out of the that action that lead to outcomes, building a story of change instead of attempting to measure something intangible using quantitative tools.

The E2A implementation approach is inspired by realist evaluation and *Most Significant Change* methodologies. These are used as complementary tools to inform the data gathering and analysis for this framework.

To apply the E2A Framework as a meta-learning tool, we have adopted the *Most Significant Change* methodology and realist evaluation to inform the data gathering and analysis processes. We view these two techniques as complementary tools to build a narrative around the changes observed and experienced by groups in focus and diverse city stakeholders.

The purpose of this combined use of realist evaluation and *Most Significant Change* is to build an understanding on how project activities are aligned with the E2A principles and how they create a positive shift in within each of the domains of change. This involves capturing data on the three aspects essential to the realist evaluation framework: context, mechanisms and outcomes (change) for specific target groups. For Fondation Botnar, the focus will be on young people and practitioners. This also includes capturing data on the *Most Significant Change* from a wide range of city stakeholders' perspectives. The data collection and analysis based on these approaches recommends the use of innovative digital data management tools.

This approach is customised for Fondation Botnar's cities portfolio. For this reason, the framework will remain emergent and will be revised periodically based on its application across projects.

The action research and learning processes will build on the monitoring and evaluation activities within individual city initiatives and projects. Fondation Botnar's city project and program-specific monitoring and evaluation activities explore the effectiveness and impact

of their activities more broadly. Meanwhile, the multi-method evidence building approach will focus on learning about the diverse city contexts, the patterns of social change and the actors that contribute to transformation in cities, seeking common themes and uniqueness in city systems change.

This approach inspired by realist research and Most Significant Change technique is customised for Fondation Botnar's cities portfolio. For this reason, the framework will remain emergent and will be revised periodically based on its application across projects. The table below summarises the design of the action research and learning process that will be important for the learning partners to consider as they overlay the E2A Framework with their M&E plan. Please read the E2A Conceptual Framework Edition 2 for further details.

Table 1. Research design overview

Philosophy	Constructivism
Approach	Abductive
Methodology	Participatory action research and learning
Methods	Multi-method approach – strong qualitative lens
Tools	Realist evaluation/synthesis and *Most Significant Change* (MSC)

Action research and learning objectives

- Inform monitoring, evaluation and research activities across a range of Fondation Botnar-funded urban programs and projects.

- Collate and draw on learnings from past and existing Fondation Botnar city projects and programs and urban initiatives from experienced agencies and academic institutions engaged in urban issues.

- Develop and document knowledge of what works and what does not work in diverse, complex urban environments which will inform the E2A research and learning framework.

- Define a range of programming approaches and tools that facilitate sustained change in urban environments.

- Inform local-level advocacy and contribute and shape global agendas, leveraging grassroots evidence for policy change.

- Contribute to the capacity of Fondation Botnar and its partners to deliver effective, efficient, relevant and sustainable programs in urban environments.

- Inform strategies for Fondation Botnar and its partners based on evidence from grassroots actions.

How to build evidence: participatory action research and learning (PAR-L) approach

The E2A Framework outlines an evidence-building process that can promote learning and mapping change across Fondation Botnar's entire city portfolio. The five domains of change are focus areas of investigation, learning, mapping and documentation of change across all projects – feeding into a global meta-learning and research strategy to be implemented by Fondation Botnar and its partners.

Establishing evidence-building and learning processes requires agreeing on an ongoing research and evaluation action plan and embedding evidence building and learning activities in the project cycle. It is important to create opportunities for diverse stakeholders to work closely together and to communicate regularly. Providing opportunities to build mutually beneficial relationships through demonstrator/entry projects can be an important strategy in building trust and establishing longer-term working relationships. Open communication about the pros and cons of various relationships is critical and should occur in the early stages of partnership formation to ensure that issues are identified and quickly resolved, and strengths can be leveraged for ongoing improvements. Hence, a structured approach, including setting up systems to allow learning to be shared and captured on an ongoing basis, is fundamental to the application of the E2A Framework at the project level.

> The five domains of change are high-level focus areas of desired outcomes in which projects seek to create a shift.
>
> This will be done through ongoing investigation, learning, mapping and documentation of change across all projects. The corresponding learning themes for each of the domains will be the focus for the global meta-learning and research strategy.

Adopting a participatory action research and learning (PAR-L) approach requires collaboration across all stages of evidence generation and action, from problem definition, data collection and analysis, formulation of strategies, through to review/evaluation. Crucial to this process is the development of a shared vision amongst stakeholders, and a commitment to building trust and respect in knowledge partnerships. Clear deadlines, shared outputs and the development of mutual incentives and accountability are also key to deepening such knowledge co-production processes.

Evidence can and should be collected from many people, groups and sources and in many forms – from desk-based research to lived experience.

Expectations and deliverables should be negotiated and formally documented and monitored. Researchers, practitioners, communities and policymakers need to work together to select and integrate evidence that is fit for context. Contextual factors that can affect uptake, implementation and maintenance should be identified and addressed. Engaging systems thinking experts is helpful for complex, highly dynamic contexts and will help to illuminate a range of considerations relating to economic, political and environmental factors that may need to be addressed to achieve sustained program benefits.

Evidence can and should be collected from many people, groups and sources and in many forms – from desk-based research to lived experience. Evidence should then be checked,

Central to the E2A Framework implementation model is the need for appointing a learning partner with M&E capabilities and research capacities.

collated and presented in a useful form to feed back to stakeholders. It is important to include a local knowledge partner as part of the team in city initiatives to facilitate learning and communication. Local researchers and practitioners should be brought together from the beginning of the project cycle to define the research problem to be investigated and how outcomes will be mapped. This will then inform the research design and methodologies that will be employed, as well as what data will need to be collected to support evidence building and learning across the five domains of change. These local-level learnings can then be shared and analysed with the Fondation Botnar global knowledge team on an ongoing basis to support broader learning and documentation.

The next section outlines the core steps of an evidence-building cycle and processes to embed ongoing research and learning approaches as an overlay on a project cycle.

PAR-L cycle

Engaging in PAR-L on a continuous and cyclical process means that collaboration, review and learning are integrated as an overlay on every step of the program or project cycle. Each step in the evidence and learning cycle should incorporate participatory methods that can capture both objective and subjective realities and empower community members to

Each step in the evidence and learning cycle should incorporate participatory methods that can capture both objective and subjective realities and empower community members to systematically gather and use evidence to improve their knowledge and act on their own wellbeing.

systematically gather and use evidence to improve their knowledge and act on their own wellbeing. This way, the evidence building and learning cycle itself becomes a participatory
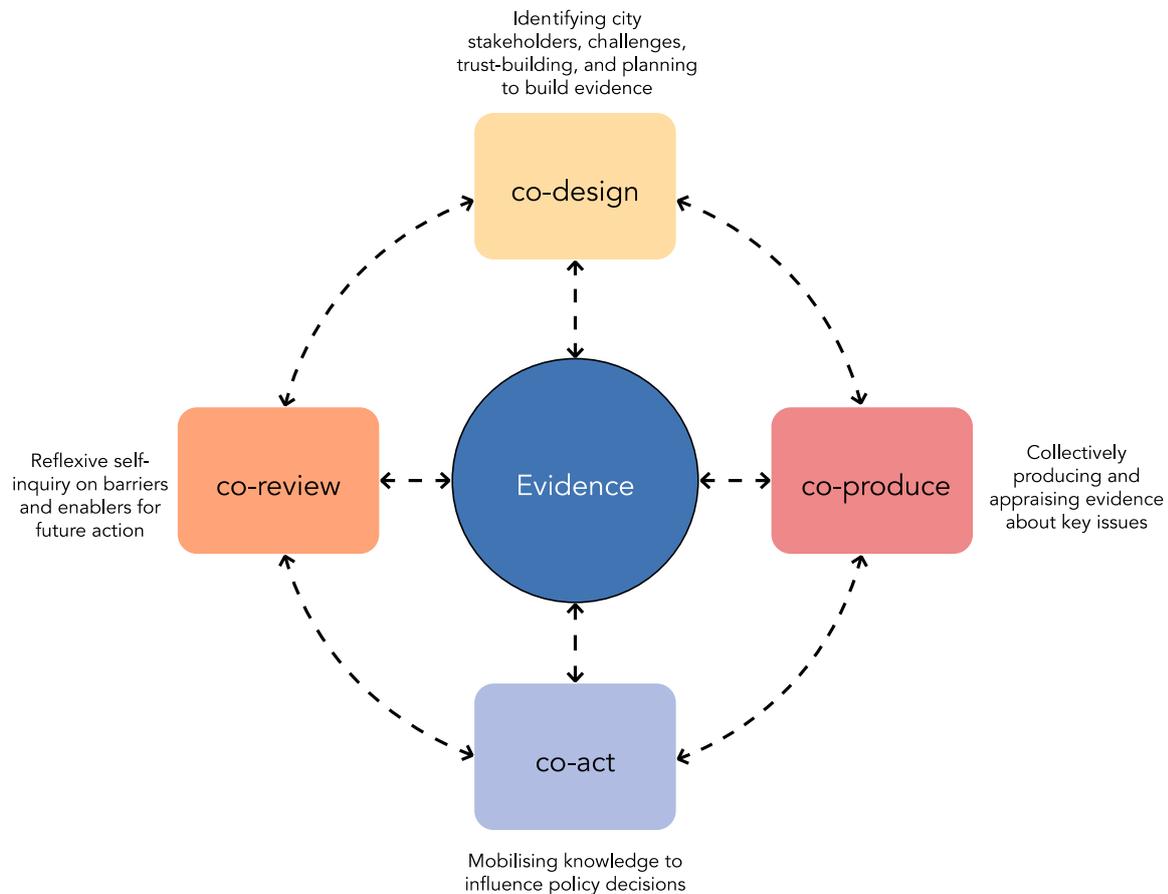
Figure 3. Evidence building and learning cycle

and empowering process where key stakeholders, including young people, co-design processes, co-produce and appraise evidence, collectively act to leverage the evidence to influence the city system, and co-learn translating evidence into knowledge through collaborative review processes and reflective practices (see Figure 2).

Co-design

The co-design stage involves mobilising diverse city stakeholders to prioritise key issues linked with the five domains of change, and establish ground rules and procedures to build trusting relationships and gain insights into city contextual issues. Project learning partners need to be involved in this planning process and collectively lead this co-design phase, ensuring realistic plans for evidence building. This should be based on action research learning approaches and tools.

The learning partner will need to design a capability-building plan addressing needs of the diverse stakeholders involved as evidence builders, especially of young people. Participation can be leveraged through hosting inclusive community events to identify shared goals, values, needs, priorities and resources, as well as forming advisory committees and working groups. Those with a stake in the problem to be addressed in the city (residents and communities, including organisations that represent marginalised groups and young people, NGOs and civil society, government, business or research communities) are consulted about the issue, their perspectives and priorities, and perceived solutions. It is important that connections and authentic dialogue from diverse and representative groups are enabled.

The co-design phase should examine the key issues in relation to the five domains of change, and identify a baseline in relation to the domains and principles, and which changes it seeks to enact. This information is evidence gathering on the state of the city against the E2A principles and domains in addition to the landscape/PEA (Political Economy Analysis) completed by the project team for the intervention area.

Co-produce

The co-production stage involves setting up structures of engagement to produce and appraise evidence on the domains and principles within the context of the city and the corresponding change. A systemic approach to producing and understanding evidence and

determining the best actions is recommended for identifying and defining the problems that are to be addressed.

The co-production stage involves devising an evidence-building plan that allows systematic data gathering through an action research process that involves critical stakeholders of the projects, especially young people trained as evidence builders.

The co-production of evidence commences with strategic actions as entry points. This might be a holistic set of activities across all strategic actions, or partners might select one strategic action as an entry point. Creating platforms and networks of engagement that allow partnerships to form based on a shared vision of the desired change is essential, especially for youth groups and marginalised communities who are critical to facilitating the co-production phase.

Co-act

The co-act stage involves collaborating to identify entry points or opportunities to act on issues that emerge from evidence generation and analysis. This can be facilitated by forming close partnerships across practice, research and policy, ensuring open and regular communication and sharing rich data, collected using approaches and methods explained in Section 2 of Part II in this Practitioner's Guide. Building the capacity of young people through training to understand data and leverage evidence for their wellbeing through local decision-making processes is important to strengthen their roles. Additionally, it will be important to engage with other city stakeholders, including government officials, and build their capacity to understand diverse evidence. A community plan in collaboration with all pertinent stakeholders should be designed to ensure that knowledge and evidence are used to develop programmatic and policy interventions that feed into a broader citywide advocacy strategy.

Co-review

The co-review stage involves a process of reflexivity and self-inquiry of community members and practitioners, facilitated by the learning partner to support collective learning. This stage benefits from scheduled time and space for reflection on the barriers and enablers associated with the implementation of the strategic actions in a safe and open forum.

Rigorous documentation is expected at the project level in collaboration with the project M&E team with guidance from the learning partner. The co-review phase seeks validation of the findings and to leverage learnings to inform future programmatic and policy action.

Overlaying PAR-L cycle on project cycle

It is recommended to apply the E2A Framework to a three-year project where the PAR-L cycle will be overlayed on the project cycle, starting with the assessment and design phase. Consider following the steps outlined below when applying the PAR-L cycle to the project cycle as a meta-learning overlay.

- **Step 1.** During the design phase, consult with the learning partner (local and/or national) and discuss how you will use the evidence cycle, who the people are that you will use it with, and whose evidence you would like to collect. Use the City Assessment Tool (see Table 1 in Section 2 of Part II) to collect information and identify gaps against the E2A principles, as well as about the change that key stakeholders (practitioners and young people) wish to see in their city. This data will be collected in addition to a landscape assessment/PEA analysis.

- **Step 2.** Consider how you will integrate the evidence cycle within the project cycle. In collaboration with your learning partner, develop and design a plan for evidence gathering, including the frequency of data collection. Consider the tools provided in this guide (see Section 2 of Part II) for mapping change in your local/city context. Contextualise the tools, if required. The E2A Learning Officer will need to coordinate this process with the project M&E team and the learning partner and integrate the activities of evidence production into the project M&E plan. Data collection using Table 1 should be done at the start, middle and end of the project.

- **Step 3.** During the project implementation phase:

  – Ask the identified practitioners from the consortium to record monthly reflections.

– Continue collecting data monthly through reflection journals from practitioners and quarterly from youth on the project activities relevant to the E2A principles and domains of change.

– Generate responses for Tables 2 and 3 (See Section II Part II)using the reflection journal data quarterly during the project implementation phase and co-review the responses with the consortium partners and community representatives at the local-level through learning workshops. Ensure participation of key stakeholders including young people in the review process, together with the national learning partner.

– Learning partners are to analyse the data and consolidate the evidence annually using tables 4 and 5 to identify the patterns of change emergent as a result of project activities.

– Consider evidence collected and information that can be considered for advocacy activities or to inform the design of a campaign.

▪ **Step 4.** Document change annually using the tool for mapping the *Most Significant Change* (tables 7 and 8 in Section 2 of Part II) based on observations of diverse city stakeholders. An annual learning event should be held, led by the national learning partner (local learning partner when national learning is not appointed), to share learnings papers that document transferable strategies to continue creating a positive shift within each domain of change.

▪ **Step 5.** Use Table 1 in the middle of the project cycle and at the end of the project cycle to identify progress towards desired outcomes resulting from project activities. Together with the local and/or national learning partner, reflect on the evidence gathered to identify patterns of change.
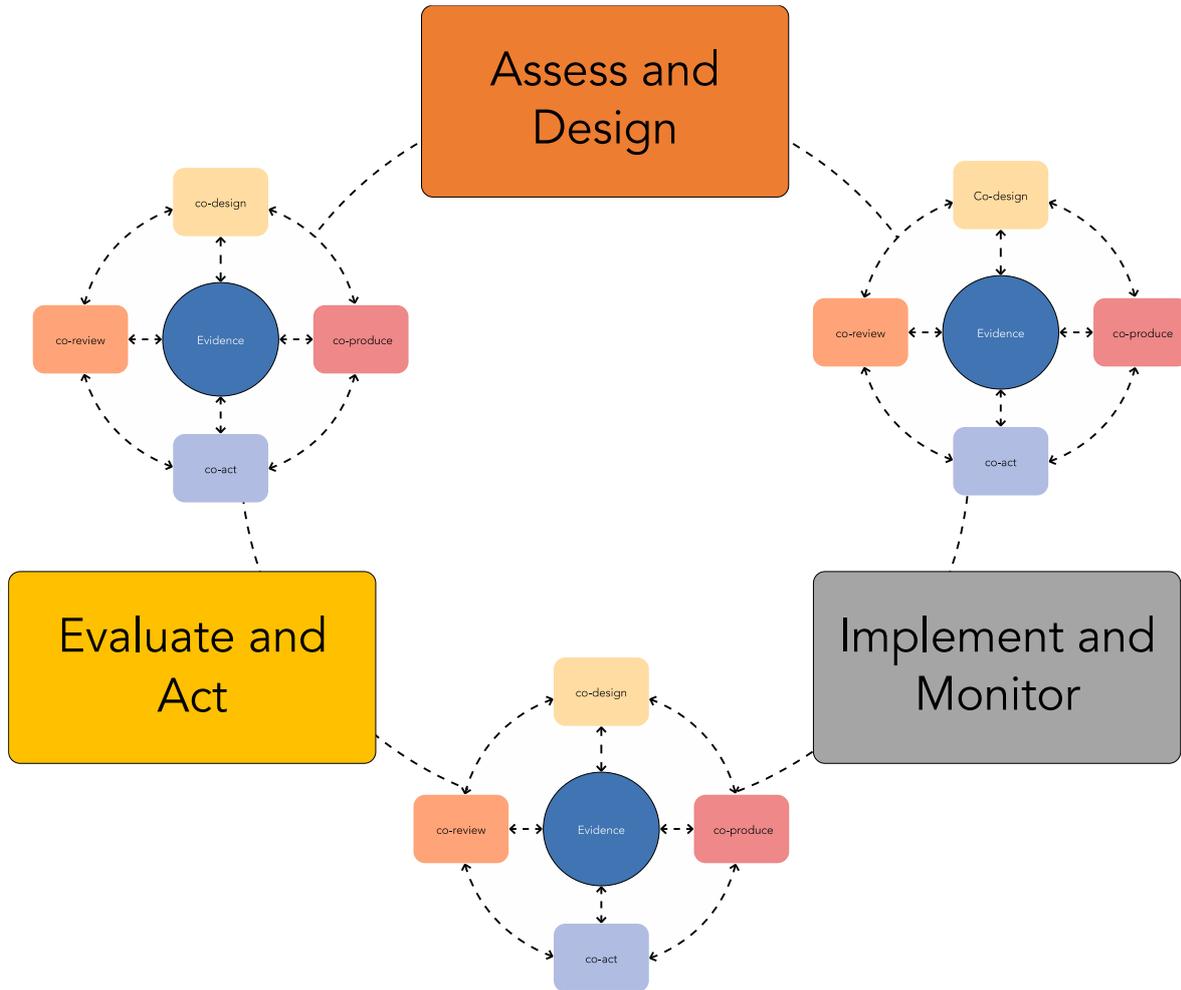
Figure 4. Project cycle and evidence-building and learning overlay

PART II: Applying the E2A Framework

The core pillars of the E2A Framework are five principles, six strategic actions and five domains of change. The five principles serve as cross-cutting values for all local projects to consider as these align with Fondation Botnar's principles and approaches and enable action. The six strategic actions provide avenues for the principles to be operationalised.

The five domains of change are informed by the strategic priorities of Fondation Botnar and provide boundaries within which Fondation Botnar's resources will be directed to enable change.

The domains of change are core focus areas where Fondation Botnar would like to see change take place over a period of time and the principles provide the themes that will enable change to achieve youth wellbeing.

It is expected that investing in interventions designed in line with the principles and programmed through the strategic actions will lead to positive outcomes across multiple domains of change.

It is critical to understand the **purpose of these core elements of the E2A Framework** to apply it as a meta-learning overlay on the project cycle.

Purpose of the strategic actions

The strategic actions are entry points to commence learning activities about the local context and launch the evidence-building cycle starting with gathering evidence about the state of the city through the E2A lens. The actions will facilitate the creation of a baseline of the city through the lens of the E2A principles and domains of change. The strategic actions allow the project team to connect with city stakeholders and enable action, setting up communication processes to mobilise evidence and catalyse action.

Purpose of the principles

The principles reflect Fondation Botnar's commitment to global human rights principles and international development principles. These principles are aspirational. It is expected that in practice their achievement will be messy, complex and partial. Learning across these principles is therefore intended to help with guiding value-based action, but also in the

reflexive examination of this complexity, with the aim of developing a deeper understanding of what is required in practice to live up to these principles.

Principles are core values for projects to consider and inform their activities. Evidence is to be documented about the alignment of projects activities with these principles to generate learning about what change is taking place and the causality of this change. They provide a filter through which diverse urban contexts are understood and assessed to document evidence of the current state of the city, explored through subjective reflections of key stakeholders, including young people.

Purpose of the domains of change

The domains of change are aligned to Fondation Botnar's strategic priorities and enable a reflexive process to enable Fondation Botnar's journey from 'a grant maker to change maker'. They provide a set of core areas of focus for projects to map change. It is recommended that change is mapped in each domain of change against three themes that are priorities for Fondation Botnar to catalyse city systems change and ensure sustained impact. These themes are the capacities built, the strategies deployed, and the processes established that aid the practitioners and partners involved in project implementation to document change in the domains during the project cycle.

Section 1: A practical, phased approach to participatory action research and learning
Three levels of engagement and roles for evidence building

To operationalise the E2A Framework as a meta-learning tool, it requires engagement at three levels, mainly from local to global, where Fondation Botnar envisions creating impact. Fondation Botnar projects are delivered through a consortium model and it is expected that consortium partners will be actively involved in the implementation of the E2A Framework for each project. Accordingly, it is recommended that three levels of engagement are established for implementing the E2A Framework. A workplan for each level with clearly defined roles, responsibilities and timelines is presented ahead for applying the E2A Framework in Fondation Botnar projects across different cities. These three levels are local, meso and meta. This section describes each of them in detail.

Outlined below is the engagement strategy of PAR-L teams from local to global to work collaboratively to implement the E2A Framework.

1. At the **local-level**, PAR-L teams are formed with the project consortium and diverse stakeholders, such as local community representatives, youth groups, NGOs, civil society groups, local government representatives and researchers. This team will be formed by either a dedicated E2A Officer or a project team member assigned to lead on the E2A tasks. A project-level learning partner is expected to be appointed as part of the consortium. See the section ahead for details.

2. **Meso-level** PAR-L teams are formed with representatives from all the different project PAR-L teams in the country and national-level diverse stakeholders such as youth leaders, NGOs, civil society groups, state and national government representatives, and national think tanks and universities. This team will be formed by either the project-level learning partner or a national-level learning partner if there are multiple in-country Fondation Botnar projects.

3. The **meta-level** PAR-L team is also called the Global Evidence Building (GEB) Program Team. Meta-level PAR-L teams are formed with representatives from the meso PAR-L teams and representatives from Fondation Botnar's thematic city programs. The global PAR-L team will not directly engage with the local-level PAR-L team (including project

teams). The meta-level PAR-L team will also establish an advisory committee with representatives of academics, practitioners and experts to inform the knowledge management and research strategy.
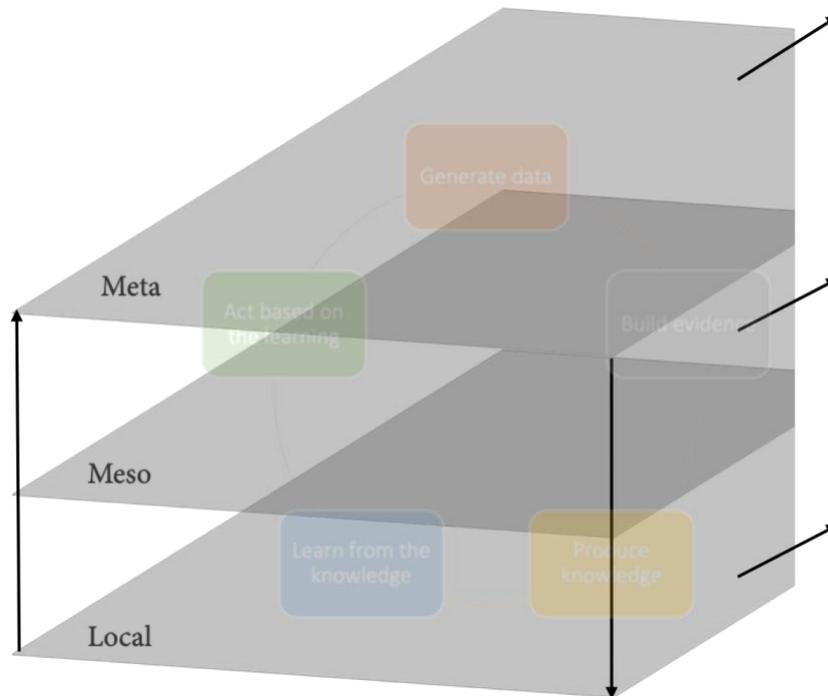
Meta PAR-L team (Global Evidence Building Team)

- Develop research and meta-learning strategy
- Support global advocacy campaigns with data
- Build a global E2A Community of Practices
- Inform and shape global agendas, including localisation of SDGs
- Inform and shape academic research and training
- Provide training, and capacity building to national and project partners
- Collate, analyse and synthesise data and produce reports on domains of change
- Share evidence with Fondation Botnar to strengthen their strategy.

Meso PAR-L team (local/national learning partner)

- Develop national research and learning strategy in collaboration with your project partners
- Inform and shape global agendas
- Inform and shape academic research and training
- Provide training and capacity building to project MEL teams
- Contextualise the E2A tools to facilitate participatory action research and learning at the project level
- Collate, analyse and synthesise data and produce reports on domains of change
- Track change in the conditions of the city in context of E2A principles.

Local PAR-L team (E2A Officer)

- Develop research and learning strategy for your project
- Provide training, and capacity building to community groups on evidence building
- Establish processes for participatory action research and learning
- Generate baseline data in context of the E2A principles for the project based on the strategic action(s)
- Collate, analyse and synthesise data and produce reports on domains of change.

Figure 4. Three levels of engagement and roles for evidence building

Guidance for action planning at the three levels of engagement for evidence building

Local-level

Local-level PAR-L teams will be formed by either a dedicated E2A Officer or a project team member assigned to lead on the E2A tasks. These PAR-L teams will include project consortium partners, M&E team representatives and local partners such as NGOs, civil society, elected representatives and youth groups. A project-level learning partner is also expected to be appointed as a part of the consortium.

During the three-year project cycle, PAR-L teams formed at the project level will co-produce evidence with young people on a regular basis using the tools provided in this guide. They will document evidence and interact with the national learning partners regularly. During these interactions, practitioners and researchers will analyse evidence through reflection on the E2A principles and domains of change. Evidence and learning will be documented at regular intervals to map change at the city level. Project-level PAR-L teams, as well as young people will be provided with training on evidence building.

At the local (city) level, evidence will be co-produced by practitioners and communities. This means implementing partners and young people will collect evidence at the project/city level, mapping the city context, identifying what change is required to promote young people's wellbeing and documenting the change taking place as a result of project interventions. These will be explored in terms of the capacities, strategies and processes established across the E2A domains of change. Evidence-building planning using the evidence cycle will need to be agreed on during the finalisation of the project's M&E framework.

At this level, evidence and learning gathered will be used, on one hand, for refining and implementing course corrections in project strategies and activities, as well as for initiating new projects; and on the other hand, for initiating evidence-based advocacy campaigns at the city level. This process will contribute to building the capacity of implementing organisations.

What can you do?
- Develop an evidence-building plan in collaboration with the learning partner.

- Provide training (by E2A Officer) and capacity-building support to community groups and project partners for using innovative data-gathering tools.

- Training to build community and partners' institutional capacity.

- Learning workshops for community and partners as required.

- Youth training on evidence building.

- Journals and reflections documented from practitioners and young people.

- Facilitate and coordinate participatory action research and the application of data-gathering tools at the community level.

- Collate, analyse and synthesise data and produce reports on the E2A principles and domains of change at regular intervals at the city level with support from the meso PAR-L team (learning partner).

- Share evidence in multi-stakeholder city-level forums and facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogue.

Knowledge output overview

- Monthly – Practitioner's journals and reflections with youth (using digital technology).

- Quarterly – Training for community and institutional capacity building.

- Quarterly – Learning workshops for community and partners.

- Every six months – Multi-stakeholder city-level forum.

Considerations for E2A action planning by local-level PAR-L team

1. Co-design evidence building plan.

    – Identify 'key champions' inside government and industry to gain their support and engagement in knowledge dissemination.

- Collaborate with a learning partner who can support research, mapping issues, capacity building, framing strategies and actions, and documentation.

- Build a shared vision with community and consortium partners, establishing clear deliverables, incentives for collaboration, and mechanisms for accountability.

- Design evidence-building plan in addition to project M&E plan.

2. Co-produce evidence.

- Mobilise key local partners and stakeholders involved, with attention to diversity and inclusion, especially of young people, to collect stories of change.

- Journals and reflections documented by practitioners and young people.

- Work with learning partner/researchers to analyse the data from a contextual lens and co-produce knowledge products with partners.

- Establish periodic forums or spaces for diverse stakeholders to respectfully engage in exchanging knowledge and learning on key issues.

3. Co-act using evidence.

- Develop a lobbying and advocacy strategy at the city level in response to the local issues with civil society and community advocates, leveraging champions within the local government.

- Generate knowledge products, hold workshops to progress shared learning, host city level forums to socialise E2A and inform stakeholders.

- Build capacity of groups to leverage data for action.

- Facilitate community review/assessment of change against three themes (processes, strategies, capacities) across each of the five domains of change on an annual basis.

- Establish networks to share learnings and scale out, such as peer-to-peer training or exchanges at the city level.

- Share evidence through engagement with citywide, in-country representatives of regional or global networks.

4. Co-review evidence with stakeholders.

- Participate in reflexive analysis of practitioners and researchers on the evidence gathered using the E2A principles in the baseline and the mapping of change during the implementation phase.

- Participate in reflexive analysis of practitioners and researchers on how issues of power, privilege and representation shaped the production of knowledge and identify strategies to address these issues.

- Identify the issues or concerns of social groups that may have been left behind and explore how they might be included in future initiatives or other interventions.

Meso-level

At the meso-level, the project-level learning partner will launch the evidence building and learning cycle and consolidate evidence to produce knowledge products. The learning partner will form the PAR-L team at the national level for all in-country projects, including representatives from local PAR-L teams, NGOs, civil society, youth groups and relevant national partners working on policies and programs for youth wellbeing.

If there are multiple Fondation Botnar projects, an in-country national learning partner will be appointed to develop and lead the implementation of the evidence-building plan and learning strategies with practitioners and communities. The project-level learning partner works at the meso-level, connecting with the PAR-L team at the meta-level in addition to its role at the local-level in the absence of a national-level learning partner.

Learning partners will synthesise learning from diverse local/city level projects to leverage evidence for national-level policy and advocacy initiatives calling for strengthening city

systems and promoting young people's wellbeing. They will also play a key role in training, building and enhancing the capacity of the local (city)-level team for documenting evidence of change.

What can you do?

- Develop a national-level research and learning strategy in collaboration with the project PAR-L team.

- Facilitate action research and learning processes in-country across all Fondation Botnar-funded project activities.

- Coordinate meta-learning activities across participating projects at the national level.

- Develop capacity-building strategy and provide training and support for all projects and their partners with evidence-building tools and learning activities.

- Collate, analyse and synthesise data gathered from the local/city level and produce reports on meta-learning and research findings at regular intervals.

- Every two years, publish thematic learning papers synthesising data from multiple city initiatives on the E2A key themes that represent Fondation Botnar's strategic priorities.

- Develop policy and advocacy plans and strategies at the national level.

- Training for project staff in E2A concepts and theories underpinning the E2A Framework.

- Training for project staff in participatory action research and learning approaches and tools as outlined in the E2A Framework.

- Develop a national-level knowledge management strategy in collaboration with the local and global PAR-L teams.

Knowledge output overview

- Quarterly – Training for project capacity building.
- Quarterly – Learning workshops.
- Annual – National-level campaigns.

- Annual – National-level partner conferences.

- Periodically – Knowledge publications (policy briefs and thematic learning papers).

Considerations for E2A action plan by meso-level PAR-L team

1. Co-design evidence building plan.

  − Lead the design evidence building plan and build a shared vision with community and consortium partners, establishing clear deliverables, incentives for collaboration and mechanisms for accountability.

  − Identify 'key champions' at the city and national levels, as well as inside national government and industry, to gain support, engagement and understanding on evidence gathered and in knowledge dissemination.

  − Lead the capacity building, framing strategies and actions, and documentation.

  − Lead research by identifying topics and learning questions focusing on issues evident from the data gathered.

2. Co-produce evidence.

  − Lead data analysis and knowledge production.

  − Share knowledge products and mobilise key national and global partners on relevant policy issues.

  − Establish periodic forums or spaces for diverse stakeholders at the national level to respectfully engage in exchanging knowledge and learnings on key issues.

  − Undertake collaborative inquiry into research questions and topics using participatory methods and tools, engaging practitioners and community members, especially young people.

  − Apply the Bond Evidence Principles and checklist to ensure rigour and quality of evidence.

- Collectively analyse research findings with special attention to divergent ideas, gaps and contradictions.

- Annual learning report and knowledge products.

3. Co-act using evidence.

- Develop a national-level lobbying and advocacy strategy in response to local issues with civil society and community advocates, leveraging evidence on specific issues of youth wellbeing, engaging champions within local government.

- Generate knowledge products, hold workshops, host multi-stakeholder events at the national level to socialise E2A and inform projects.

- Identify opportunities for knowledge exchange and share evidence through engagement with national, regional or global networks.

- Consolidate community review/assessment of change against E2A principles and the three themes (processes, strategies, capacities) across each of the five domains of change on an annual basis.

- Establish networks to share learnings and scale out, such as peer-to-peer training or exchanges, at the national, regional and global levels.

4. Co-review evidence with stakeholders.

- Lead reflexive analysis of practitioners and researchers on evidence gathered using the E2A principles in the baseline and the mapping of change.

- Lead reflexive analysis of practitioners and researchers on how issues of power, privilege and representation shaped the production of knowledge and identify strategies to address these issues.

- Analyse the issues or concerns of social groups that may have been left behind and explore how they might be included in future initiatives or other interventions.

Meta-level

The Global Evidence Building Team will form the PAR-L team at the meta-level. The PAR-L team will include representatives from meso-level learning partners, representatives of multilateral agencies, research and academic institutes, and experts from policy and practice.

It is recommended that city (local), national (meso) and global (meta) level PAR-L teams come together every two years, hosted by one of the national learning partners in-country. This will be the opportunity for the projects to share their learnings generated from evidence gathered, informing programmatic adaptations and policy actions. The collective learning from the projects will help further refine the E2A Framework and research and policy advocacy themes to advance youth wellbeing.

To operationalise an organisational learning agenda via the implementation of the E2A Framework, the global E2A team will frame the overall meta-learning strategy, support documentation and learning processes. Strong engagement is needed between global and local teams, who are accountable for gathering, analysing and sharing evidence from city projects to inform global learning questions. They will also establish an advisory committee with select consortium members to guide the knowledge management strategy and the meta-learning process on an annual basis.

The meta-level PAR-L team will play a key role in knowledge exchange and creating a global community of practice. It will leverage meta-level evidence to design global advocacy programs with the partners. The global team will also analyse collective evidence and prepare annual learning reports that can inform both Fondation Botnar's strategy and grant-giving priorities.

What can you do?

- Develop a global research and learning strategy to be adopted/localised across Fondation Botnar city projects.

- Set up systems to generate themes to frame the overall meta-learning and research strategy.

- Facilitate action research and learning processes across Fondation Botnar-funded programming activities with the Fondation Botnar team.

- Provide training and capacity building to support research and learning activities.

- Establish and maintain a global community of practice for knowledge exchange on E2A and inform research and learning plan.

- Design a global knowledge management strategy and communication plan to set up learning processes between the local, meso and meta-level partners. The team will coordinate the knowledge outputs based on collected evidence to leverage policy change at the global level.

- Develop global policy and advocacy plans for the cities portfolio and strategies at the global level, and undertake global advocacy initiatives on issues around young people's wellbeing in intermediary cities.

Knowledge output overview

- Annual – Advisory committee meeting.
- Annual – Global advocacy events.
- Annual – Knowledge outputs, policy briefs and learning papers.
- Continuous – Global community of practice events (digital engagement).

Considerations for E2A action plan by meta-level PAR-L team

1. Co-design evidence building plan.

    – Develop global research and learning strategy in collaboration with PAR-L team and meso learning partners.

    – Support and advise the development of national-level evidence building plan.

    – Develop a research and learning strategy to be adopted by meso learning partners.

    – Identify global partners for knowledge dissemination.

2. Co-produce evidence.

- Review and consolidate knowledge products and share with national and global partners on relevant policy issues.

- Establish forums or spaces every two years for diverse stakeholders at regional and global levels to respectfully engage in exchanging knowledge and learning on key issues.

3. Co-act using evidence.

- Develop a global lobbying and advocacy strategy in response to emergent global issues within the E2A domains of change.

- Identify opportunities for knowledge exchange and share evidence through engagement with regional and global networks.

- Establish networks to share learnings and scale out, such as peer-to-peer training or exchanges at the regional and global levels.

4. Co-review evidence with stakeholders.

- Review the research and learning strategy in collaboration with PAR-L teams.

- Review national-level knowledge products that capture assessment of change against E2A principles, and the three themes (processes, strategies, capacities) across each of the five domains of change on an annual basis.

Essentials for projects implementing the E2A Framework

When applying the E2A Framework to any project, the implementing organisation must consider the following.

Assess organisational readiness

The implementing organisation must start with an assessment of organisational readiness and existing capacities to apply the E2A Framework. It is vital to ensure that the implementing organisation has a clear understanding of the E2A Framework and a commitment for co-producing evidence and learning together with practitioners and young people. This requires a shift in mindset and unlearning conventional thinking about how development projects and organisations build evidence and learn.
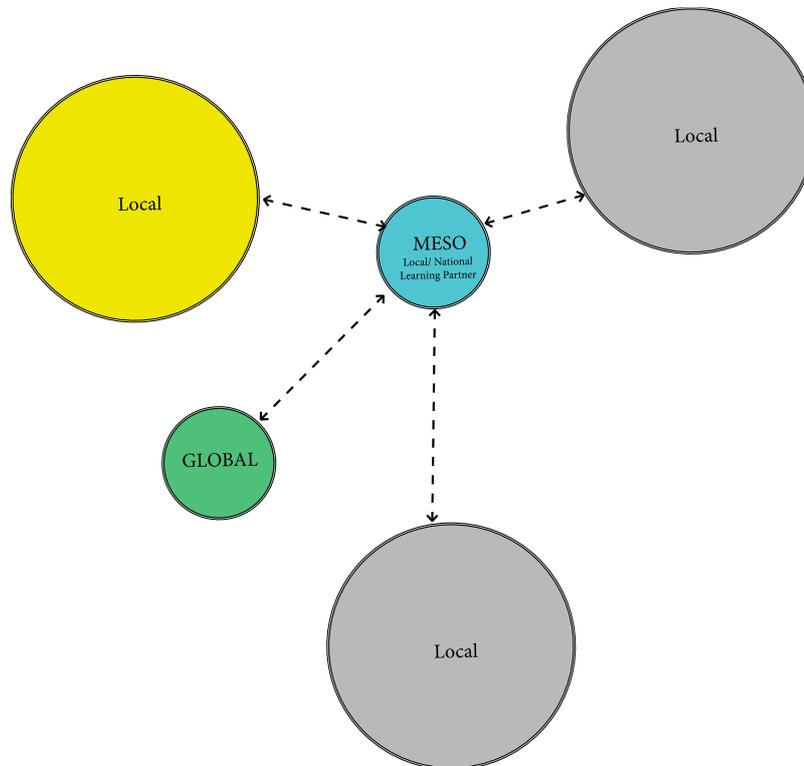
Figure 5. Basic operating model

Allocate resources

Fondation Botnar will constitute an E2A PAR-L team as discussed at the start of the section. This will include a meta-level PAR-L team that includes the Global Evidence Building (GEB) Program Team. The GEB team will set up the meta-level PAR-L team and appoint national-level partners (where relevant) in Fondation Botnar countries to promote participatory action research and learning across project teams. Resources will need to be allocated at the global level to appoint these national learning partners. At the local-level, the E2A PAR-L team will need to be set up and the local-level project grant will need to include resources to implement the E2A Framework. Resources need to be allocated during project planning and design to ensure adequate provisions exist to cover the cost of project-level E2A activities and human resources. The

This is the basic operating model expected to be established in Fondation Botnar country projects. See Figure 5. The local learning partner will also work at the meso-level. If more local projects are initiated in the same country, a national level learning partner will be appointed. The grey 'local' PAR-L teams in the diagram represent new projects.

local PAR-L team will include a focal point in the form of an E2A Officer at the project level who will work closely with the national learning partner. The E2A Officer will serve as the conduit between project implementers (e.g., fieldworkers and managers), the project M&E team and the learning partner. Apart from the E2A Officer, resources should be allocated to appoint a learning partner at the local-level as part of the project consortium. The learning partner is critical for evidence gathering and analysis and becomes the liaison to the meta-level PAR-L team in the absence of the national-level learning partner.

Invest in capacity development

Local PAR-L teams will play a key role in co-producing evidence through documenting reflections from practitioners and young people. To this end, it will be necessary to allocate adequate resources and time to build their capacity so that they have the skills required for documenting evidence and experiential learning using the tools provided in this guide, as well as for using any innovative digital tools for data gathering. The local/national learning partner will play a key role in building and enhancing capacity of the project-level PAR-L teams on E2A, and in designing evidence building training for communities and young people.

Digital tools for data management

The research design centres qualitative research methods for evidence building draws from lived experiences and stories of change. To ensure that this can be done at scale, use of digital technology is proposed. Projects are encouraged to use the digital tools available and appropriate to their operations at the local-level in order to strengthen evidence-building and knowledge-management processes.

Section 2: Evidence-building Tools

This section presents a suite of data-gathering and analysis tools in the form of eight tables. The tables in this section are informed by relevant elements of the Context, Mechanisms and Outcomes (CMO) framework and *Most Significant Change* methodologies. These are used as complementary tools to inform the data gathering and analysis activities to implement the E2A Framework. These tables are to be used by PAR-L teams at the different levels of engagement for systemic evidence building and learning across all Fondation Botnar cities portfolio projects.

These tables will guide all PAR-L teams to gather data, build evidence and learn through regular, systematic reflection processes and inform programming and policy action from local to global. The tables help gather qualitative evidence through ethnographic methods to centre the lived experiences of youth and practitioners on the change taking place within the city. The data collected is analysed to facilitate a process of meta-learning across the Fondation Botnar cities portfolio projects and for Fondation Botnar as an organisation.

The E2A principles and domains of change establish boundaries within the vast complex adaptive system of the city, determining the conceptual space within which Fondation Botnar's resources are being directed to enable change.

Tools at the local-level

There are three tables that facilitate data capture at the local-level on the context, mechanisms and outcomes across the project cycle based on the evidence building and learning cycle. The evidence building and learning efforts are launched during the design phase of a city project. At that stage, the implementing partners have already been selected and their proposals have been approved to receive a Fondation Botnar grant. The E2A Framework is operationalised during the inception phase, which includes developing a project monitoring and evaluation plan. The evidence building and learning process using the E2A Framework is critical in steering the integration of evidence building and learning processes over the project cycle. The specific purpose of each table and the frequency of its use is presented ahead. All three tables at the local-level are focused on data collection from the projects complementary to the existing M&E plans.

- Table 1 is for mapping the context and applying the lens of E2A principles. This table facilitates capturing the **context** of the city system in reference to the E2A principles through a combination of desk review and reflections from project consortium partners. Data is collected using this table at the launch of the project cycle, in the middle of the implementation phase of the project cycle, and at the end of the project cycle.

- Table 2 facilitates evidence building on how the project activities align with the E2A principles. This refers to the underlying entities, structures and processes that create the conditions within which project activities have to be implemented. We are focused on capturing data about the processes established through project activities. Please see the Evaluation Paper for details on the CMO framework which inspired this data collection tool. This evidence is generated through the quarterly consolidation of the monthly practitioner's journal reflections, including consortium partners and the quarterly youth reflections, both gathered using digital tools.

- Table 3 tracks progress towards the desired **outcomes** by observing shifts within each domain of change with respect to the capacities built, processes established and strategies deployed. This is achieved through consolidating the monthly practitioner's journal reflections, including consortium partners and the quarterly youth reflections, both gathered using digital tools.

Table 1 captures **contexts** on the ground. It presents the status of the city, as well as the project activities, promoting a value-based and principled approach to project delivery. Data is gathered during the standard project-level landscape/PE assessment, during the mid-cycle assessment, and end of cycle assessment. Digital tools maybe used for this as needed. Data is gathered by the E2A Officer who is a part of the local PAR-L team in collaboration with the M&E team through:

a. a desk-based document review: analysing secondary data based on the prompts in *italics* against each principle, followed by developing answers to the relevant questions listed in column two. [Column 2]

b. a few focus group discussions and key informant interviews: project partners are expected to reflect on the questions in column three in collaboration with consortium

partners and community representatives, particularly youth, to produce a report on the context where the project will operate and the status of the conditions within the city in relation to E2A principles. [Column 3]

Table 1: Mapping the context applying the lens of E2A principles

Principles	Assessment by project team (desk review)	Practitioner reflection themes (with consortium partners, especially with youth)
Fit for context	*Review the city plan and other urban policy documents.* Which youth-focused issues are included in city plans and budgets to promote youth wellbeing? Which partnerships with civil society to implement youth programs, especially youth-led groups, worked or did not work?	How do you understand the principle 'fit for context' from your experience? What are the gaps and what change would you like to see in three years? What are the opportunities for change that you see?
Inclusion and equity	*Citywide stakeholder mapping (with attention to intersectionality) to identify hard to reach groups, especially youth.* Which youth-led NGOs are working in the city? What participatory processes are in place to include these groups in government plans?	How do you understand the principle 'inclusion and equity' from your experience? What are the gaps and what change would you like to see in three years? What are the opportunities for change that you see?
Practical innovation	*Identify existing innovations (promising practices, grassroots action or innovation, etc., related to your project theme) being implemented by local government and civil society.* What innovative practices are already being documented by local government and NGOs? What technology is being used to address the issues of accessibility, affordability, etc., for communities?	How do you understand the principle 'practical innovation' from your experience and context? What are the gaps and what change would you like to see in three years? What are the opportunities for change that you see?

Enabling environment	*Map spaces and mechanisms of city ecosystems where local government and NGOs are promoting youth voice and participation.* What is the local government's investment for promoting inclusion of youth voices? What are the partnerships at the local-level that actively establish spaces and platforms for dialogue and discussion on youth wellbeing? How is technology being used to create an enabling environment through reaching diverse audience at scale?	How do you understand the principle 'enabling environment' from your experience? What are the gaps and what change would you like to see in three years? What are the opportunities for change that you see?
Shared learning	*Map young peoples' and practitioners' platforms that enable knowledge exchange for collective action within the city.* What are the platforms and processes in place where local government and civil society are sharing knowledge for collective action at the local and national level? What community-led promising practices are shared with government on an ongoing basis to inform city planning?	How do you understand the principle 'shared learning' from your experience? What are the gaps and what change would you like to see in three years? What are the opportunities for change that you see?

Table 2 captures the underlying processes that create the conditions within which project activities have to be implemented. It is meant to be used as a guide to develop the questions for data collection through the practitioner's journals and youth reflections using digital data collection tools (see Annex for SenseMaker® and Rural Senses). These questions are developed by the local PAR-L team.

It is also a tool for quarterly consolidation of the reflection data from practitioner's journals and youth reflections. This data consolidation is by the local PAR-L team. The purpose of this table is to facilitate the generation of narratives of change from practitioners and young

people on the changes they observe in the project activities, and their alignment with the E2A principles.

Table 2: Reflections on E2A principles

Principles	Prompts for quarterly reflection by local project teams
Fit for context	How did your activities reflect contextual issues raised by the community, especially in relation to youth wellbeing?
Inclusion and equity	How did your activities ensure that people have a voice and equitable participation, and community members, especially diverse young people, are included in project design and implementation processes?
Practical innovation	How did your activities promote the use of practical innovation(s) change?
Enabling environment	What project activities established spaces, conditions and mechanisms that contributed to strengthening an enabling environment?
Shared learning	What mechanisms were created to enable shared learning from grassroots to local and national levels?

Table 3 captures the shift in the **outcomes** within each domain of change reflecting on the change captured through tables 1 and 2 (reflected in capacities, strategies and processes). The shift is captured from the perspective of practitioners and young people using monthly practitioner's journals and quarterly youth reflections. In both cases, observations of these stakeholders are captured in the context of the specific learning themes corresponding to the desired outcomes within each domain. The observations focus on how different strategies are employed, capacities are built and processes are influenced within the city system. The prompts for capacities, strategies and processes for each E2A domain listed in Table 3 are in place to guide the development of questions to be used for the practitioner's journal and youth reflections.

These questions are to be developed by the local PAR-L team and digital data management tools are to be used for this data collection (see Annex for SenseMaker® and Rural Senses). These prompts are also to be used to structure the quarterly consolidation of the reflection data from practitioner's journals and youth reflections. This data consolidation is also conducted by the local PAR-L team in collaboration with local consortium partners.

The purpose of this table is to facilitate the generation of narratives of change from practitioners and young people on the changes they observe corresponding to the actions that have taken place as part of the project within each E2A domain of change. This will

guide the quarterly learning workshop and shape the discussion with consortium partners and community representatives during these workshops. The learning workshop deliberations and discussions will shape the overall annual analysis and inform the learning papers that the meso PAR-L team will produce.

Table 3: Reflections on E2A domains of change

Domain	Prompts for quarterly reflection by local project teams	
Empowered youth and communities Learning theme: participation	Capacities	Capacities of the young people to participate in local political, social and community formal and informal processes.
	Strategies	Stakeholder strategies that build young peoples' confidence and capacity to participate in local political processes.
	Processes	Formal and informal processes for young peoples' participation in local political processes.
Equitable partnerships Learning theme: inclusion	Capacities	Capacities of various partners for cultivating equitable collaboration that include diverse city stakeholders, especially young people.
	Strategies	Strategies to address power dynamics and to sustain equitable partnerships amongst diverse city stakeholders, especially young people.
	Processes	Processes that mainstream different established partnerships amongst diverse city stakeholders, especially young people.
Effective city systems Learning theme: governance	Capacities	Capacities of the city officials to understand the aspirations, priorities and challenges of young people.
	Strategies	Strategies applied to mainstream approaches that consider/prioritise youth wellbeing within urban governance.
	Processes	Processes established to create platforms of engagement for young people to strengthen urban governance.
Technological innovation Learning theme: leveraging technology	Capacities	Capacities of young people and diverse city stakeholders to leverage technology to engage in advocacy and governance processes within the city.
	Strategies	Strategies for young people and diverse city stakeholders to use technology to activate change.
	Processes	Processes to institutionalise transformative innovations developed by young people and diverse city stakeholders.
Global in reach	Capacities	Capacities of young people and communities to link local priorities with global agendas.

Learning theme: shaping agendas	Strategies	Strategies of young people and communities to influence global agendas.
	Processes	Processes to mainstream young people and community knowledge to shape global agendas.

Tools at the meso-level

There are four tables that launch and facilitate evidence building at the meso-level through analysis of data collected at the local-level and through the collection of additional data from the local-level that is conducted by the meso PAR-L team. This analysis may also be used to conduct comparative and other studies across Fondation Botnar cities and projects.

- Table 4 facilitates annual analysis of the data captured by the local PAR-L teams on the E2A principles. Its purpose is to map systemic change in the cities with Fondation Botnar-funded project interventions in terms of the E2A principles.

- Table 5 facilitates annual analysis of the data captured by the local PAR-L teams on the shifts within each E2A domain of change. Its purpose is to map systemic change with each of the E2A domains in context of the cities with Fondation Botnar-funded project interventions.

- Table 6 facilitates the generation a comprehensive understanding on what is the *Most Significant Change* in terms of the alignment of project activities with E2A principles for a wider group of city stakeholders – beyond practitioners and young people who are the target groups in the implementation of the E2A Framework.

- Table 7 facilitates the generation a comprehensive understanding on what is the *Most Significant Change* across the E2A domains of change for a wider group of city stakeholders – beyond practitioners and young people who are the target groups in the implementation of the E2A Framework.

Table 4 is to be used by meso-level learning partners (PAR-L team) to generate annual analysis of the data collected at the local-level and record the change in project activities in line with E2A principles in cities with Fondation Botnar-funded project interventions. Following multiple annual analyses, meso PAR-L teams will be able to identify the patterns of change in the city. This table will help generate annual learning papers to be shared annually as a knowledge output.

Table 4: Patterns of change for E2A principles

Principles	Analytical questions
Fit for context	Explain how the data produces evidence of activities that were shaped by local cultural context and values. Analyse if the activities reflected by the practitioners were locally owned and promoted participatory approaches to evidence building and action that are appropriate for and grounded in the culture and context of the community.
Inclusion and equity	Explain how the data produces evidence of inclusion of diverse actors and the creation of equitable partnerships. Explore how practitioners reflected on the rights-based approaches used to enhance the capacity and credibility of young people, to engage with multiple forms of knowledge and actors.
Practical innovation	Explain how the data produces evidence of practical innovations promoted at the grassroots levels. Explore how practitioners reflected on the innovations emerging from local expertise, and the role of innovations as a disrupter.
Enabling environment	Explain how the data produces evidence of urban governance systems that adapt to new formal and informal mechanisms of engagement that enabled a collaborative environment. Explore how practitioners reflected on the approaches that created an enabling environment that leveraged the strengths and weaknesses of the political and institutional systems.
Shared learning	Explain how the data produces evidence on knowledge exchange across jurisdictions and scales from local to global. Explore how practitioners reflected on the processes of systematic sharing of knowledge within and across communities, from the local to global scale.

Table 5 is to be used by meso-level learning partners (PAR-L team) to generate annual analysis of the data collected at the local-level and record the shift within each of the E2A domains of change in cities with Fondation Botnar-funded project interventions. Following multiple annual analyses, meso PAR-L teams will be able to identify the patterns of change in the city. This table will help generate annual learning papers to be shared annually as a knowledge output.

Table 5. Patterns of change for E2A domains

Domain	Analytical questions
Empowered youth and communities Learning theme: participation	What capacities were built by communities and young people? What strategies were applied and what processes were established to cultivate genuine participation of young people in citywide planning processes? Generate learning papers supported by case studies on this theme.
Equitable partnerships Learning theme: inclusion	What capacities were built by different partners? What strategies were applied and what processes were established to cultivate practices of promoted equitable partnerships at the project level? Generate learning papers supported by case studies on this theme.
Effective city systems Learning theme: governance	What capacities were built of city officials? What strategies that were applied, and what processes established to cultivate practices of good governance that led to youth wellbeing? Generate learning papers supported by case studies on this theme.
Technological innovation Learning theme: leveraging technology	What kind of technological innovation was leveraged for promoting youth wellbeing? What capacities were built by diverse stakeholders to operationalise the use of this technology? What strategies were applied for scaling up the use of technology in project implementation? What processes were established to institutionalise innovative use of technology in program implementation and city planning processes? Generate learning papers supported by case studies on this theme.
Global in reach Learning theme: shaping agendas	What opportunities were identified by projects to leverage evidence to shape agendas at the city, national and global levels to influence policy? Generate learning papers supported by case studies on this theme.

Table 6 is to be used by meso-level learning partners (PAR-L team) to independently collect data at the local-level to capture the diverse perspectives about what change is most significant for different stakeholders in Fondation Botnar-funded project interventions in line with the E2A principles. This table is inspired by the *Most Significant Change* methodology, and it is designed to serve as a complementary tool to realist evaluation, and it is used to capture narratives of change by the local PAR-L teams. It will help identify the

gaps or anomalies between the efforts directed through the project activities and the changes observed by the community stakeholders.

Table 6 Most Significant Change in line with E2A principles

Principles	MSC question
Fit for context	What is the most significant change you observed in your city context that could be associated with the project implementation?
Inclusion and equity	What is the most significant shift in the power dynamics among relationships of diverse stakeholders that was observed leading to meaningful partnerships with marginalised community members and grassroots organisation?
Practical innovation	What is the most significant change in the way innovation was framed, integrated and implemented through the project?
Enabling environment	What is the most significant change created through the project that resulted in an enabling environment for participatory action research and learning for youth wellbeing?
Shared learning	What is the most significant change in the practices that promoted shared learning set up through the project that fostered knowledge building?

Table 7 is to be used by meso-level learning partners (PAR-L team) to independently collect data at the local-level to capture the diverse perspectives about the *Most Significant Change* for different stakeholders in Fondation Botnar-funded project interventions within each E2A domain. This table is inspired by the *Most Significant Change* methodology, and it is designed to serve as a complementary tool to the realist evaluation approach used to capture narratives of change by the local PAR-L teams. It will help identify the gaps or anomalies between the efforts directed through the project activities and the changes observed by the community stakeholders.

Table 7. Most Significant Change in line with E2A domains of change

Domain	MSC question
Empowered youth and communities Learning theme: participation	What is the most significant change you observed in terms of spaces and platforms for empowering young people to act as change leaders and enhancing their participation and voice in cities?
Equitable partnerships Learning theme: inclusion	What is the most significant change you observed in the power dynamics amongst the different stakeholders, particularly for grassroots organisations and marginalised groups, being included in decision-making to promote youth wellbeing?

Effective city systems Learning theme: governance	What is the most significant change you observed within city governance, especially in urban planning processes to build inclusive, just and sustainable cities for young people?
Transformative innovation Learning theme: leveraging technology	What is the most significant change you observed in terms of the innovations being enabled by technology that enhanced youth wellbeing within the city?
Global in reach Learning theme: shaping agendas	What is the most significant change you observed in terms of capacity of young people and the community's ability to share their knowledge and influence global agendas?

Tools at the meta-level

There are two tables that launch and facilitate evidence building at the meta-level (Global Evidence Building Team) for E2A.

Table 8 outlines the E2A meta-level research and learning framework. The meta-level PAR-L team will consolidate evidence and learning on principles from every country to inform the research themes, priorities and questions, and continue to generate knowledge products based on the table below.

Table 8. Research and learning framework about E2A principles

Principles	Learning priorities
Fit for context	In what ways have projects reflected the local socio-cultural values and meanings, and included divergent perspectives? Provide examples.
Inclusion and equity	How were issues of power, equity and knowledge biases negotiated amongst diverse social groups to ensure access to equitable opportunities to participate in and shape the projects for the marginalised members of the community and youth? Consider the processes that were created to foster ongoing respectful dialogue and trusted collaborations between these groups.
Practical innovation	What practical actions at the grassroots level were innovative and led to positive outcomes for the community? Consider how technology played a role in these innovations, particularly in terms of ensuring equitable access.
Enabling environment	What multi-stakeholder spaces, platforms and processes were created and institutionalised to engage and enable young people as evidence builders?

	Consider how these young people were enabled to influence elected representatives and other decision-makers.
Shared learning	How were regional or international networks leveraged to showcase learning or advocate for local and global change? Consider how young people were supported to engage as leaders at city, national and global levels.

Table 9 outlines the E2A meta-level research and learning framework. The meta-level PAR-L team will consolidate evidence and learning on domains of change from every country to inform the research themes, priorities and questions, and continue to generate knowledge products based on the table below.

Table 9. Research and learning framework about E2A domains of change

Domains of change	Learning priorities	Learning/reflection questions
Empowered youth and communities Learning theme: participation	What works (or does not) in creating spaces and platforms for empowering young people to act as change leaders and enhance their participation and voice in citywide planning, agenda-setting and decision-making?	How were individual and collective capacities built to empower young people and marginalised communities to engage as change agents? What strategies were most and least effective in building trust and relationships for young people to effectively engage with decision-makers? What opportunities and challenges are there for institutionalising participatory and inclusive processes for youth engagement?
Equitable partnerships Learning theme: inclusion	What works (or does not) in building trust and strong relations across diverse urban stakeholders that leads to effective collaborations and collective actions?	How were collective and institutional capacities built to promote multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder partnerships? What strategies were most and least effective in creating shared vision, trust and commitment among diverse stakeholders to enhance the wellbeing of young people? What governance processes enabled and constrained sustainable collaborations

		and collective actions across diverse city stakeholders?
Effective city systems

Learning theme: governance | What works (or does not) in strengthening urban governance mechanisms to act on creating cities fit for young people? | How were capacities built across urban stakeholders to better understand and engage with youth aspirations and challenges?

What strategies were most and least effective in influencing diverse city governance sectors and service providers to address problems impacting young people?

What processes were most and least effective in strengthening inclusive policy and planning? |
| Technological innovation

Learning theme: leveraging technology | What works (or does not) in creating inclusive access to and use of innovative technology and ideas that can lead to transformative changes in urban systems? | How were capacities built to engage inclusively with technologies as a tool to drive change in urban systems?

What strategies were most and least effective in using technologies to influence city planning and policies?

What processes supported practical innovations that enhance wellbeing to be scaled across city systems? |
| Global in reach

Learning theme: Shaping agendas | What works (or does not) in building knowledge and learning that can influence positive changes in policy, planning and practice at the city, national and global levels? | What capacities were developed among key stakeholders, particularly youth, that facilitated the exchange of knowledge and learning across diverse cities and shared globally?

What strategies were most and least effective at sharing promising local-level practices at the national and global level?

What processes were most and least effective at facilitating multi-sectoral knowledge exchange to shape global agendas? |

Appendices

1. Using digital data management tools for implementing E2A: Sample cases

Using innovative digital tools for gathering, collating and analysing data and sharing evidence can significantly enhance the process of evidence building and learning by allowing data collection from a very large sample size spread across different cities and countries, as well as real time data synthesis and analysis, and faster dissemination. Moreover, digital tools can allow capturing subjective experiences and perceptions of practitioners and young people in various formats such as text, audio, photograph and video. The E2A Framework recommends using different digital tools that are fit for purpose and context and can effectively enhance the evidence-building and learning process.

This section presents sample use cases for two such digital tools as examples – Rural Senses and SenseMaker®. Depending on the project and context, other digital tools may also be used. The use cases presented were authored by the teams involved in the development and implementation of these digital tools during the Healthy Cities for Adolescents test and pilot phase.

Rural Senses

By Yau Ben-Or and Raluca Igret

Rural Senses is a UK/Israel-based social enterprise that originated from seven years of research conducted at the University of Cambridge. It combines robust community-driven data collection methods with advanced AI data analysis. Our digital infrastructure is tailored to support evidence-based learning for monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) processes. Through our digital dashboard, users can interact, manage and share the stories the data is telling. We collect, analyse and visualise rich data (qualitative and quantitative) about the changing priorities and perceptions of a project's targeted communities and audiences.

Our learning dashboard

One platform for learning and insights to interact with your data.
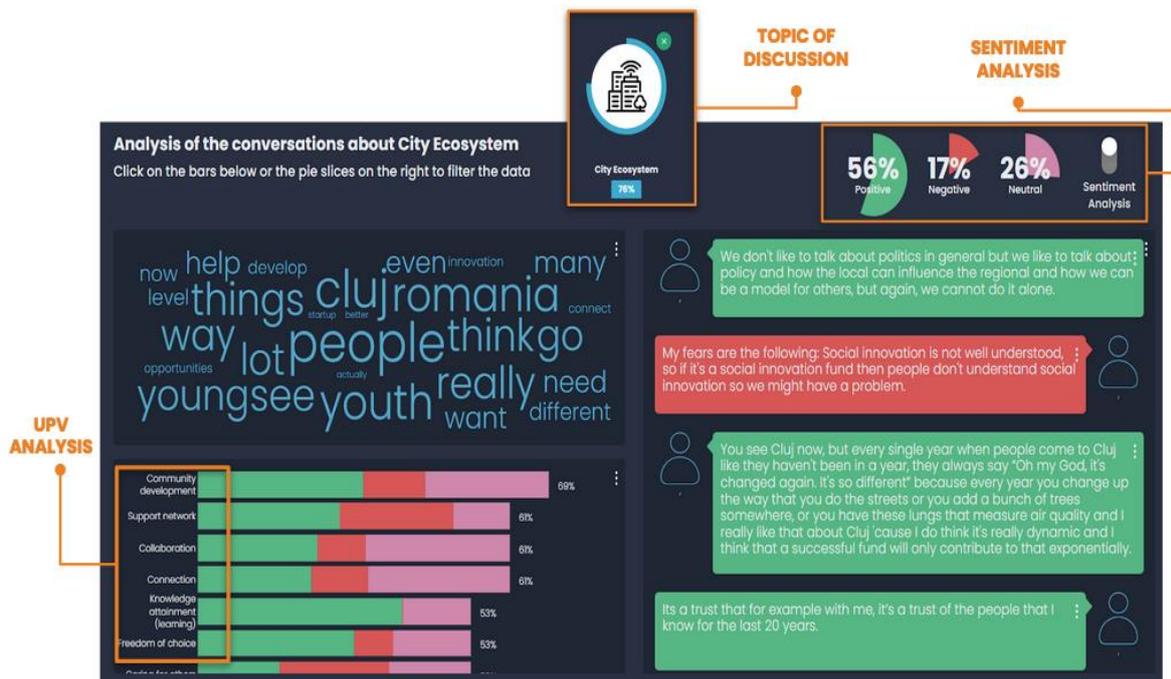
Figure 6. Real Sense's learning platform

Our AI and participatory approach are based on our proprietary data collection method called **User-Perceived Value** (UPV) through which we capture the values, wants and needs of local community members.

We use AI to make unstructured qualitative data quantifiable and comparable to further help project designers and developers save time by processing large volumes of qualitative and quantitative data.

Our interactive dashboards facilitate easy and fast sharing of **learning reports** or specific **data insights** on the most impactful and valuable learning that arises with each project or project phase. Our visualisation and sharing tools help to effectively communicate results to team members, funders and the general public.

Our journey in implementing E2A on #OurCity initiative

Rural Senses was invited to implement the E2A Framework on a pilot project in Cluj, Romania, part of Fondation Botnar's #OurCity initiative. The #OurCity initiative is locally known as #OurCluj. The #OurCluj umbrella is an innovation cluster of 12 projects. We have implemented the E2A Framework in the MEL process of the #FIXCluj pilot project, a social entrepreneurship fund for youth, using our tools and a project-dedicated digital dashboard.
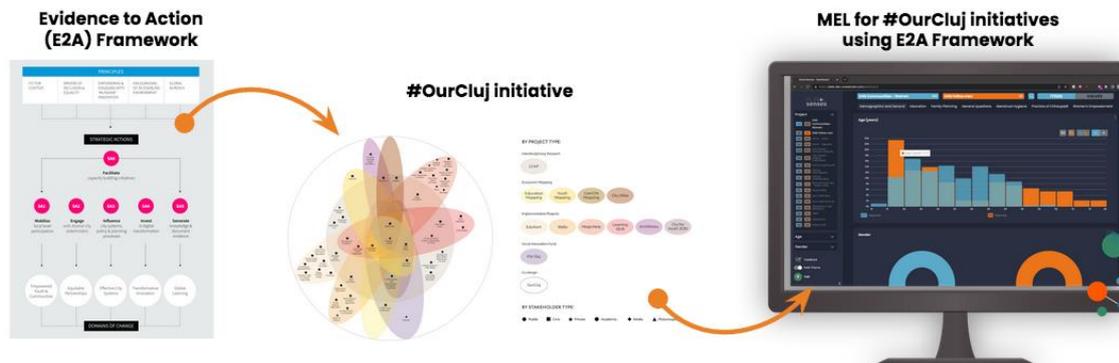
Figure 7. Integration of E2A for OurCluj, Romania

Figure 8. Our implementation process

E2A implementation using Rural Senses tools meant building a **digital learning architecture** that is informed by E2A domains of change. By identifying **Learning Indicators** through **participatory methods** with local community members, we have created a blueprint to help guide the data-collection process. The Learning Indicators are mapped on the E2A domains of change. These are used to paint the story of impact on each domain addressed by the project evaluated.

What followed was an **in-depth learning process** through data collection and analysis at various stages of #FIXCluj implementation. The data-driven insights and MEL process involved ongoing sharing of learning through data snapshots and reports with the local community.

Step-by-step MEL on #FIXCluj

1 SCOPING	> Learning about the project. > Stakeholder mapping. > Initial contact and on-site engagement to understand the local context.
2 STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGEMENT	> Interacting and learning what local community members care about through in-depth interviews. > Taking a learning-from-within approach by asking stakeholders different questions regarding their motivations of being involved in the project.
3 DEVELOPING LEARNING INDICATORS	> Analysis of interviews according to UPV tags, sentiment and the topics of interest arising to identify Learning Indicators. > Setting up a tailored digital dashboard for #FIXCluj. > Uploading and sharing the results on the digital dashboard. > Comparing the results to the E2A domains of change. > Drafting LIs based on the analysis of the interviews and mapping these on the E2A domains of change.

	> Validating the LIs through participatory co-selection sessions with stakeholders and updating the final LIs according to feedback.
4 **DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS**	> Build a data collection plan to address the agreed LIs and align with #FIXCluj's calendar. > Ongoing data collection and analysis to populate the LIs. > Local community members are trained as annotators, transcribers, proof-readers and translators and make sure the data preserves the local context. > The data collected is organised into sections corresponding to each LI and audience type.
5 **LEARNING & IMPROVING**	> Feedback sessions with stakeholders are used to refine previous and next stages. > The LIs are adjusted and updated according to what the data collection showed and #FIXCluj project changes.
6 **SHARING EVIDENCE**	Sharing data snapshots and insights analysed by our MEL experts on an ongoing basis and guiding stakeholders on how to use, navigate and share the learning insights cross-projects. The final learning outcome is organised into a **high-level view feature**. This is described in a separate section. The **final learning report** on #FIXCluj can be accessed here.

E2A high-level view

The learning process led to the creation of a **high-level view architecture** that allows users to see how stories are changing for each domain of change thematic and the impact the project is having at the local level. Mapping learning on the E2A domains of change offers a higher perspective on the ripple effect a project implemented is having within the ecosystem of the city.
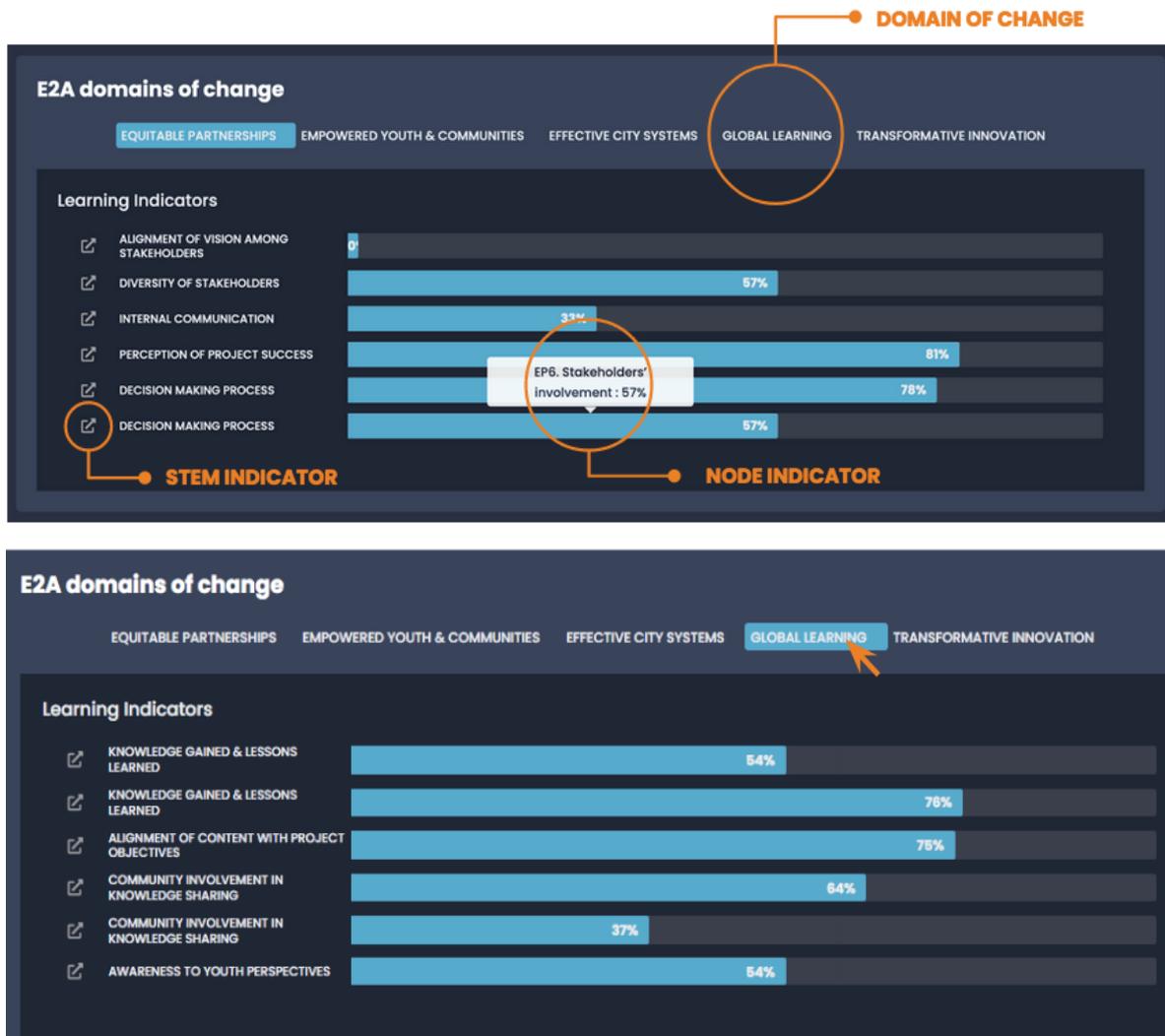
Figure 9. E2A high-level view

For each domain of change we have created two levels of Learning Indicators:

- **STEM indicators**. These are more general, at the level of OurCity initiatives, do not change and are guiding NODE indicators.

- **NODE indicators**. These are project-specific, changing according to project needs.

The high-level view allows:

- **E2A-Level Learning (macro level)** that offers an impact overview of how a project is being implemented from a E2A domains of change perspective, by navigating the DOMAINS OF CHANGE tabs.
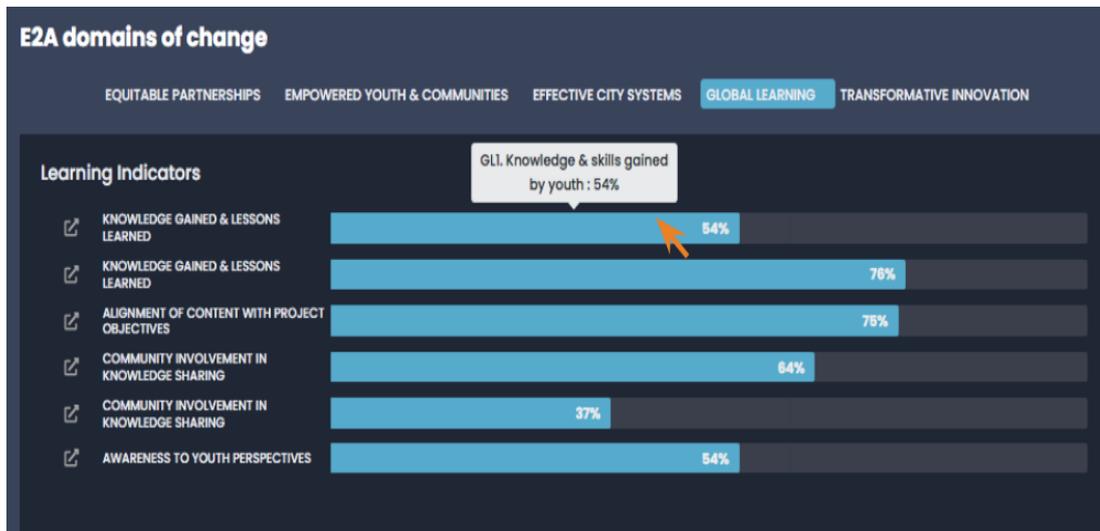
- **OurCity-Level Learning (meso level)** that offers an impact overview of how an umbrella initiative (i.e., OurCluj) is being implemented, by navigating projects by data feeding STEM INDICATORS tabs.

- **Project-Level Learning (micro level)** that offers an impact overview of how a project is being implemented (i.e., FIXCluj), by navigating the data points feeding the NODE INDICATORS tabs.

Ultimately, if more projects are added within this architecture, the **high-level view allows comparison across** different **iterations** of a project, **across projects** within an OurCluj initiative, or **across countries** where OurCity initiatives are being implemented.

Sensemaker®

By Zhen Goh & Anni Beukes

What is SenseMaker®?

SenseMaker® is an approach utilised for gathering E2A global level meta-data. It is powered by a software tool that facilitates a process of mass and distributed ethnography. It is thus simultaneously a method and approach that incorporates narrative action research and sensemaking into your program's E2A practice. This approach functions on the premise of providing people with the ability to share their experiences, and to tell us what their experiences mean. Unlike other approaches that extract stories and then apply an external system of meaning and interpretation, SenseMaker® allows the person who is sharing their story to also tell us what the story means to them.

SenseMaker® supports the capture of both qualitative and quantitative data in a single tool. The qualitative stories provide the richness of context. The quantitative data supports the visualisation of patterns that reveal influences on actions and decisions at the level of lived experience. SenseMaker® supports a multi-level and diverse understanding of how E2A will be operationalised and socialised within Fondation Botnar programs. The global team has piloted and will continue to refine a core set of customised SenseMaker® tools to generate data from beneficiary, practitioner and partner experiences within the operationalisation of the E2A Framework. These lived experiences and the meaning participants themselves give to these experiences may then be integrated into the design and implementation of current and future Fondation Botnar programs.

The strength of this approach and method lies within its ability to:

(a) collect a large amount of quantified qualitative data from multiple sources

(b) conduct statistical analysis showing patterns and trends in a fairly short time and at a low cost

(c) generate evidence that makes it possible to identify and respond to emergent opportunities or threats, as well as support the design of better and more responsive policies and practices.

The E2A SenseMaker® tool opens two threads of meta-learning

In operationalising E2A, we are seeking to open two ongoing threads of learning; we will capture stories of impact from both the adolescents who represent the beneficiaries of Fondation Botnar programs, as well as from local partners and practitioners.

1) **Practitioner Reflection: authentic feedforward.** Practitioners represent a critical intermediary point in the donor-donee-beneficiary chain. They operationalise the donor's vision and contextualise to local needs. They understand where the points of resistance are that need to be overcome, and how specific adaptations within a program may need to be made. Often, however, their perspectives are overlooked. The E2A SenseMaker® Practitioner tools invite and incentivise practitioner reflections. Practitioners share their perspectives, interviews with key stakeholders in their systems, and help the global team to understand where they are sensing change and resistance that might require us to shift programmatic approaches. Practitioner contributions provide an authentic feedforward.

2) **Adolescent Participant Experiences: critical feedback.** Adolescents are the key participants of Fondation Botnar programs. Through the E2A SenseMaker® Participant Experiences tools we capture their experiences and perspectives at regular intervals to provide a sense of how programs and their implementation are translating into impact on the ground. This layer of data provides us with critical feedback.
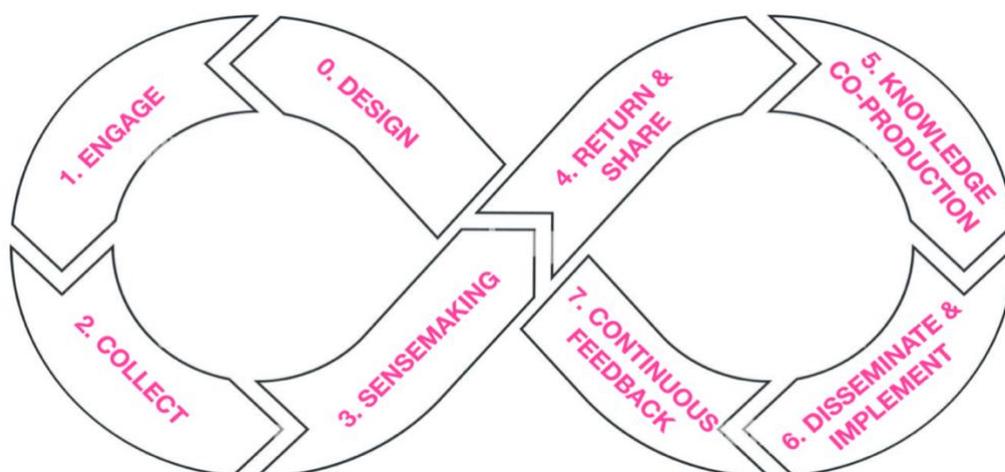
Figure 10. The steps involved in the SenseMaker® process of ongoing learning, sensemaking and sharing that support the E2A practice of co-learning, co-designing, co-producing and co-acting

The approximate timeline for each cycle will be six to eight months.

Engaging SenseMaker® within E2A: the use-case from a pilot within the Healthy Cities for Adolescents Program

Within the E2A meta-learning space (see illustration below) practitioners engage SenseMaker® to support an ongoing practice of learn-and-iterate. This section walks you through what to expect as your organisation uses SenseMaker® within the E2A learning system.

SenseMaker® was piloted for E2A over the course of six weeks, in March and April 2022, within two Healthy Cities for Adolescents programs in India and in Senegal. The SenseMaker® method was introduced through a series of online workshops with local partners in both countries. These partners then used the Practitioner Reflection tool and mobilised the young people within their programs to implement the Adolescent Participant Experiences tool on the ground. Given the time constraints, the pilots were unable to complete the full ongoing learn-and-iterate loop. However, critical learnings were gathered around the design, implementation and future development of the two SenseMaker® tools.

The pilot collected a total of 280 stories from young people (128 from India and 152 from Senegal), and 19 journal entries from practitioners. Data collection took place over a period of 14 days, utilising a simple online web interface and phone-based app that was translated from English and made available into three additional locally used languages.

The full process involves the following steps. It assumes an approximate six-to-eight-month cycle for each run.

0. Design

The SenseMaker® global team designs the Practitioner Reflection journals and Participant Feedback tools in line with the E2A principles. Signifiers and indexing are held consistent across all programs and countries so as to maintain the global meta-learning infrastructure across E2A learning indicators. In collaboration with local learning partners and practitioners the tools are translated into versions adequate in proper language and terminology to reflect and capture local understandings. Early adopters will have a significant opportunity to influence the overall design of the E2A SenseMaker® frameworks.

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Figure 11. Screenshots from the pilot tool used, providing a look at the way practitioners and participants will interact with the system at the point of data collection and entry

During the pilots, a starter framework was utilised with a standardised design across India and Senegal. Basic training to understand the design of the instrument was provided, as well as the tools that were used for data collection. Once the design was mutually agreed upon, the pilots moved onto the next stage. In India, the pilot was conducted in three languages (English, Hindi and Odiya), and in Senegal the pilot was run in French.

Estimated timeline: Approx. 1 to 2 weeks, coupled with onboarding and socialisation of program.

1. Engage

In this step, the formal E2A process begins through data collection – this stage is meant for socialising the practice with partners, and co-designing how processes will be operationalised for each local context. The E2A program will set timely intervals for both practitioner journals, as well as adolescent observations. For the practitioner journals, the intent is to develop a scaffolded approach that includes fortnightly reflection questions, as well as interview schedules with different actors across each partner's local ecosystem (i.e., local government practitioners, partner agencies) to help practitioners to cultivate a stronger practice of reflection.

For the youth, a regular interval for collecting observations from different beneficiary groups will be agreed together with each partner. For example, the program might schedule timely collection of observations from different beneficiary groups every six months, with the first capture providing the E2A program with a baseline of each community. Due to a short timeline, the pilots managed to only collect once, from a concentrated group of youth.

Estimated timeline: Approx. 2 weeks.

2. Collect

In the Collect step, practitioners will begin entering journal entries, as well as operationalising data collection with beneficiaries according to the program's agreed schedule. The Global team will agree on a cadence of check-ins to ensure the design of the process is supporting the program's objectives, as well as identify where adjustments might be required.

In the pilot in India, for example, the local team's feedback was that the pilot was conducting data capture during a busy state exam period. This meant that youth were occupied with school, and alternate means to collect data had to be identified. Going forward, the E2A program will be able to plan capture around a better understanding of local event calendars.

Estimated timeline: This step will require ongoing activity over approx. 3 to 4 months.

3. Sensemaking

In the Sensemaking step, the global team will make sense of high-level patterns that can be observed across all E2A program partners, and prepare high-level reports that will be delivered to partners, together with an invitation to partners to participate in making sense of the patterns.

In the early stages, the global team will also design training and capacity building sessions that are aimed at helping practitioners to make sense of these patterns for themselves, and to use the data for supporting learning across all E2A program partners.

Estimated timeline: Approx. 4 weeks, overlapping with Steps 4 and 5.

India

being valued as a part of their community

N = 118 n = 85 nN/A = 33 filter n = 85 %age = 100% filter N/A = 33

In India, patterns in Male stories indicate that fair treatment was most important, whereas Females index (57%) very strongly toward the importance of being valued as a part of their community

#moabhigyata
22 March 2022

mo abhigyata anusare sahara re rahiba gote drusti ru bhala au kharap madhya . bhala ehi drusti ru je adhika chakiri milibara abasara achi , rahana sahana bes bhala madhya . kharap...

Practitioners will interact with the data through patterns as they form within geometric shapes. Here one can see an example which depicts patterns from the stories, as they emerge within a triad. The patterns correspond to the way adolescents describe (or signify) their stories.

Based on these patterns in this example, we can compare male and female responses within conceptions of inclusion and equity across the two pilot countries. In the triangle, the participant had to decide which of the three elements described in each vertex of the triangle was dominant in their experience and to what extent. Then they marked their answers accordingly.

When viewing the resulting graphs, aggregate responses can be seen as dot pattern where the higher the concentration, the more people marked that point as the correct combination of elements in their story. In this way, critical issues, problems or solutions identified by most people can be quickly distinguished. SenseMaker® analysis allows practitioners to make use of the visual pattern recognition that forms the basis of our human sensemaking. Instead of having to trawl through endless spreadsheets or unstructured text, practitioners can read the patterns, and facilitate discussions around the patterns as they shift over time and beneficiary group.

The method also couples quantitative (patterns) with qualitative (stories). To return to the context of the story, practitioners need only select any points or clusters on the resulting graph and read the original stories to gain a deeper understanding of the context behind the answer.

In the pilot study, the most significant differences in the patterns appeared when comparing the information by cities and by age groups, and subtle differences between strata.

Senegal

being valued as a part of their community

N = 143 n = 101 nN/A = 42 filter n = 101 %age = 100% filter N/A = 42

In Senegal, Female patterns of indexing indicate a stronger importance placed on fair treatment and being valued, and Males indicated the importance of fair treatment and feeling accepted for who they are.

L'avortement
1 April 2022

Je suis jeunes et j'habite à thies qui est une ville bon à vivre calme stable on vi bien en gros même si on 'a des problèmes on fait avec. Si j'avais un ami qui voulait déménager ici à Thiè...

Figure 12. Mapping patterns of change from practitioner's reflections through SenseMaker®

4. Return and share

Embedded into the E2A program will be ensuring that the global team returns and shares the data and insights with the practitioners, and also making sure practitioners will return and share critical learnings and insights with beneficiary groups.

For the global team to practitioner return, the global team will schedule regular practitioner learning and sharing sessions. For new program partners, these sessions will be coupled with training and capacity-building sessions. The Global team will also support practitioners in preparation of insights for beneficiaries, but also leave room for partners to develop and input their own learnings.

The pilots only managed to get to Step 4, where high-level findings and learnings were returned and shared with practitioners. The insights were met with positive approval as practitioners remarked that it helped to articulate patterns they tacitly understood, but had never had reflective space to engage more deeply in.

Estimated timeline: Approx. 4 weeks, overlapping with Steps 3 and 5.

5. Knowledge co-production

As part of the broader learning ecosystem that E2A aims to create, this step takes the learnings from the sharing and learning sessions to support co-production of new knowledge with partners and practitioners. Insights from this step will contribute to knowledge products that will be shared with program partners.

These knowledge products will help E2A to develop interventions, and influence more coordinated development practice across partners, helping to support E2A ambition of co-producing and co-acting.

Estimated timeline: Approx. 4 weeks, overlapping with Steps 3 and 4.

6. Disseminate and implement

The global team will also be able to take these knowledge insights to develop knowledge products for a broader audience (i.e., journals, conferences), thereby influencing the larger donor and practitioner landscape.

Program partners will also be encouraged to share the learnings across their spheres of influence.

The program seeks to learn how best to affect, influence and improve donor and development practice. Wider knowledge dissemination and sharing new practices will also help E2A to create radically incremental impact.

Estimated timeline: This work will be ongoing and happen throughout the program.

7. Continuous feedback

Finally, as part of E2A's commitment to a process of ongoing learning and iterations to the program's own processes, the program will take feedback and learnings from practitioners to continuously improve the program and its implementation in a manner that best supports the objective of ongoing learning, reflection and adjustment to development practices.

As early adopters transition into mature program partners, they will also potentially develop into centres of excellence that can provide support to newer program members in time. Throughout the process, the global team will coordinate and schedule learning and sharing sessions, and provide communication on the way learnings are being implemented into new and different practices.

Estimated timeline: Every six months, at the end of one E2A onboarding cycle.

Summary

One of the key differences with the program that the SenseMaker® team has put together for E2A is the re-designing of relationships along the traditional mechanisms of reporting responsibility, and accountability. Traditionally, practitioner and program partners are responsible for results and reporting upstream to donors. However, in this instance, we are introducing a new dynamic where practitioners are responsible for upward data flow and reflections into the Global team's data and learning repository. The global team then assumes responsibility for supporting the conditions for genuine learning and transformation, as well as for reporting results as evidenced through the data back to practitioners. This inverses a relationship dynamic. In turn, practitioners are expected to

cultivate accountability to the communities they work with, and report back to them in turn.

This stimulates a new dynamic.

RESPONSIBILITY TO...

We begin with process of co-development with practitioners to understand what is critical to support learning and reflection.
In this phase, responsibility of Practitioners is to gather data and evidence that can best provide useful insight to guide the Global team to develop the right tools and processes to support the work they do.

RESPONSIBILITY TO: Provide and collect data and evidence at Meso level to support Global team to better enable the work practitioners do.

Local level partners and communities are encouraged to share stories of impact (failure and successes) to create evidence flow.
In this phase, responsibility of Practitioners is to help support local level data collection and evidence building that contributes to the global E2A data bank. Global team provides training to the Meso level to support their use of data at this level.

RESPONSIBILITY TO: Provide and collect data and evidence from local level and communities. Do basic sensemaking of data to better support their own activities.

META
"Building learning processes together"

MESO
"Learning to reflect together"

LOCAL
"Learning to learn together"

The Global team designs and creates conditions that enable the learning environment through processes, tools, artefacts, platforms, etc.

The Global team are accountable to the Meso-level and reports outputs from the data collected to the Meso level. Working with learning partners, we will design and convene sensemaking and learning workshops, as well as build capacity for practitioners to run similar with the local level.

**ACCOUNTABILITY TO: Create the conditions that can best enable learning and reflection.
Reporting on results done from Global to Meso.**

Meso level is accountable to the Local-level and reports outputs from the data collected to the local partners and beneficiaries.

**ACCOUNTABILITY TO: Create the conditions that can best enable local level to understand what we have learnt from their inputs.
Reporting on results done from Meso to Local.**
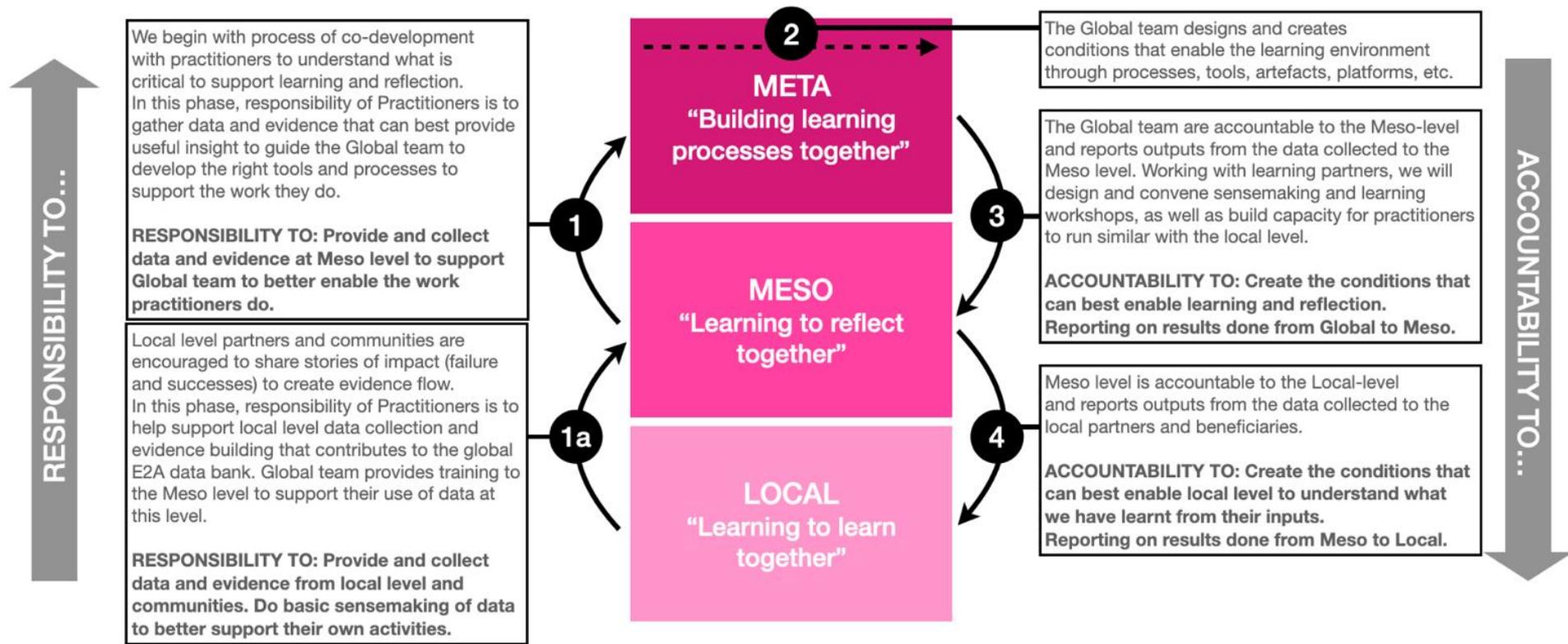
ACCOUNTABILITY TO...

Figure 13. Responsibility and accountability flow in the design of SenseMaker® for E2A

2.   Knowledge products and dissemination plan for E2A

About E2A Framework

The Evidence to Action (E2A) Framework is a meta-learning framework developed to support evidence building and learning processes across Fondation Botnar's cities portfolio addressing youth wellbeing in intermediary cities around the world. The framework articulates elements and methodologies as part of a comprehensive strategy to produce knowledge on 'what works' or 'what does not work' for enhancing youth wellbeing in a complex urban landscape. The E2A is anchored in Fondation Botnar's strategy and commitment to becoming a change maker and facilitate transformation of city systems, promoting sustainable development that centres wellbeing of young people. It advocates for knowledge-driven decision-making processes that privilege experiences of young people.

Knowledge

Knowledge is fundamental in the process of building evidence to influence decision making processes. Knowledge is produced from information through analytic operation (O'Connor et al. 2002; p 24). Within the information technology sector, it is understood that knowledge "consists of data or information that have been organised and processed to convey understanding, experience, accumulated learning, and expertise as they apply to current problem or activity" (Braf, 2002; p 74, Turban et al., 1999; p 45). Information is data endowed with relevance and purpose. (Drucker, 1993; Braf, 2004; 74) or processed data which is meant to deliver meaning and value to the recipient. (Braf, 2002; p 74). Data is the elementary descriptions of things, events, activities, and transactions that are recorded, classified, and stored but not organised to convey any specific meaning.
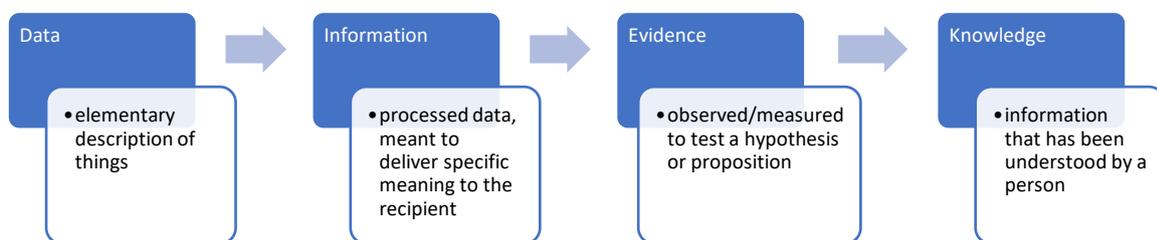

Figure 14 Transformation of data into knowledge

Knowledge is an inherently human concept. Nake (2002, pg. 48) writes that "knowledge is a person's lived life. It is total, whole, and inseparable". However, knowledge is distinct from

evidence. Evidence is 'propositional' as it serves hypotheses about real-world phenomenon, and it is demonstrable. Evidence is crucial to know how things are going, such as through programme monitoring. Knowledge, on the other hand, is internalized learning – in this sense we only know something demonstrated by evidence if we have internalized it. Therefore, knowledge is situated with the knower. Both evidence and knowledge support people in their actions (Braf, 2002). This is the underlying logic for the evidence to action framework. Systematically generated evidence can be leveraged to shape actions for positive development outcomes. Implicit in this assumption is the transformation of the evidence into knowledge or internalised learning by the people on the ground. By ensuring the inclusion of people on the ground in evidence building processes, the framework centres their knowledge to inform action to ensure wellbeing of young people in cities.

Knowledge Management for E2A

The creation and use of knowledge is fraught with uncertainties due to the diversity of contexts. Success of past human actions can be observed from the changes in urban landscape. These observations or measurements of change enable knowledge production, which in turn sets things in motion or prevents them from occurring (Adolf & Stehr, 2017). Therefore, knowledge enables transformation of reality (Adolf & Stehr, 2017). Managing knowledge production processes is fundamental to shaping change. That is the purpose of the knowledge management sub-framework within the E2A Framework. It plays the critical role directing the evidence building processes to ensure maximum possible of the impact of the knowledge being generated in collaboration with young people. This dissemination plan outlines initial steps for the knowledge management for projects implementing the E2A framework. It will facilitate their relationship with the national level learning partners, and the relationship between the national level learning partners and the global evidence building team. It is based on the acknowledgement that the act of building evidence is distinct from the process of producing knowledge outputs that can inform actions to create meaningful change (Adolf & Stehr, 2017; pg 24).

This is an initial knowledge dissemination plan that is created to inform development of knowledge management products in collaboration with projects implementing the E2A Framework across Fondation Botnar's cities programmes. This initial knowledge

dissemination plan serves as a starting point of the development of a comprehensive global strategy on knowledge management and products to be developed in partnership with the diverse consortium partners during the first year of E2A implementation. The table ahead outlines an initial list of knowledge products and their dissemination schedule. Product development and activity plan for knowledge management is contingent upon receiving additional grant. During the first year, the efforts will be focused on the establishment of the community of practice and E2A advisory committee that will be a part of the annual meeting in Melbourne.

Proposed Knowledge Products & Dissemination Schedule

Activity	Products	Frequency	Delivery date	Notes
Global Learning Conference	Policy paper publications	Every two years (Aligned with WUF)		
E2A Website development and branding and upkeep	Website and social media to host podcasts, blogs, newsletter and digital engagement	Ongoing		
Global community of practice (CoP) Research stream Practice stream Advocacy stream	Academic and other publications Advocacy campaign Policy briefs/papers Networking event at UN Habitat Assembly Digital engagement Two regional webinars including World Cities Day event	Ongoing (different for each product)	February 2024 (Dates vary)	CoP is a part of the ToR with University of Melbourne; delivery of products will require additional resources
Annual Expert Committee Meeting	Recommendations on research themes, and a publication	Annual	November 2023 (Date TBD)	Hosting the expert committee meeting is a part of the ToR with University of Melbourne; delivery of products will require additional resources
Knowledge product guidelines		Annual	December 2023	Reviewed at the expert committee meeting
E2A Launch workshops for national learning partners			All regions March-May 2023	These will be held virtually and in person as available.
Learning workshops for national learning partners			All regions January & February 2024	Virtual

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3. Overview: Evaluation approaches informing research design of E2A Framework

Introduction

This paper is intended as a resource for Fondation Botnar and its project partners who are planning to implement the Evidence to Action framework and build evidence for systemic change. It outlines evaluation approaches, techniques, that have informed the design of the data collection and analysis methodology for implementing the E2A Framework in diverse urban contexts. These approaches are aligned with the participatory action research and learning (PAR-L) approach outlined in the E2A framework.

Understanding the impact of development efforts is critical for ensuring that development as a process of social transformation can result in the desired change (Guijt, Brouwers, Kusters, Prins, & Zeynalova, 2011). To this end, evaluation plays a central role in producing evidence that is essential for programmatic strategy and policy agenda setting to make informed decisions. Evaluation of development projects and programmes produces evidence about what works, what does not and why (OECD, 2021). Evidence produced from evaluations allows implementing organisations, community participants, funders and other relevant stakeholders to identify if a project/intervention is creating in the intended change. It can directly contribute to making projects/programmes, services and systems more efficient and effective for the grassroots stakeholders while also providing directions and informing strategic decisions.

Drawing on a desk review of current development evaluation practices, this document presents a brief overview of the diversity of evaluation approaches, commonly used evaluation criteria and some of the major and emerging trends in development evaluation as well as presents a rationale for adapting realist evaluation approach and *Most Significant Change* (MSC) technique in the overall research design for applying the E2A.

Evaluation Approaches and Major Trends

The section ahead presents an overview of some of the commonly used evaluation approaches and tools used in international development.

Evaluation Branches and Approaches

Evaluation has been defined by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as a systematic assessment of an ongoing or completed project with aim to determine its development effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability (OECD, 2021). However, there are many different definitions of development evaluation. Moreover, during the last fifty years many different models and approaches of evaluation have also emerged. In their review of evaluation approaches, Alkin and Christie (2004) identified at least 27 different approaches. Many other approaches and methods are likely to have emerged in the past decade. All of these evaluation approaches are guided by the requirements for social accountability, social inquiry and epistemological stance (Alkin, 2013). Alkin and Christie (2004) categorised these diverse evaluation approaches into an evaluation tree with three branches–use, value, and methods–depending on the key focus of their design. Expanding on this categorisation, more recently Mertens and Wilson (2019) proposed a fourth branch on evaluation approaches that focuses on social justice. Description of the four branches and the approaches and methods commonly used in each branch are shown in Table 1.

Evaluation Branches and Approaches

Branch of Evaluation	Description	Approaches/Methods Used
Methods	Focuses primarily on the method and tools used in evaluation i.e., study design, how data is gathered and analysed May use mixed methods but often quantitative methods dominate	Randomized control trials (RCT)
		Logic model
		Theory-based evaluation
		Quasi-experimental design
		Process tracing
Use	Focuses on how the evaluation results are to be used. This is concerned with identifying what factors are associated with the use of an evaluation including instrumental, conceptual and symbolic uses Advocates for mixed methods	Developmental evaluation
		Utilisation-focused evaluation
		Context, Input, Process, Product (CIPP) evaluation
		Practical participatory evaluation
		Process and outcome evaluation

Branch of Evaluation	Description	Approaches/Methods Used
Values	Focuses on the ways in which 'merit' and 'worth' of a project/program/policy is determined in evaluation. This involves considering how data are judged and valued, by whom and in what ways, and what underlying values were used for this May use mixed methods but often qualitative methods dominate	Realist evaluation Responsive evaluation Goal-free evaluation Case study Collaborative evaluation Contribution analysis
Social Justice	Focuses on viewpoints of marginalised/ disenfranchised groups, structures of power, social justice and human rights Mixed methods.	Indigenous evaluation Feminist evaluation Transformative participatory evaluation Principle-based evaluation Culturally responsive evaluation Deliberative democratic evaluation

Source: Adapted from Mertens and Wilson (2019)

It is important to keep in mind that, first, the four branches of evaluation are not exclusive and can be overlapping depending on the specific nature of a project and the evaluation questions. And second, there is no single best approach or method of evaluation. Many M&E experts now experiment with combining different evaluation methods and tools based on the project context and the complexities it presents to the project practitioners.

Evaluation criteria and standards

The OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation has defined a set of six evaluation criteria that were especially adapted to capture progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the Agenda 2030. Widely adopted in international development, the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria provide a normative framework for determining the merit of a project/intervention by serving as the basis upon which evaluative judgements are to be made (OECD, 2021). These criteria promote accountability and learning in development interventions. The six criteria are:

1. Relevance: the extent to which a project's objectives and design respond to the project participants', country, global and partner/institutions' needs, policies, and priorities.

2. Coherence: compatibility of the project with other projects/interventions in a country, sector or institution.

3. Effectiveness: the extent to which a project was able to achieve, or is likely to achieve, its objectives and results, including any differential results across various stakeholder groups.

4. Efficiency: the extent to which a project has delivered, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.

5. Impact: the extent to which a project has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended effects.

6. Sustainability: the extent to which the net benefits of the project continue, or are likely to continue even after completion of the project.

Figure 15: OECD/DAC Evaluation Criteria. Source: (OECD, 2021)

The OECD/DAC evaluation criteria and standards can be applied to any evaluation design. Moreover, they can be used pre, during, and post intervention. Application of these criteria relies on two principles. First, when applying, the criteria must be contextualised. This means the evaluation questions should inform how the criteria are interpreted and analysed. And second, use of the criteria depends on the purpose of evaluation. This means they should be covered according to the needs of the relevant stakeholders and the context

where the evaluation is to be carried out. While these six criteria are designed to ensure upward/donor accountability, this paper explores measurement of success in terms of downward accountability (Fowler, 1997). The research design employed in this practitioner's guide considers the principle of subsidiarity which emphasises the criticality of seeking solutions closer to the context that can facilitate a participatory and grassroot led approach to development.

Major (and emerging) trends in development evaluation

Evaluation approaches and methods have been constantly evolving in the development sector. Presently, development evaluation has reached an inflection point where several recent and emerging trends necessitate rethinking evaluation design. These trends also suggest opportunities for integrating new and innovative methods and tools for collecting and analysing data. Some notable rends emergent in evaluation design are:

Complexity and systems thinking

Increasing recognition of development processes as complex, unpredictable and even uncontrollable (Ramalingam, 2013). This has led to a focus on systems and markets, and dynamic, reflexive and responsive approaches rather than single factor, linear or reductionist approaches (Archibald, Sharrock, Buckley, & Young, 2018). This recognises complexity in the design (i.e., components, adaptability), delivery (i.e., implementation, levels of intervention), and outcome (i.e., causal pathways, outcome patterns) of projects and interventions. This is a key area of focus in realist evaluation and theory-based evaluations.

Mixed-methods rather than a 'gold standard'

Growing recognition of the potential of mixed-methods approach that combines a set of qualitative and quantitative tools over randomised control trials (RCT) which is misleadingly considered by many as the 'gold standard' in evaluation. The focus on humans and the complex, changing nature of societies can make application of statistical methods limited in the context of development projects (Dale, 2004). In contrast, a mixed-methods approach can incorporate multiple ways to demonstrate impact and change using multiple data types, methods and procedures. Complexity

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oriented evaluation designs often rely on blending qualitative and quantitative methods (Wolf-Branigin, 2013).

Incorporating human-centred design[1] allows more effective evaluation of projects and programmes that are complex and involves marginalised communities and/or volatile contexts. It allows a flexible and inclusive evaluation design that takes into consideration issues of intersectionality. Moreover, utilising a participatory approach, the evaluator engages from the outset as a partner. A human-centred design also encourages double loop learning[2] and greater accountability.

Big data analytics

Emerging and more accessible technologies (e.g., mobile devices and apps; web-based platforms; GPS mapping, etc) are creating opportunities for real time data collection (Vaessen et al., 2020). Significant advancement in data analytics/data science and use of AI (e.g., natural language processing; data mining – text, video, audio; social media analysis; geo-spatial analysis and modelling, etc). This trend is rapidly expanding and likely to grow further significantly.

Shared measurement platforms

Growing trend in using shared measurement platforms that allow multiple donors and grantees to take advantage of a single platform to report results. Takes leverage of digitalised cloud-based data entry and storage platforms for immediate feedback and learning. Platforms such as IRIS allows using a single database to measure outcomes across many organisations.

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[1] Human-centred Design (HCD) is an approach to problem solving that puts people, for whom the solution is being developed, at the centre of the process enabling the creation of solutions that are tailored to their needs.

[2] Double loop learning involves modification of goals or decision-making rules based on experience and critical reflection. This is contrasted with 'single loop learning' where there is no room for critical questioning about the goal or actions taken to reach that goal.

Evaluation ethics

This involves a strong emphasis on the transformative potential of evaluation. Ethics
can inform who is included or excluded in the evaluation process and how the rights of
the participants are protected. Evaluation ethics advocates for ethical principles
around the right to inclusion in evaluation processes as well for moving beyond from a
duty to project participants to a duty to society (Barnett & Camfield, 2016). Evaluation
ethics also advocates for responsible use of data and draws attention to ethical
concerns around the collection, use, sharing and storage of data in an increasingly
interconnected world.

Evaluation approaches informing evidence building & learning for E2A

The purpose of this literature scan is to explain the evaluation techniques that have
informed development of the E2A data collection and meta-learning approach and
methodology. It now well established that there is no single approach or method for
evaluation of development projects that can be considered as the best practice (Vaessen et
al., 2020). Selection of an evaluation approach and design depends on the nature of the
project and program, type of evaluation questions, as well as on the internal and external
opportunities and constraints. Fondation Botnar's strategic and programmatic focus is on
young people's wellbeing in intermediary cities and use of digital innovation. Evidence
building and learning on systemic change is central to its organisational priorities. Fondation
Botnar's focus on understanding complex city systems and leveraging innovative digital
tools and artificial intelligence (AI) and the adoption of the participatory action research and
learning (PAR-L) approach outlined in the Evidence to Action (E2A) framework offers
opportunities for developing new and combining innovative evaluation designs. Such
evaluation design must also take into consideration the major and emerging trends in
development evaluation as discussed in the previous section.

Process and outcome evaluation, realist evaluation and *Most Significant Change* (MSC) are
three evaluation techniques considered for the design of the data collection and meta-
learning methodology for evidence building and learning under the E2A Framework. Also
refer to the Practitioner's Guide. This evidence building and learning involves the use of
multi-method data collection and analysis approach. It primarily depends on qualitative data

that is compiled through reflections and narratives drawn from lived experience. For this purpose, realist and MSC evaluation methods heavily inform this design of the E2A data collection and analysis approach and methodology.

Process and Outcome Evaluation

Process and outcome evaluations are two of the most used evaluation approaches in international development. Process evaluation is used to determine whether project activities have been implemented as intended whereas outcome evaluation is used to measure the effects of the project in the target population (CDC, n.d.). In practice, many evaluations often contain elements of both process and outcome evaluation (INTRAC, 2017b).

Process evaluations can generate data/evidence on internal project or programme issues. It looks at, among other things, whether projected activities were carried out according to plan as well as the quality of the work; how management policies, practices, internal cultures and capacities have affected that work; and how external socio-economic factors have affected the delivery and quality of the project. Findings generated from process evaluation are used to improve a project or intervention. Hence, process evaluations are usually carried out during the project cycle. However, it is not uncommon to carry out process evaluations at the end of a project. Process evaluations rely on simple methods of data collection such as review of project and policy documents, financial records, etc backed by interviews, focus group discussions, and observation.

In contrast to process evaluations, outcome evaluations examine the changes brought about by a project or intervention. Doing an outcome evaluation allows producing evidence about whether a project was able to achieve its goals and the desired outcomes and to what extent. Outcome evaluations can have either qualitative or quantitative design, but each has their pros and cons. A mixed design is often recommended which can address the limitations of both quantitative and qualitative methods. Also, a project's inability to produce the desired results could be due to implementation issues which would not be identified through outcome evaluation.

Process and outcome evaluations can be useful for the following reasons:

- When combined, process and outcome evaluations can produce comprehensive information about the changes resulting from a project implemented in the context of intermediary cities.

- Process evaluation allows examining the underlying theory of change and generating evidence regarding whether the project is unfolding on the ground as intended in terms of how it is being delivered, whether it is reaching its intended populations, whether the project actions are adequate, and reasons for successful or unsuccessful performance.

- Process evaluations are particularly useful for examining new projects and services.

- Outcome evaluation allows various project stakeholders to see what changes were created as a result of a project/intervention and to what extent.

- Outcome evaluation enables generating evidence that can be used for making funding decisions and undertaking policy advocacy.

Process and outcome evaluations will likely be considered for many of the project level M&E plans in Fondation Botnar Cities portfolio. Hence, the E2A data gathering, and analysis tools are designed to align with these approaches. As the E2A Framework overlaid on the project cycle and its M&E plan, there will be broad similarities in the data collection for the M&E process and the data collection for E2A meta-learning process. The M&E processes will generate data useful for the E2A meta-learning and the E2A data collection and analysis tools may be helpful for the project level M&E plan.

Evidence building under the E2A Framework is inspired by the realist evaluation approach with a participatory data gathering technique to capture the lived experiences of target groups and project partners and it is also inspired by *Most Significant Change*. The aspiration is to use innovative digital data collection and analysis tools at the local level while leveraging the power of artificial intelligence (AI). Integrating MSC in combination with a realist evaluation approach can make it possible to tackle the high level of complexity, informality and unpredictability that characterise the city systems. Several different tools integrated under the umbrella of a mixed methods design can allow, first, to integrate certain aspects of process and outcome evaluations selected by projects in the overall design thus leveraging their specific strengths.

Most Significant Change

Most Significant Change (MSC) is a form of qualitative, participatory monitoring and evaluation technique that allow many project stakeholders to engage in the process of discussing, analysing and recording change (Davies & Dart, 2005). This technique emerged as a response to overcome the limitations of conventional monitoring and evaluation processes in dealing with complexity. Its strength lies in its ability to explain 'how' changes take place (processes and causal mechanisms) and 'when' (in what contexts and under what circumstances) (McDonald, Stevens, Nabben, & Rogers, 2014).

In practice MSC involves the collection of significant change stories around agreed upon domains of change from different stakeholders of the project/intervention being evaluated and the systematic selection of the most significant of those stories by designated staff and stakeholders. MSC does not rely on pre-defined indicators (numerical or non-numerical) and instead focuses on stories that captures change as perceived by field staff and community participants. Implementation of MSC requires a step-by-step process that is presented below, adapted from INTRAC (2017a) and Davis & Dart (2005):

1. Define domains of change where transformation is expected to take place

2. Decide how and when to collect the stories and from whom

3. Collect significant change stories

4. Determine which stories are the most significant

5. Share the stories and reflect on their values with stakeholders and contributors

6. Secondary analysis and meta-monitoring

7. Revising the monitoring system

The MSC technique can be especially useful for Fondation Botnar projects as it:

- The E2A domains of change can be used to guide the *Most Significant Change* analysis through the learning themes identified for each E2A domain. This can allow for focused evidence gathering on observed change from project participants including young people.

- As a participatory technique it allows identifying changes in people's lives from their own perspectives.

- Contributes to building the community's capacity in identifying and analysing data, reflecting on change and conceptualising impact.

- Generates learning within projects or interventions that seek to mobilise and empower communities.

- Allows identifying unexpected change taking into account the complexity of the context where a project/intervention is implemented.

- Allows shared reflection between project stakeholders on the change resulting from the project and the impact of such change. As an evaluation technique MSC enables project stakeholders to work together in co-evaluating and co-producing evidence on project impact.

The E2A data collection and analysis tools are influenced by the *Most Significant Change* (MSC) technique. The E2A evidence building cycle is centred on building collective narratives of change and the MSC technique is adopted to construct this narrative integrating diverse perspectives of city stakeholders. The E2A is also inspired by the realist evaluation discussed ahead.

Realist Evaluation

Realist evaluation is a theory-based evaluation method that is grounded on the assumption that the same intervention will not work for everyone, everywhere. Hence, the focus of this method is on understanding 'what works, for whom, under what circumstances and how' (Pawson & Tilley, 1997). A realist evaluation framework examines three aspects of a project or intervention which are context, mechanism, and outcome (CMO)

a) Context:

   The context consists of the broader conditions within which a project is implemented. These conditions can include socio-economic and political environment, institutional and infrastructural arrangements, local history and culture, individual and community

characteristics, geographical location, and so on. Examining context allows understanding the 'for whom' and 'under what circumstances' aspect in the evaluation.

b) Mechanism:

The mechanism consists of the underlying entities, structures and processes that operate within a particular context to generate the project outcomes. Mechanism is a combination of two parts – resources (e.g., the intervention) and reasoning (changes in mindset, capacities, actions, etc). Examining mechanisms allows understanding 'how' and 'why' a project is creating change within a particular context.

c) Outcome:

The outcome consists of short, medium and long-term changes, both intended and unintended, that emerge as a consequence of the interaction between the context and the mechanism.

A realist evaluation approach was considered for Fondation Botnar projects applying the E2A is for the following reasons:

- It is well suited for assessing how an intervention works (or does not work) in complex situations such as in intermediary cities as it allows the projects and learning partners to understand the particular conditions that are needed for a particular mechanism to work in diverse complex contexts.

- The core ideas that the realist evaluation approach is based on, i.e., focus on what works for whom in what conditions, are well aligned with the philosophy behind the E2A. The elements of context, mechanism and outcomes broadly inform the local project level data collection for evidence building under the E2A Framework.

- Realist evaluation understands outcome as short, medium, or long-term changes (intended and unintended). This can be aligned with E2A's focus on capturing observed change captured through the narratives of diverse city stakeholders.

- The realist approach allows mapping change which can over time help identify patterns of positive change. It can allow successful strategies to be transferred across diverse contexts.

Conclusion

The E2A Framework is a bridge between research and practice and as such, it has components that are typical to a monitoring and evaluation process, but it also includes elements that support and inform the shape of academic inquiries about changes within the urban context. The purpose of this overview of evaluation approaches is to be a resource for the implementing partners seeking to deepen their understanding about the E2A framework. It presents the thinking behind the design of the data collection and analysis tools to build narratives and gather stories of changes from the ground. This literature scan outlines the evaluation approaches that have informed the development of the data collection and analysis process under the E2A Framework discussed in detail earlier in this Practitioner's Guide.

We are inspired by the *Most Significant Change* (MSC) technique and realist evaluation approach as complementary tools to capture the changes observed and experienced by diverse city stakeholders. Our approach is new because it proposes integration of digital technology and AI for evidence building. Therefore, it remains emergent, informed by the implementation of the E2A Framework on the ground across Fondation Botnar Cities Portfolio. The approach will be reviewed periodically based on the learnings generated by consortium partners.

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