



EVALUATING PLACE-BASED APPROACHES IN SCHOOLS: REFLECTIONS FROM EVALUATORS AND PRACTITIONERS IN SCHOOLS AS COMMUNITY HUBS

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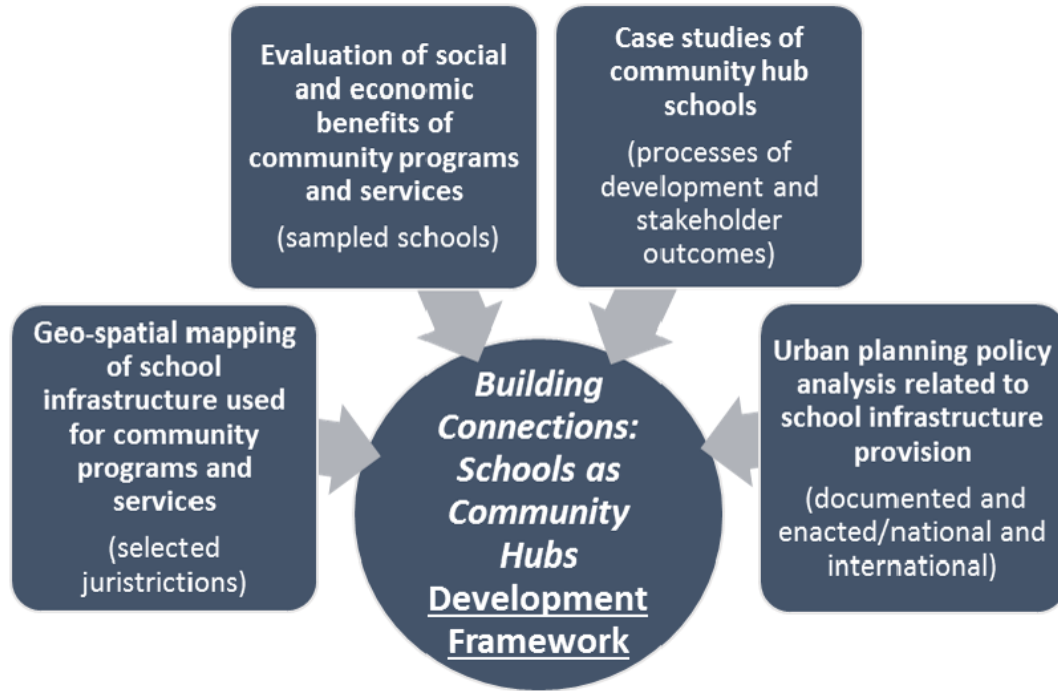


Agenda



- Introduction - Building Connections project
- Project aims
- Hayley Paproth: Applying Success Case Methodology in Schools as Community Hubs
- Ruth Aston: Characteristics, Impact and Evaluative Thinking among Schools as Community Hubs
- Janet Clinton: Evaluation Considerations to Support Scaling of Schools as Community Hubs
- Questions

Background



Schools as Community Hubs (SaCH)

- School-community partnerships
- Involve one or more of:
 - Sharing facilities with community or other organisations
 - Co-location of facilities or services on school campus
 - Integration of services and facilities
- Aim to address ‘wicked’ problems
- Large variation in terms and definitions, implementation, infrastructure, stakeholders, and intended outcomes

Why study Schools as Community Hubs?

- Increasing interest
 - Building new schools
 - Facilities are underutilised
 - Integration of services
 - School locations/ trust
 - Results from international examples
- Expectations yet to be verified by research



- Evaluation of schools as community hubs tends to be very localised
- Limited evidence, slowly accumulating for positive impacts in some cases
- Australian success stories – Doveton College & Our Place
- Community Hubs Australia – SROI evaluation (2021)
\$2.23 return on investment

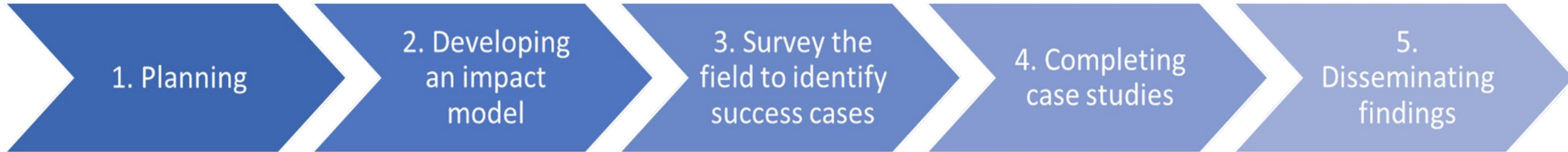
Literature

Evaluating SaCH

- Investigating what successful hubs can achieve, and what factors are important
 - Evaluative Thinking may be an important factor
- Success Case Method research methodology



Success Case Method



Developing the impact model



1. Hubs literature
2. Other literature
3. Workshops with Australian and international hubs stakeholders
4. Consultations with Australian stakeholders

Impact Model Consultations

90-minute workshops

25 participants:

- Principals
- Hub leaders
- Backbone organisations
- State and local govt
- Architects
- Researchers





Activities



1. Pre-workshop question – *“How would you know if a School as a Community Hub was working well? What are some of the examples of evidence you would see?”*

- Summarised answers verified in the workshop

2. Scenarios – vignettes of successful and less successful hubs.

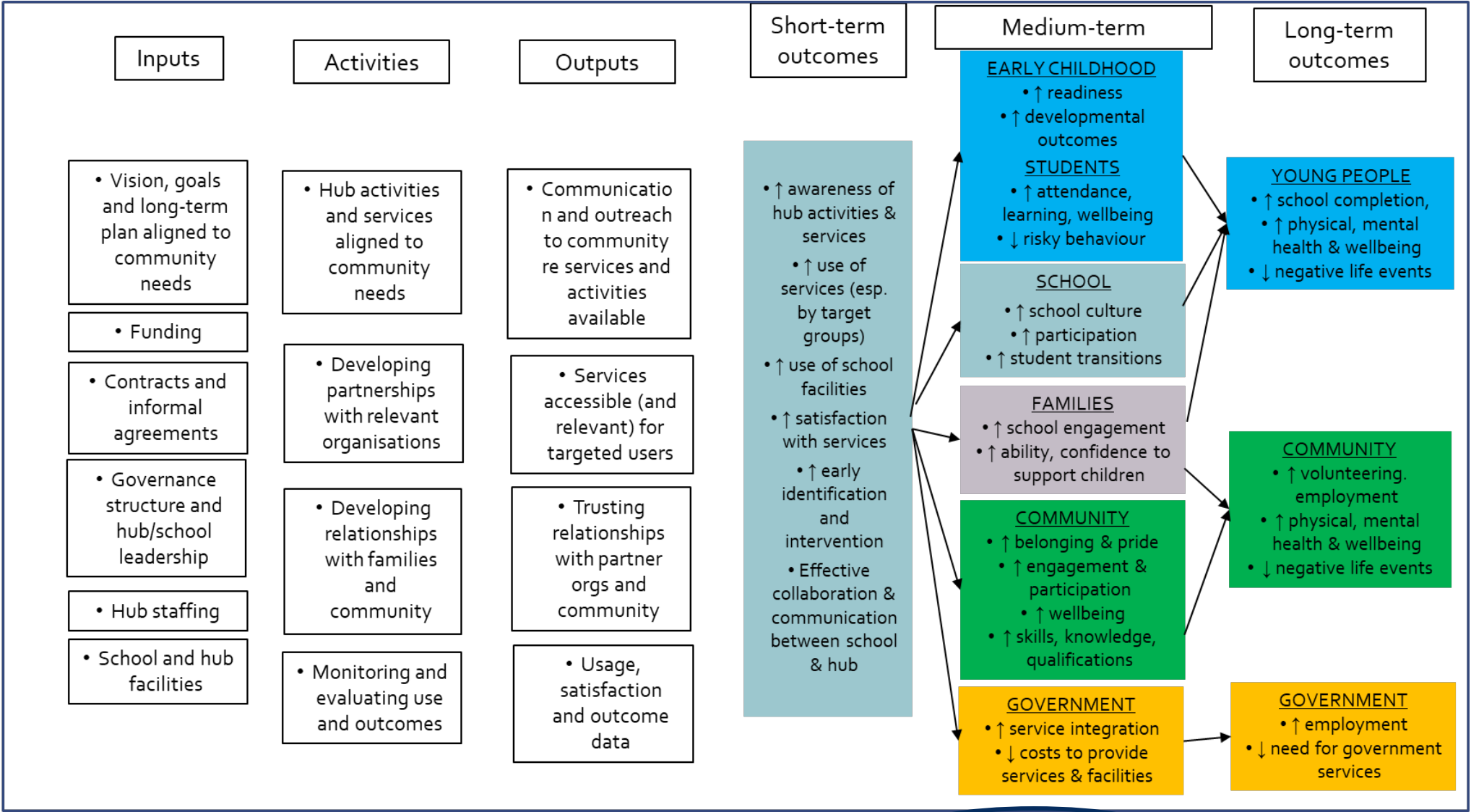
- What outcomes would be achieved, who for, how long?
- What are the factors enabling this success?



Healthy and happy young people, prepared for successful transitions to further education, training, the workforce, and adulthood.

Healthy and happy community, with improved outcomes and decreased social inequality.

Increased economic and social return on investments in school and community facilities and services.



Assumptions

External factors

Enablers & Barriers

- Evaluative Thinking
- Backbone organisation
- Policy environment
- Collaboration across sectors

- Staffing consistency
- Adaptation to changing community needs
- Management of facilities & partnerships



Evaluative Thinking questions



Questions were adapted from the Evaluative Thinking Inventory (ETI) – McIntosh et al, 2020

‘In our school or organisation, we... ‘

Believing in and Practicing Evaluation	Posing Thoughtful Questions and Seeking Alternatives
Enjoy discussing strategies for monitoring and evaluating	Question assumptions or claims made by each other
Are eager to engage in monitoring and evaluation	Offer evidence for claims that we make
Believe evaluation is a valuable endeavour	Suggest alternative explanations
	Take time to reflect on the way we work



National survey of School leaders of School Community Hubs across Australia



Survey purpose & aims

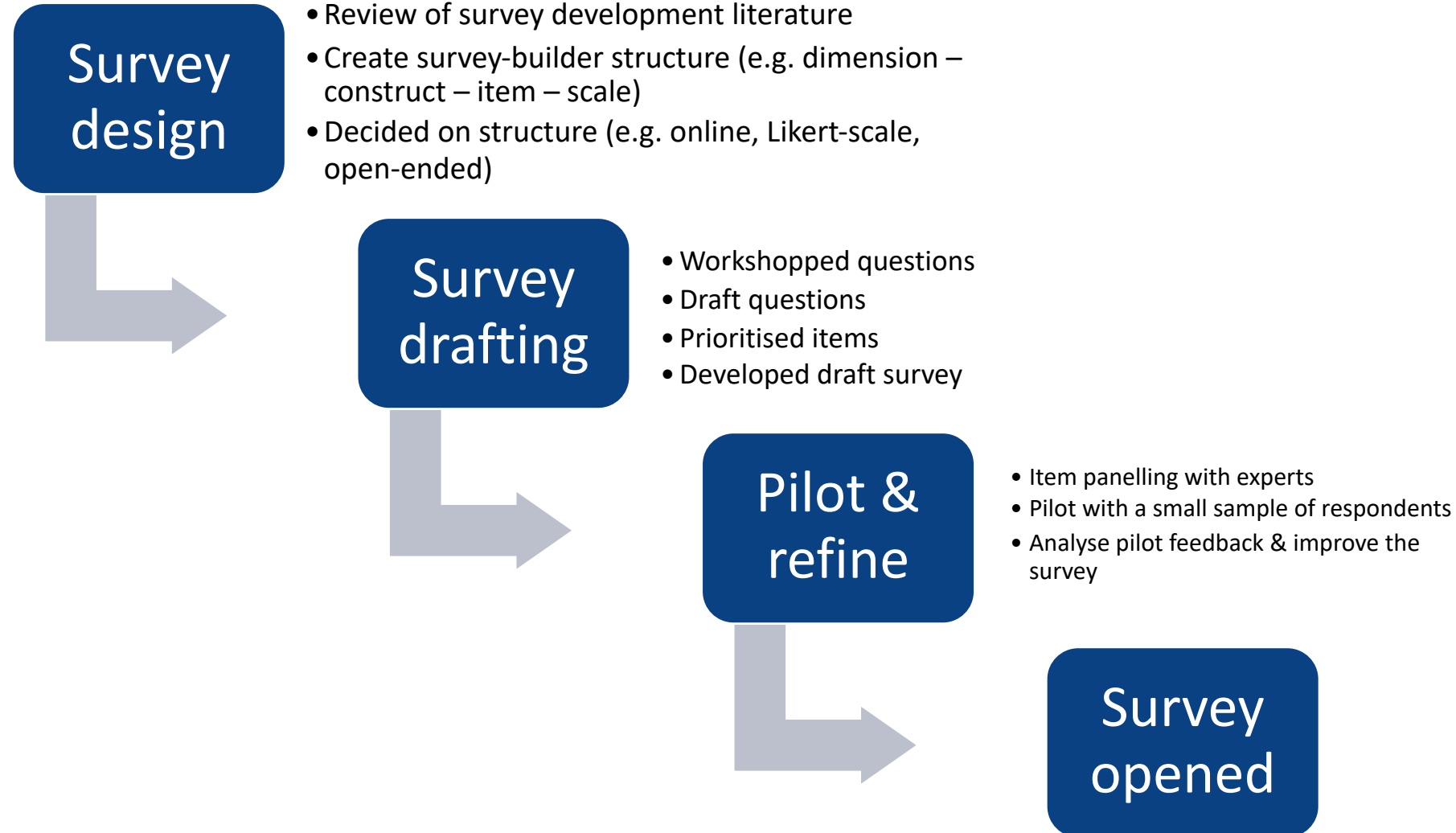
Understand the characteristics of school operating as community hubs

- School characteristics (size, location, student population)
- Infrastructure and facilities (management, funding, leadership, resourcing)
- Additional services or activities offered to the community in schools community hubs
- Enablers and barriers

Gather data on the impacts of schools operating as community hubs

- Identify benefits for students
- Identify benefits for parents, caregivers and the local community
- Capture monitoring and/or evaluation practices
- Improvements to facilities that could enhance schools operating as community hubs

Survey development process





Preliminary results – full report to come

Discussion of preliminary findings of survey results – full report of results to come.

If you are interested in being advised when report is released, please contact

building-connections@unimelb.edu.au



What do the findings tell us about schools as community hubs?



Great diversity in sharing facility arrangements

Facility sharing **contributes most** to impact associated with **access** to sport and recreation activities, school connectedness.

Impact and sharing is supported by:

- Established relationships between schools and organisations
- Existing community engagement with schools can support impact
- Funding for facility sharing, maintenance can also support impact
- Dedicated hub coordinator role

What about evaluative thinking?

There is recognition of the value of evaluation, but **limited monitoring and evaluation practice** occurring.

Only 11% are engaging in monitoring of outcomes associated with school community-hub activities.



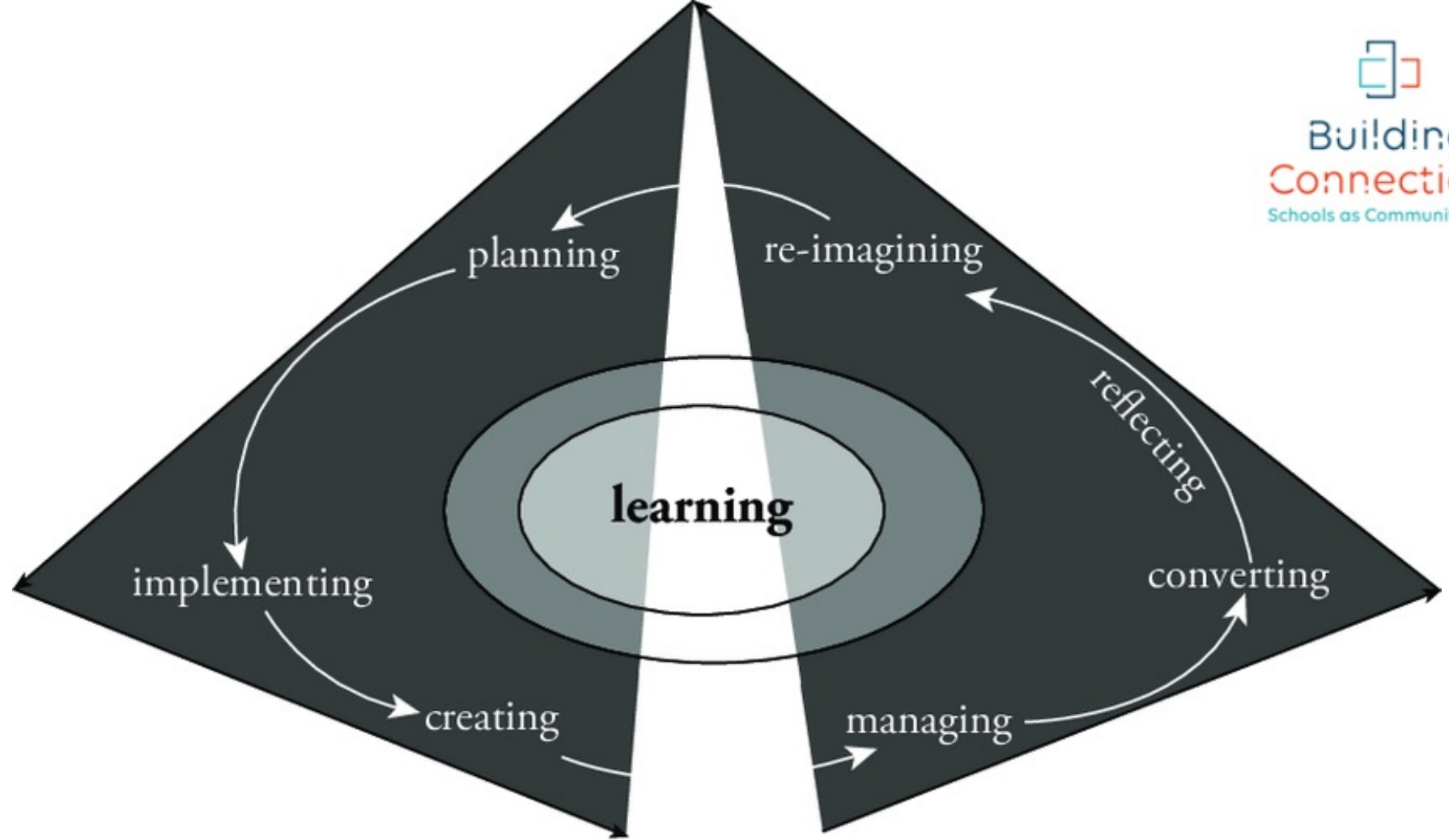
Relationship between evaluative thinking, evaluation activity and success



“Evaluative thinking is critical thinking applied in the context of evaluation, motivated by an attitude of inquisitiveness and a belief in the value of evidence, that involved identifying assumptions, posing thoughtful questions, pursuing deeper understanding through reflection and perspective taking, and informing decisions in preparation for action.” (Buckley et al., 2015)

Evaluative thinking framework

Bennett, G. & Jessani, N. (2011).



planning projects and interventions

implementing activities and ideas

creating data and outcomes

learning, adapting, improving

managing data and information

converting data into lessons and knowledge

reflecting on lessons

re-imagining core activities



Next steps



- Further analysis examining relationships between evaluative thinking and reported impact
- School case studies (Hayley)
- VFI of schools as community hubs



Evaluating Schools as Community Hubs

What works? For whom?



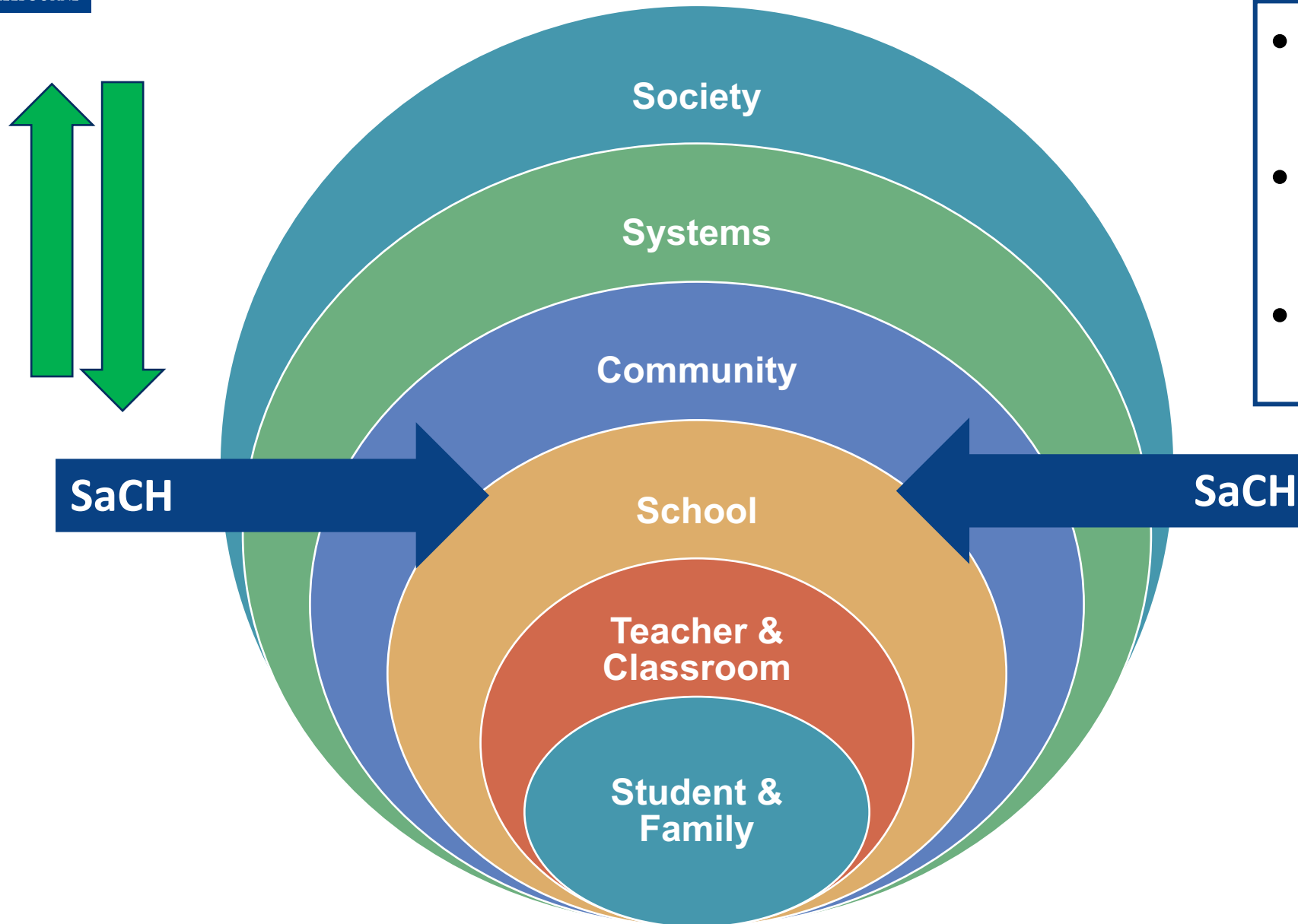
‘It is very hard to find any evidence that implementation of Schools as Community Hubs have any effect on student achievement. This is not to say they could not be, but if there is then it is elusive. Policy should hardly proceed on illusions. Those that advocate and see merit in SaCH need to provide the evidence for or against the effects on achievement and not presume it has any such effects.’
Hattie, 2021



What do we need to consider?

- The context
- Previous evidence
- Evaluation approaches that are fit for purpose
- Reality of the program
- It's structural integrity
- Knowledge gained

The Education Ecosystem



- Where is the impact?
- What's the effect across the system?
- What about time?

Challenges of understanding success & impact

Complexity across the system

Multiple forms of evidence

Different contexts

Different initiatives

Varying levels of implementation

Understanding collaboration

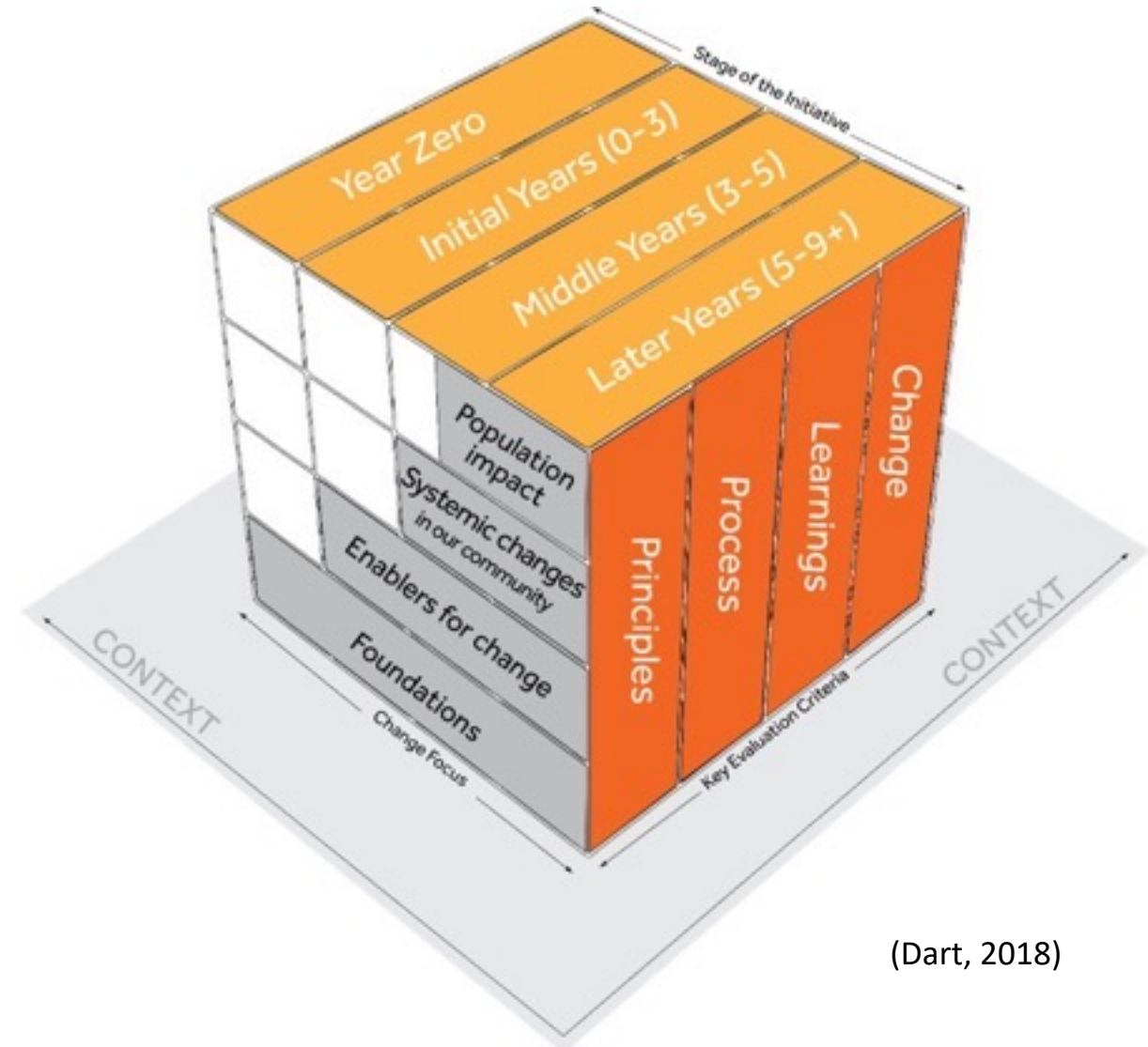
Credible evidence? For whom

Duration of initiative & evaluation

Phases of implementation

Causal links & contribution to impact

Continuous development & change



Collective impact

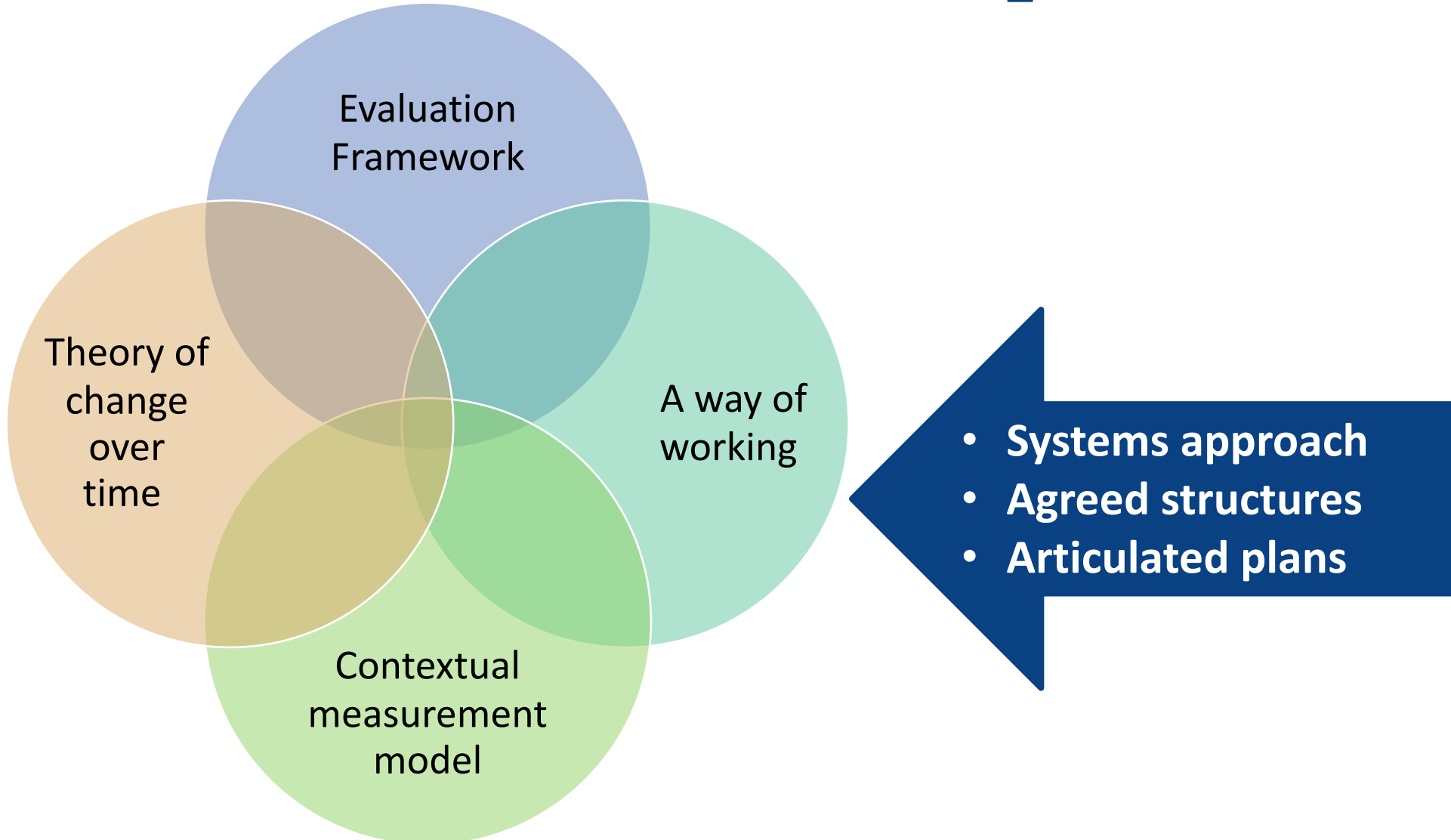
‘Large-scale social change requires broad cross-sector coordination, yet the social sector remains focused on the isolated intervention of individual organizations.’

Collective Impact is a collaboration framework that engages across sectors and groups who share a common interest to address a complex social issue, in a given community.



Kania & Kramer (2011)

Evaluation framework & approach for a collective impact



Building an evaluation framework for SACH



Agreed & Transparent:

- Meets the evaluation standards
- Rigorous methodology
- Measurement model
- Evidence at every level
- Triangulation clarity
- Sophisticated analysis
- High level of dissemination
- Every step transparent & reproducible

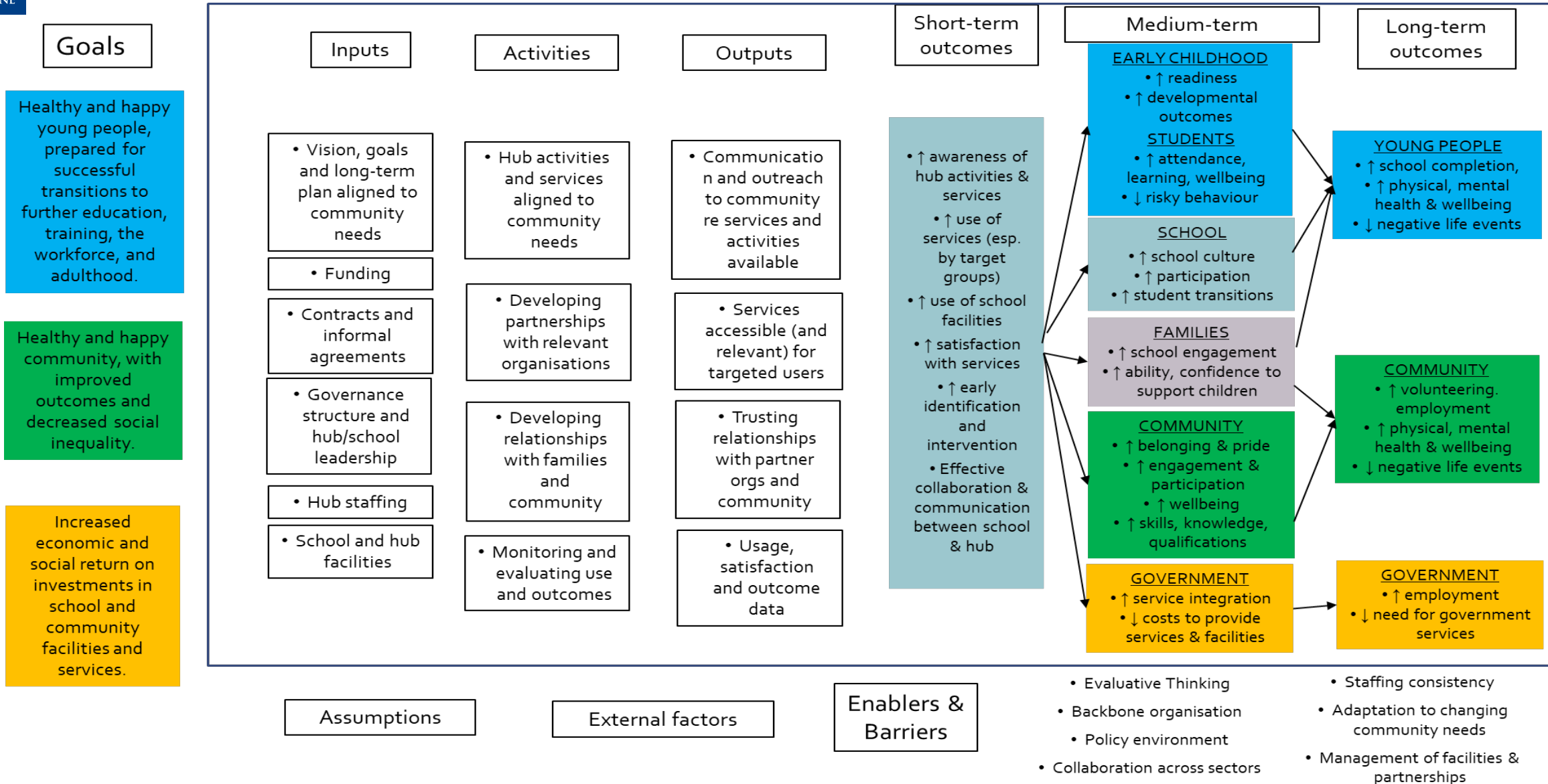
The program theory over time

- Level of evidence required
- Fidelity and adaptation
- Evidence of scale
- Strength & quality of evidence: The standard
- Evidence in context
- Judgement across the ecosystem



A key question: Are we testing the theory or the implementation and organisation?

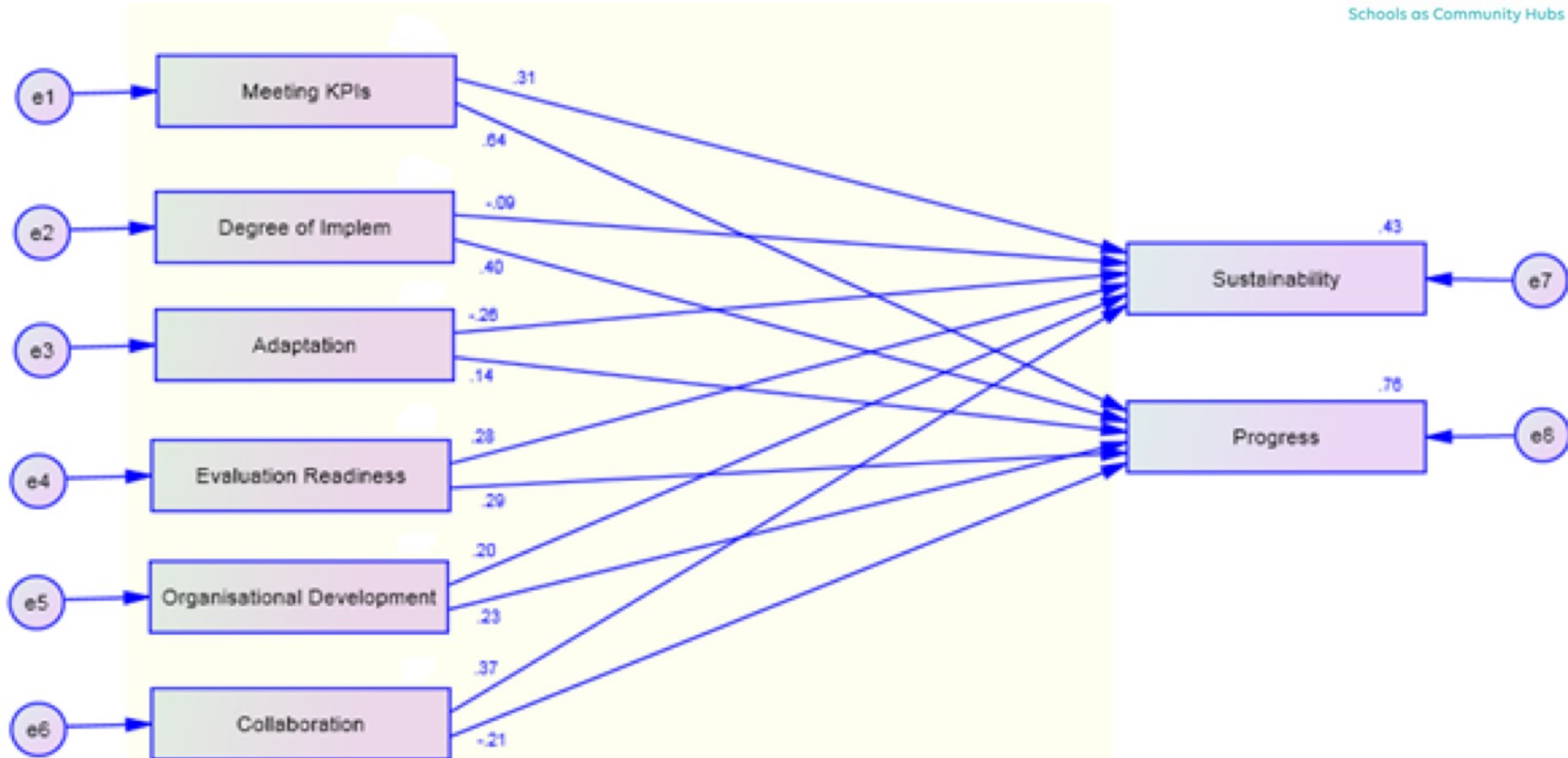
Developing the logic model



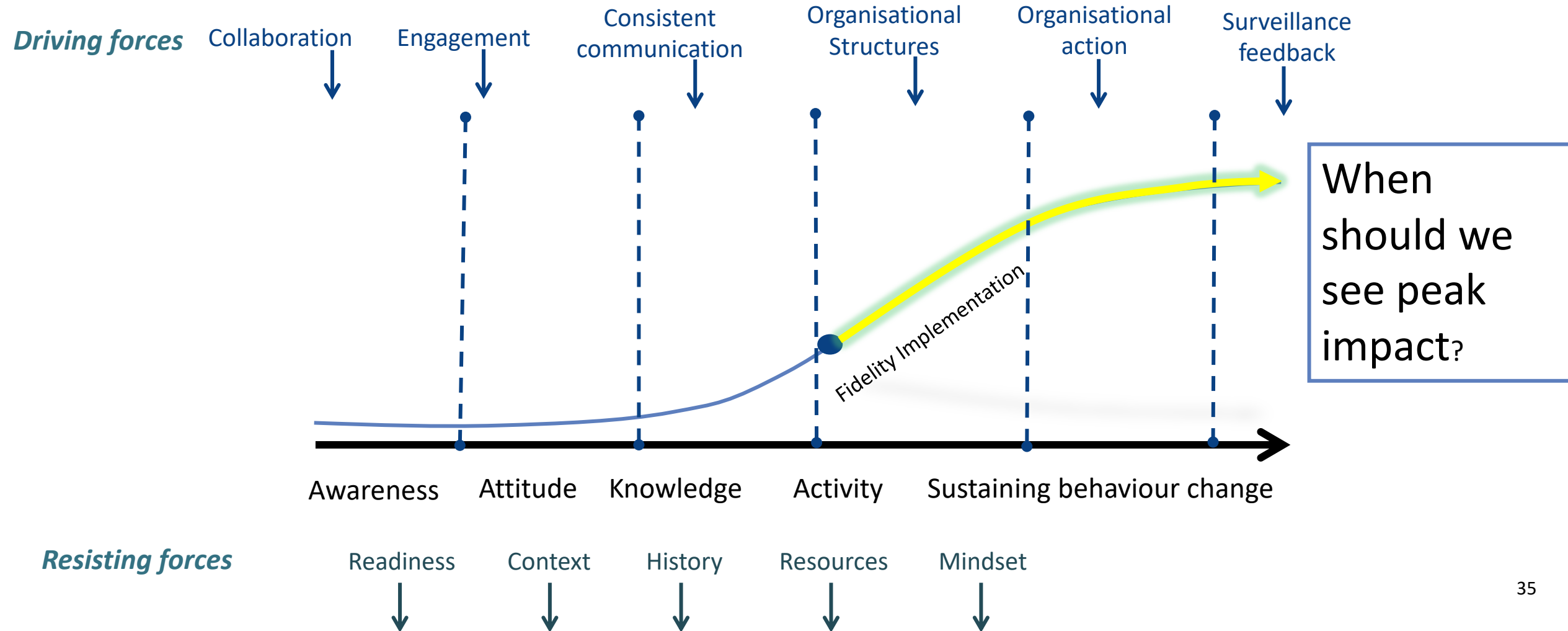
WHAT TO MEASURE?

When?

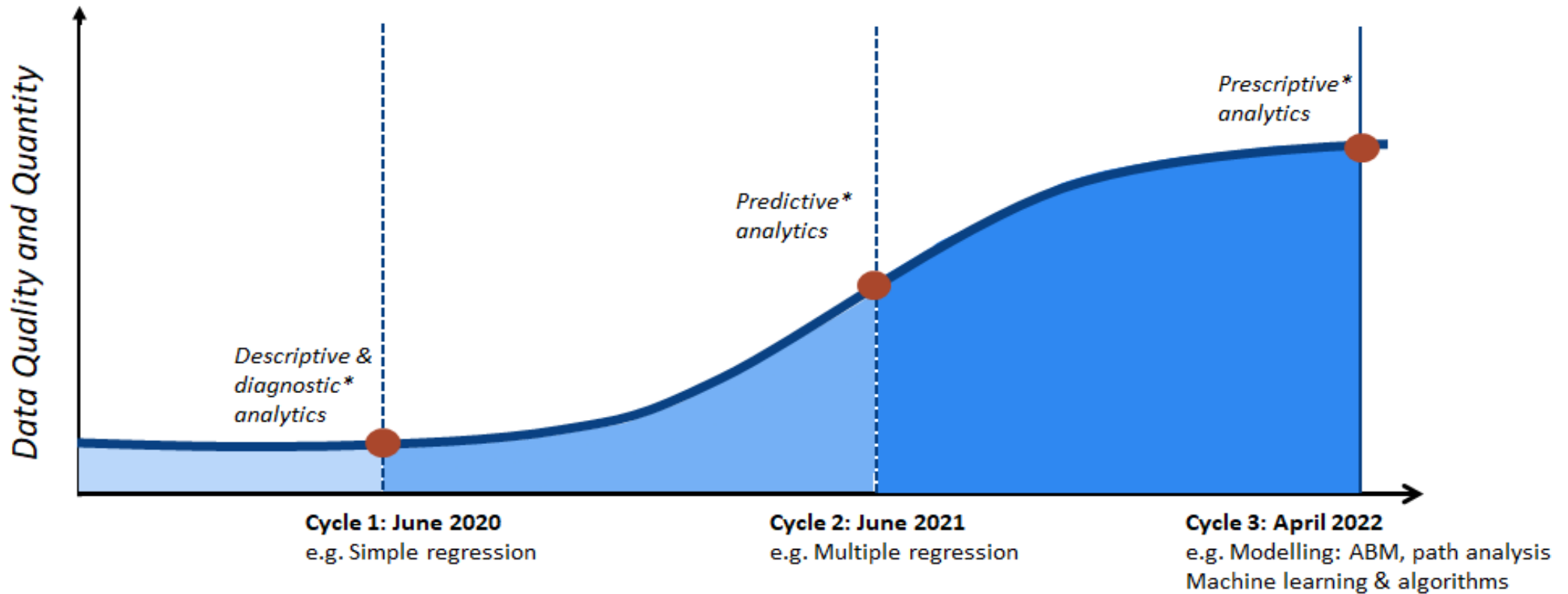
What should we measure?



Tracking overtime: Life Course of Implementation



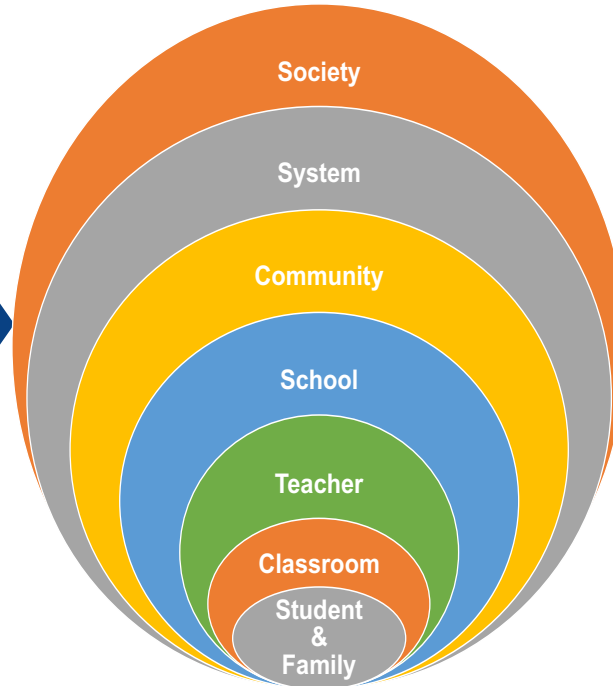
The influence of evaluation: data matures longitudinally



Assumptions Data quality can improve across the timeline • Some data can be linked • Harmonisation across sites can be achieved • Data is of a sufficient quality across most levels

Understanding success & impact

Longitudinal &
surveillance



Rich explanatory

Reaching the impossible target

The evaluation considered over time allows:

- Power to predict
- Scale
- Understand the **LIFETIME VALUE** of the exposure to Schools as Community Hubs





QUESTIONS & THOUGHTS



Find out more or get in contact

Website: <https://sites.research.unimelb.edu.au/learn-network/home/projects/building-connections>

How to Hub

framework: https://melbourne.figshare.com/articles/figure/How_to_Hub_Model_Version_1/19100381

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Our full survey findings will be published in late 2022

To be notified, email

building-connections@unimelb.edu.au





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