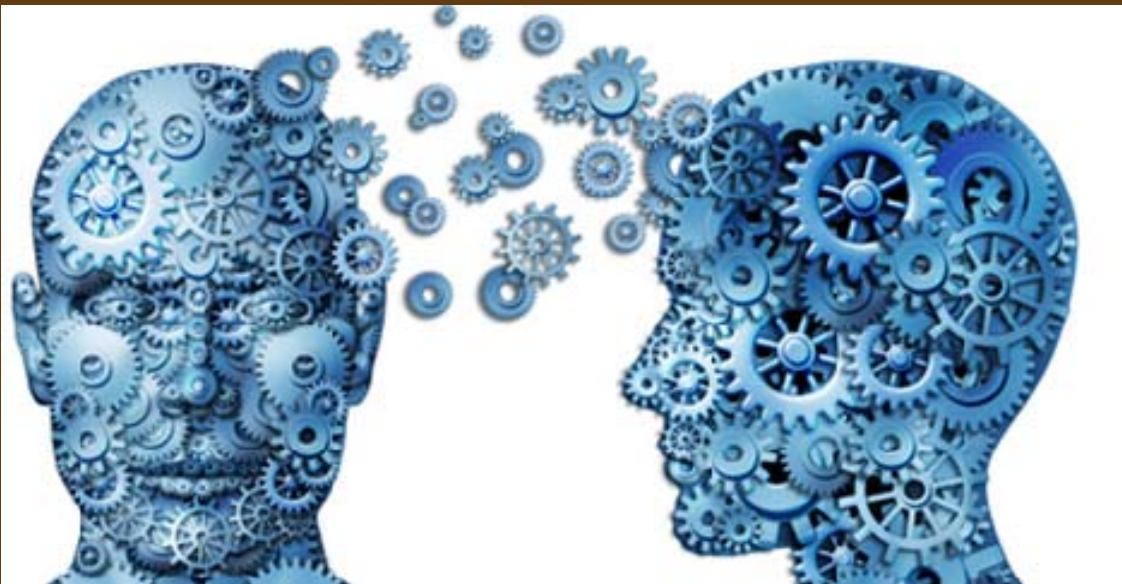# Evaluation Evidence Throughout Policy and Program Cycles

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Objectives

Through this mini-workshop, participants will . . .

1. Increase their knowledge about the contributions of evaluation at different stages of the policy and program cycle.

2. Reflect on what counts as evidence in different stages of the policy and program cycle.

3. Engage in reflection and discussion about how evaluation can or should influence the policy and program process at various stages.

Agenda

What is evaluation?

How can evaluation be conceptualized in policy and program cycles?

What counts as evidence?

Exercise & debriefing

Summary of lessons learned

What is Evaluation?

. . . the systematic determination of merit, worth, or significance
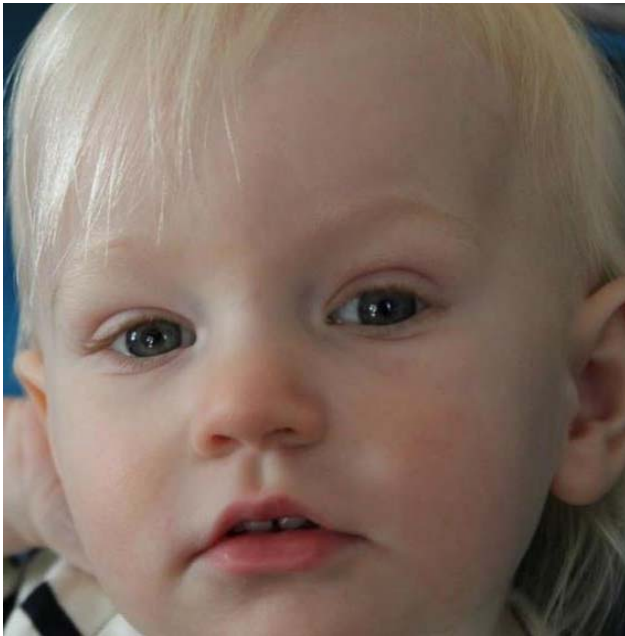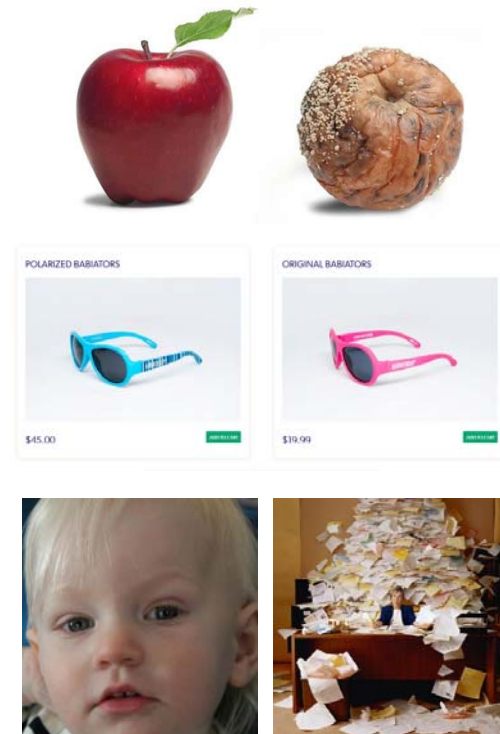
MERIT

WORTH

From http://www.babiators.com/store/
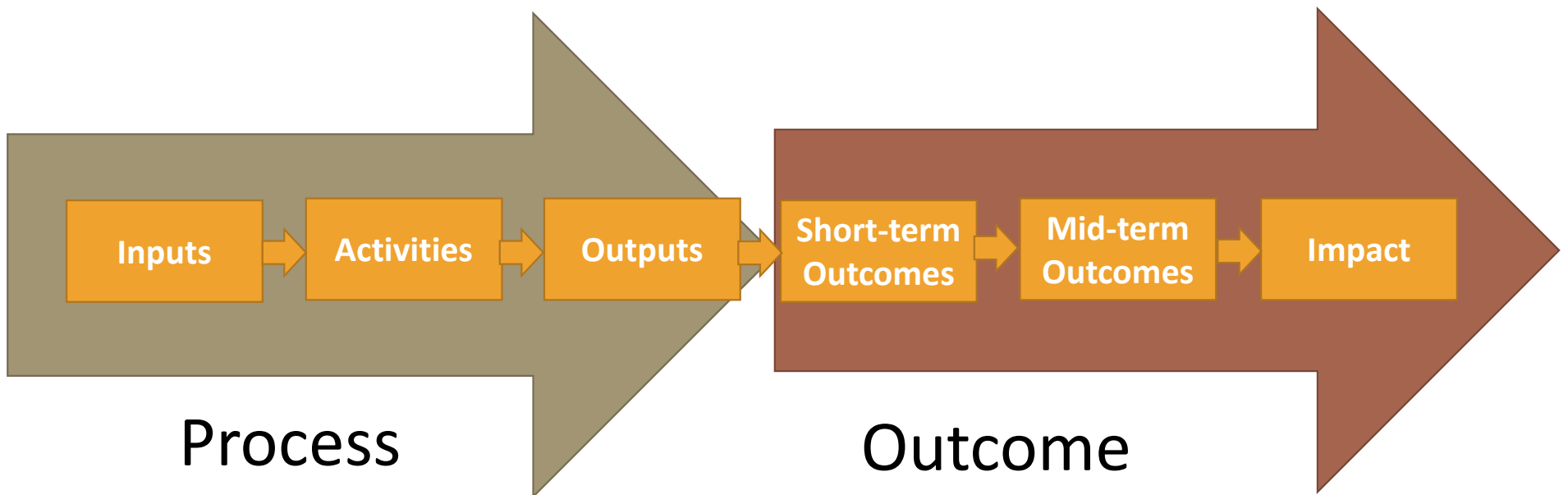
SIGNIFICANCE

For evaluations, values and standards present a filter to provide meaning to information

What is the difference between
Monitoring & Evaluation?

What is the difference between
Process and Outcome Evaluation?

Process

Outcome

Inputs → Activities → Outputs → Short-term Outcomes → Mid-term Outcomes → Impact

Distinguish from formative and summative purposes!

Simple Evaluation Formula

Evidence
What so?

+

Values/ Standards

=

Evaluative Conclusions
So what?

Based on Davidson, 2005

How does evaluation fit into the policy cycle?

1. Issues Emergence/ Agenda Setting
2. Policy Formulation/ Alternative Selection
3. Enactment/ Legitimation
4. Implementation
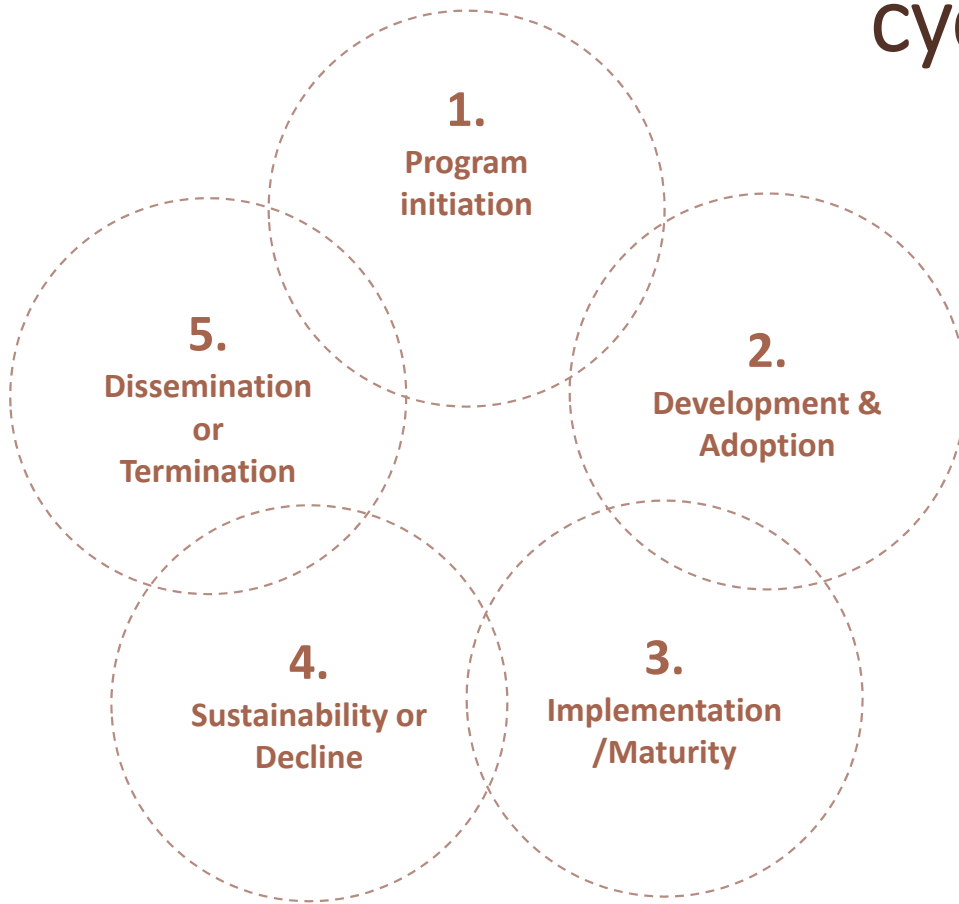5. Evaluation
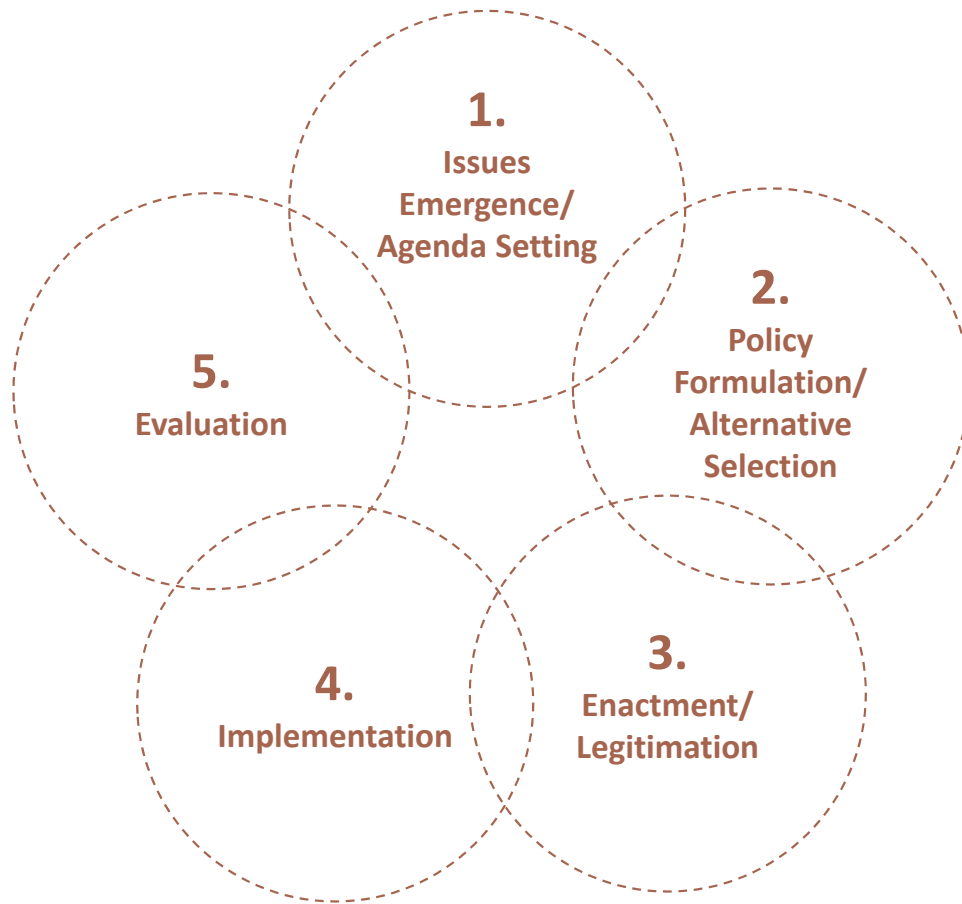
1. Identification and selection of issues

2. Development and selection of the most rational and feasible solution to the issue

3. Generation of stakeholder buy-in and legalization

4. Appropriation of funding; interpretation, oversight, administration, and delivery of the policy

5. Identification of "success" via quantitative objectives measures

How does evaluation fit into the program cycle?

1. Program initiation

2. Development & Adoption

3. Implementation /Maturity

4. Sustainability or Decline

5. Dissemination or Termination

1. Inform program via needs assessments, literature reviews, formative evaluation, evaluability assessments

2. Test program models via RCTs, QEDs, systematic change evaluations, synthesis, meta-analysis

3. Inform program via formative evaluation, performance measurement, quality improvement, and evaluation of sustainability

4. Assessment of diffusion models, implementation fidelity measures, social marketing, and sustainability
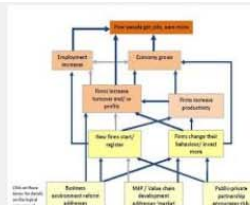
Based on Scheirer, 2005 & 2012

What is Evidence?

Outcomes from analysis

Empirical facts about aspects of a policy or program that are measured via indicators (data points)

Analyzed and synthesized findings

Strong evaluation evidence is

- Believable to the audience
- Independently observable/verifiable
- Based on
  - systematic data collection
  - logical and empirical linkages between the program/policy and outcomes
  - multiple data sources, methods, and types of data
  - comparisons over time
  - comparisons between groups and sites
- Replications
- Derived from analysis and synthesis
- Requires triangulation
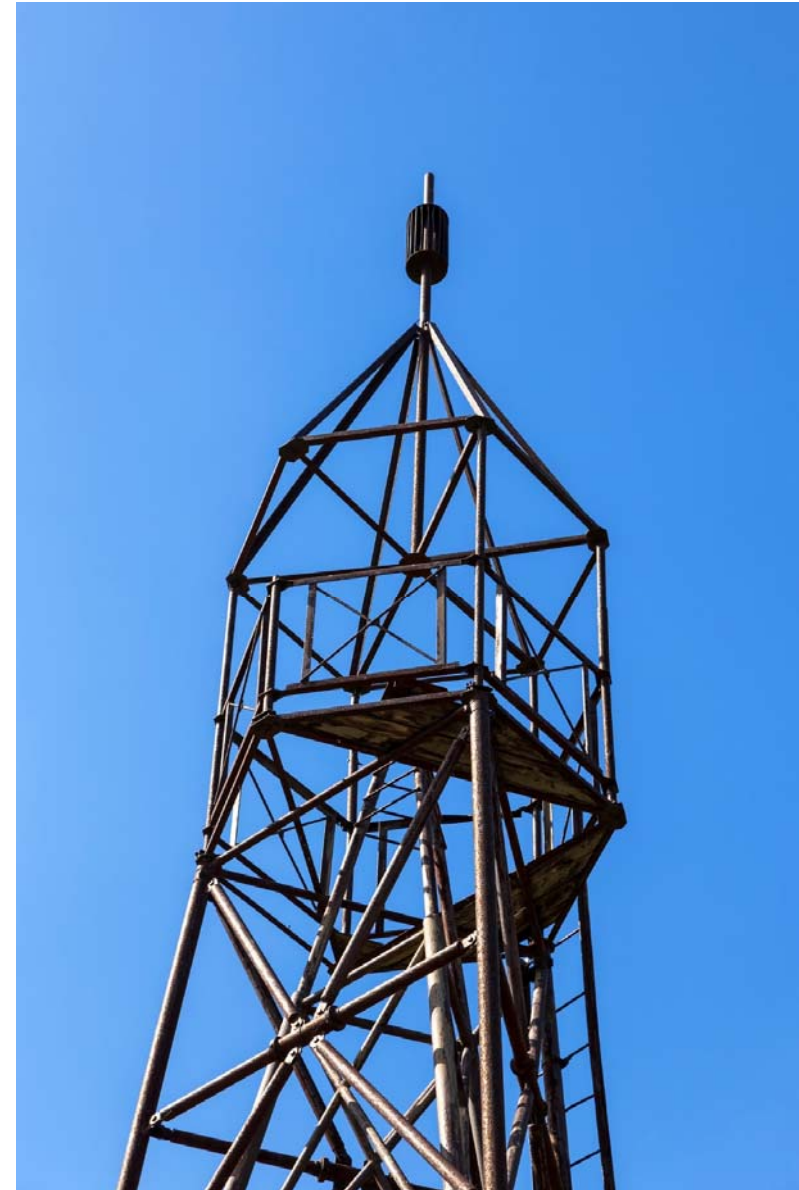
"The [Obama] Administration is committed to a broad-based set of activities to **better integrate evidence and rigorous evaluation** in budget, management, operational, and policy decisions, including:

(1) making better use of already-collected data within government agencies;

(2) promoting the use of high-quality, low-cost evaluations and rapid, iterative experimentation;

(3) adopting more evidence-based structures for grant programs; and

(4) building agency evaluation capacity and developing tools to better communicate what works."

Big & little data

Secondary data; developmental & formative eval; RCTs

Clearinghouses

Training & Development

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Exercise

In small groups and in light of your personal experience, please populate the tables provided on the handout.

What evaluation methods (or models and approaches) might provide evidence in different stages of the policy and program cycles? Why?

Evaluation in Each Stage of the Policy Cycle
What evaluation methods (or models/approaches)
might provide evidence in different stages of the policy cycle? Why?

Issue Emergence	Agenda Setting	Alternative Selection	Enactment	Implement.

Evaluation in Each Stage in the Program Cycle

What evaluation methods (or models/approaches)
might provide evidence in different stages of the program cycle? Why?

Program Initiation	Development and Adoption	Implementation or Maturity	Sustainability or Decline	Dissemination or Termination

Debriefing

What evaluation methods (or models and approaches) might provide evidence in different stages of the policy and program cycles? Why?

Questions

References & Continued Reading

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Thank you!

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