



On Think Tanks

Innovative strategies to increase your reach, functions and impact

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Innovative strategies

This session aims to:



Expand your strategic mindset around the role of generating evidence and communication for impacting policy and practice.



Deconstruct the traditional linear research to impact trajectory to enable you to better leverage different processes.



Introduce strategies to help you consider your audience, the policy problem, solutions, and the type of evidence AND ACTION needed to catalyze change in public opinion and policy.

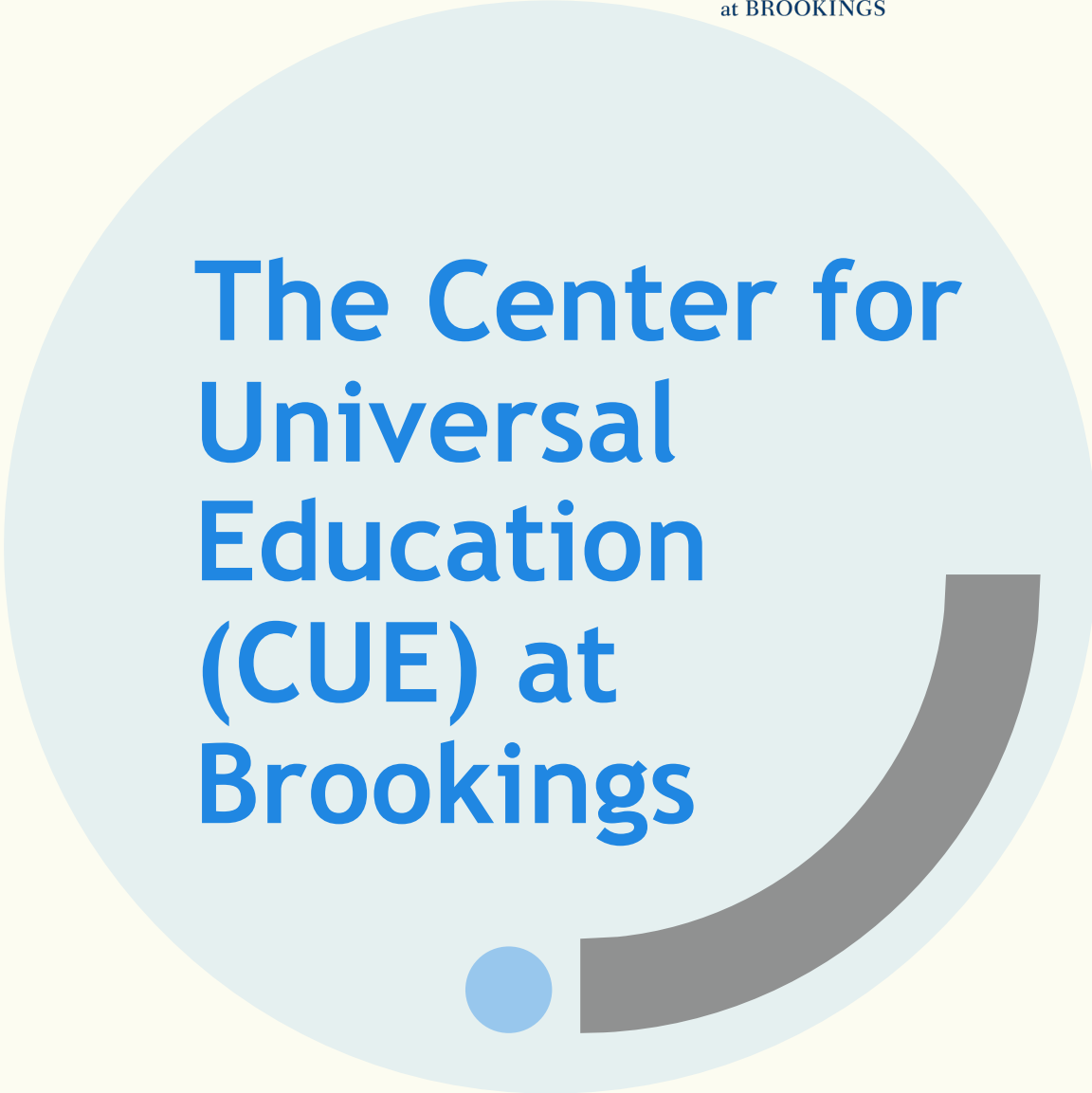
What's our goal and how do we get there?

1. What problem are you trying to solve or what gap are you trying to fill and who ultimately will benefit?
2. How do you get there? Often policy research is thought of as very linear:



But.... it's often not so linear and what fits into the boxes of **research** and **evidence** generation can take on many shapes and sizes...

- Conducts innovative research and generates real solutions to achieve quality learning for all
- Informs policymakers and thought-leaders on educational challenges around the world
- Shapes the policy debate by elevating global education priorities on the international agenda



The Center for Universal Education (CUE) at Brookings

Strategies from CUE



1. Engage in a
consultative
process



2. Partner with
those who
have presence
on the ground



3. Diversify
the team



4. Create
communities
of practice



5. Develop
tools and
build capacity



1. Engage in a consultative process

Why?

1. Engage in a consultative process

- Create a learning opportunity for your research
- Establish buy-in -stakeholders are more likely to adopt your ideas if they feel like part of the process.
- An opportunity to share ownership of the ideas.

1. Engage in a consultative process: **Who?**

Researchers

Implementers

Policymakers

Funders

Beneficiaries (the people who
your research impacts)

**Note this may also include those opposed to
your ideas!*

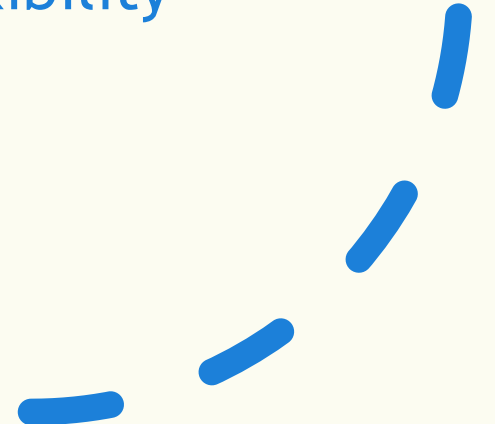
1. Engage in a consultative process: **How?**

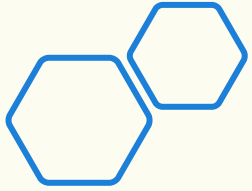
Possible actions:

- Conduct surveys among your stakeholders
- Hold consultative roundtable discussions
- Create an advisory group
- Crowdfund information through social media

Keep in mind:

- Strategic clarity with tactical flexibility
- Be a neutral convener
- Nerve center, not owner

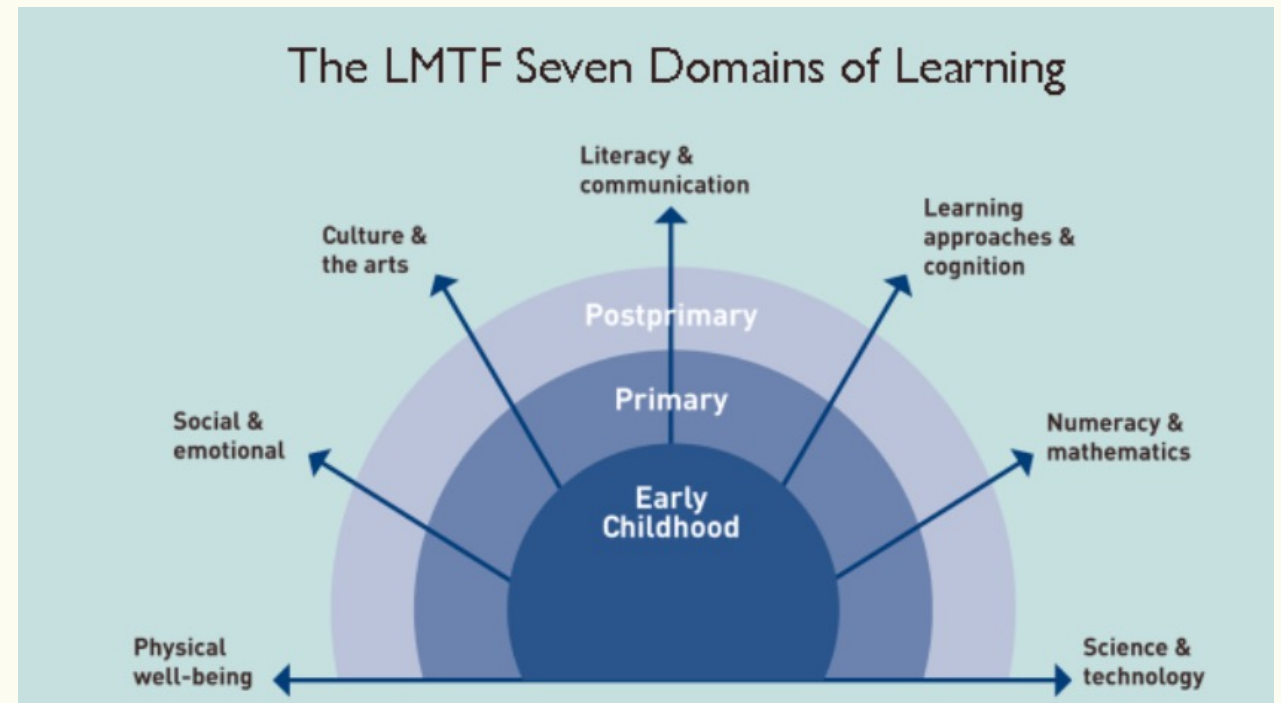




1. Engage in a consultative process: Example

Learning Metrics Task Force

- Led by CUE and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics aimed at improving learning outcomes for children and youth worldwide.
- 30 organizations in multistakeholder collaboration.
- 1,700 Consultations in 118 countries.





2. Partner with those who have presence on the ground

Why?

2. Partner with those who have presence on the ground

- To bring important "real life" insights to our research
- Ensure the research is responsive to needs on the ground
- Gather primary qualitative or quantitative data
- Test out hypotheses
- Test out tools

2. Partner with those who have presence on the ground: **Who?**

Implementing organizations such
as NGOs

Funders such as donor agencies
or foundations

Government (national and
subnational)

Local universities or think tanks

2. Partner with those who have presence on the ground: **How?**

- Data collection
- Pilot tools
- Conduct training
- Disseminate research



2. Partner with those who have presence on the ground: Example

Real-time Scaling Labs

- Led by CUE in collaboration with local partners around the world
- Participatory, action research approach to document, learn from, and support ongoing efforts to scale education innovations
- Goal: generate more evidence and provide practical recommendations around the process of scaling and strengthen local scaling capacity





3. Diversify the team

Why?

3. Diversify the Team

Bringing in other researchers and practitioners from a variety of environments can enrich and amplify your work

3. Diversify the team: Who?

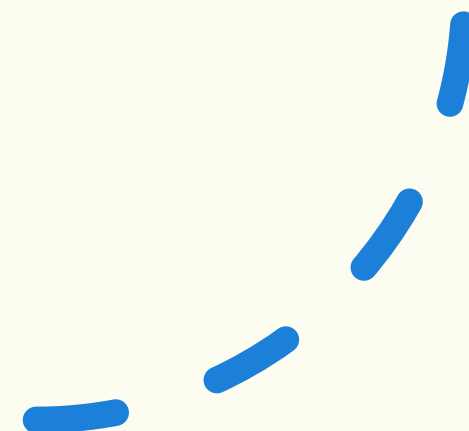
Scholars from Universities or
other Think Tanks

Policymakers from
Government

Practitioners from
Implementing Agencies

3. Diversify the team **How?**

- Guest scholars
- Non-resident scholars
- Practitioners in residence
- Co-author studies and blog posts



3. Diversify the team: Example

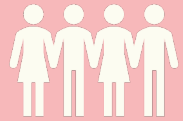
Echidna Global Scholars Program

Annual cohort of 3-4 scholars from around the world come to CUE for 4-6 mos. to conduct research on Girls Education

Current scholar *Tran Thi Ngoc Tran* is co-founder and managing director of ProPath Education Group.

She will explore the experiences and needs of Vietnamese young women participating in entrepreneurial education in the Future for Women Program





4. Create communities of practice

Why?

4. Create communities of practice

- Generate a learning loop - learn from and share with others - both in terms of content and policy thinking
- Amplify policy influence

4. Create communities of practice Who?

Researchers

Implementers

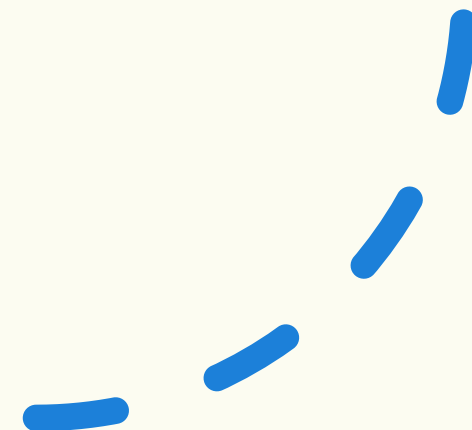
Policymakers

Funders

**A more diverse group (including from outside the sector) can bring important insights to the CoP*

4. Create communities of practice **How?**

- Information platforms, hubs, shared files, fora
- Live/online roundtable discussions
- Joint working sessions
- Study tours



4. Create communities of practice: Example

The Global Education and ECD Costing Consortium (GEECC)

- Experts working to advance knowledge and capacity around costing Ed and ECD
- Monthly working session Zoom meetings
- Outputs:
 - Problem Statement and Theory of Change
 - Joint survey on existing costing tools
 - Website with compiled resources





5. Develop tools and build capacity

Why?

5. Develop
tools and build
capacity

When your research identifies practical gaps to achieving the goals you are seeking, sometimes the most direct way to achieve those goals is to try to fill those gaps yourself!

5. Develop tools and build capacity: **Who?**

Researchers

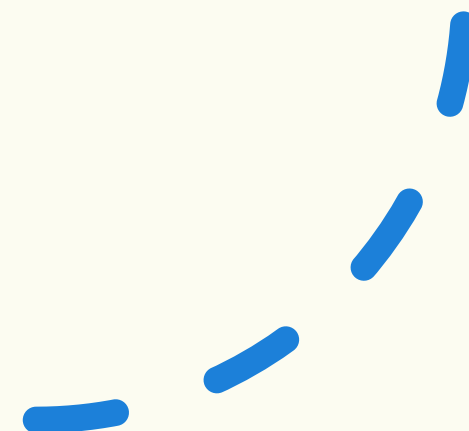
Implementers

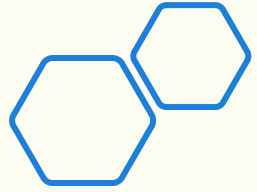
Policymakers

Funders

5. Develop tools and build capacity **How?**

- Playbooks
- Survey tools
- Data collection tools
- Databases
- Training modules





5. Develop tools and capacity: Example

Brookings Education and ECD Cost Calculator

- Tool for collecting and analyzing cost data
- Available online to anyone
- Guidance documents to accompany tool
- Data used to build database on costs



The screenshot shows a web application interface with a dark blue header containing a logo and a menu with 'My Forms' and 'Form History'. Below the header, there is a section titled 'Select Form Name' with a list of forms, each preceded by an orange play button icon. The forms are:

- 1. Program Background
- 2a. Cost entry- Overhead: Program Design
- 2b. Cost entry- Overhead: Indirect Program Management
- 2c. Cost entry- Overhead: Program Evaluation
- 2d. Cost entry- Overhead: Other Overhead Costs
- 2e. Cost entry- Direct: Training
- 2f. Cost entry- Direct: Direct Delivery
- 2g. Cost entry- Direct: Direct Program Management
- 2h. Cost entry- Direct: Transfers to Individuals/Families
- 2i. Cost Entry - Direct: Other
- 3a. Output - Summary and Visualization of Aggregated Data
- 3b. Output - Disaggregated Data




Questions?

Break: 10 Minutes



1. **Identify a research question** or area that you are working on.
2. **Choose one strategy** from the list of 5 innovative strategies (something you haven't yet done):
 1. *Engage in a consultative process*
 2. *Partner with those who have presence on the ground*
 3. *Diversify the team*
 4. *Create communities of practice*
 5. *Develop tools and build capacity*
3. **Identify the Why, Who and How** of this strategy as it applies to your research question.
4. **Share with your group** (3 mins each)



Breakout Exercise (25 mins)

Share Back & Group Discussion

Remaining
questions or
thoughts

Gracias a todxs!

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