

Navigating organisational turbulence: An evaluation-based collaborative strategic learning model to support organisational sustainability.

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Monash acknowledges the Elders past, present and emerging, and the descendants of the people of the Eastern Kulin nation who have been and are the Custodians of the lands upon which Monash original campuses sit. This unceded land is the place of age-old ceremonies, of celebration, initiation and renewal, and the local Aboriginal peoples have had and continue to have a unique role in the life of these lands.

Kulin Nation: When Europeans colonized the Port Phillip region it was already occupied by five Aboriginal language groups.

The **Woiwurrung** (Woy-wur-rung) - The **Wurundjeri** People
The **Boonerwrung** (Bun-er-rong) People The **Wathaurong** (Wath-er-rong) People and The **Taungerong** (Tung-ger-rong) People



Overview

The problem: Monash context improving *strategy alignment* across areas, strategy execution and strategy adaptation to support organisational collective impact.

The solution: Enhancing planning transparency, quality and consistency accompanied by an MEL based organisational collaborative strategic learning and effectiveness model.

Our findings to date: Pockets of MEL good practice w/ broad organisational appetite for MEL capability uplift and desire to share org. learning for operational strategy adaptation.

Next steps: Implementing the macro MEL model for strategic effectiveness and systems mapping strategy and planning implementation plus ongoing evaluation capability building.

AES conference theme

Aligned with the '*Wayfinding*' theme, our **MEL collaborative strategic learning model** is a '*Tool*' designed to support organisational strategy design implementation and execution so an organisation can successfully adapt its strategy to navigate complex and disruptive environments on its '*Journey*' towards its community's goals and mission.

OUR GLOBAL FOOTPRINT



9

CAMPUSES AND
LOCATIONS ACROSS
6 COUNTRIES

2

CAMPUS
PARTNERSHIPS

100+

PARTNER UNIVERSITIES

84,884

STUDENTS

18,234

STAFF

490,000+

ALUMNI COMMUNITY
ACROSS 156 COUNTRIES

CAMPUSES AND LOCATIONS

MONASH COLLEGE MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

ENTITIES NOT FULLY OWNED BY MONASH UNIVERSITY

- Alfred Medical Research And Education Precinct (AMREP), Alfred, Australia
- Biocurate, Parkville, Australia
- Hudson Institute of Medical Research, Clayton, Australia
- Monash Partners Academic Health Science Centre, Clayton, Australia
- Neurosciences Victoria, Parkville, Australia
- Bendigo Primary Care Centre, Bendigo, Australia
- Open Universities Australia, Melbourne, Australia

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS DELIVERING MONASH COLLEGE PROGRAMS OVERSEAS

- Jakarta International College, Jakarta, Indonesia
- Sunway College, Johor Bahru, Malaysia
- Universal College Lanka, Colombo, Sri Lanka
- Viscend Education, Chengdu, China
- Timespro, Mumbai, Delhi, India

INVESTMENTS

- Monash Commercial, Clayton, Australia
- Monash Investment Holdings, Clayton, Australia
- Monash University Foundation, Clayton, Australia

INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC PARTNERS

- University of Warwick, Coventry, UK
- King's College London, London, UK
- Newcastle University, UK
- Pennsylvania State University, Pennsylvania, US
- University of British Columbia, British Columbia, Canada
- European Molecular Biology Laboratory, Heidelberg, Germany
- University of Padua, Padua, Italy
- Southeast University, Jiangsu (Province), China
- Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, Mumbai, India

The Problem

How can we move from **Strategic Planning** → **Strategy Execution**:
Strategy implementation and Evaluation system complexity

Strategic Planning Covers Three Horizons



Internal challenges:

- Complex system: size, decentralised model, sector diversity and systems complexity for strategy implementation
- Planning environment disconnected:
 - capability, capacity, implementation, monitoring & reporting landscape (measuring the right things in the right way for the right reasons at the right times)
 - transparency AND accessibility
 - evidence of synergies, streamlined governance and opportunities for early intervention/adaptation
- Appetite for: organisational alignment, collaboration/support, streamlined implementation monitoring, sharing of sector intelligence and insights to **enable evidence-based adaptation and strategy realisation**

The Problem (2)

Drawbacks of the conventional systems change approach

‘(i) changes that are wanted but don’t happen; (ii) changes that happen that people (stakeholders) don’t want; (iii) decisions and politics that seem unresponsive, insensitive or prematurely pragmatic; (iv) inaccurate assumptions, over generalisations, and an inability to see and hear what people are really saying; (v) preoccupation with fixing things that are going wrong with little or no time spent to make things right in the first place, or (vi) solutions becoming new problems . . .’
(Wadsworth 2010)

The Solution

Integrating MEL into organisational strategic planning, operations & governance

A MEL model of;

Sensing: Gathering relevant, useful and timely strategic information (learning);

Making sense: Analysing and contextualising strategic learning alongside other relevant information (institutional performance data, emerging trends, policy, and legislative reform etc); and

Good sense decisions: Reporting timely and relevant evaluative intelligence and insights to support evidence based good strategic decision making.

The solution (2)

Foundational Elements

- Enhancing planning transparency & accessibility;
- Enhancing institutional level planning capability and consistency;
- Introducing planning evaluation frameworks (ToC and program logics); and
- Introducing and improving M&E reporting to ensure it is useful at all operational levels

→ Strategy alignment, evaluation culture, shared organisational learning and operational adaptable decision making that is connected up across organisational areas

= Strategy execution and effectiveness (impact)

The Solution (3)

Model Pillars to Establish

Policies and procedures: Protect privacy of information providers and ensure trust in the system, and rigorous and transparent methodology enhance the reliability and validity of findings whilst reducing potential bias.

M&E Capability building: Providing planning implementation areas with the tools, frameworks and specialist support to enable them to design M&E into their planning from the outset.

A network of improvement specialists: Supporting the sharing of strategic learning and M&E best practice across Monash areas.

Governance: Connecting strategic learning insights into strategy and planning systems and processes to support proactive decision making.

The Solution (4)

Systemic strategy and planning M&E for organisational transformation

*‘This creates the possibilities for **emergent, contextualised, transformation instead of the mainstream focus on delivery and adoption, that is, knowledge transfer**’
(Schmidt-Abbey 2020)*

Our findings

- Evaluation capability and capacity assessment** -> Pockets of good practice and strong appetite for increased evaluation capability
- Evaluation Capability Building:** Appetite for tools (guides), resources (frameworks) and support (a professional improvement network)
- M&E Governance:** Appetite (planning managers) for increased learning and sense making (integrating impact in planning design)
- Influencing M&E and impact mindsets/behaviour across operational levels (activity operators, coordinators, managers and decision makers) via pilots, relationship development and partnering.

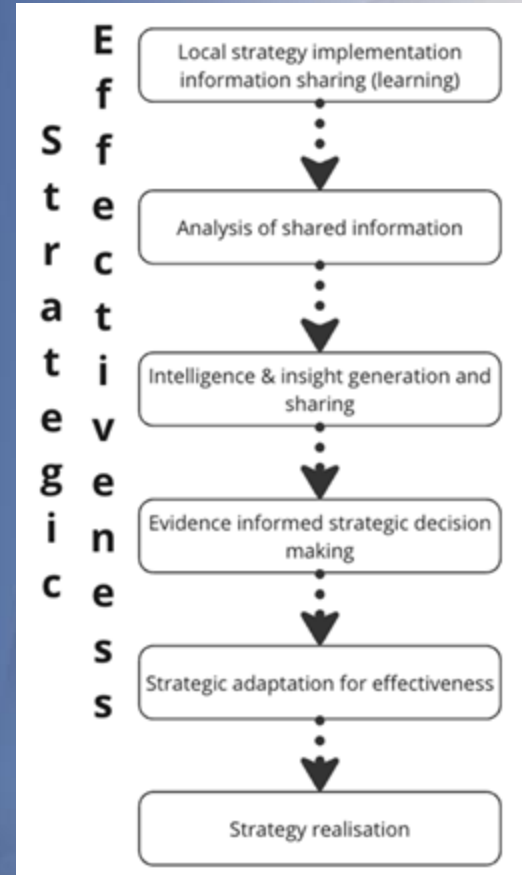
Next Steps

Systems efficiency testing (for strategy and planning implementation)

- SET use for defining the system (and sub-systems), evaluating system efficiency, identifying System change interventions (systems thinking interventions)
- System change interventions (systems thinking interventions)

Strategic effectiveness model

- Sharing insights and intelligence to support leaders to proactively modify strategy and planning activity towards goals and impact.



Some learning/reflections

- Evaluation is organisationally underutilised
- Existing performance reporting has been weighted towards quantitative data but leaders feel there would be value for more contextualised intelligence and insights that encompassing diverse information sources
- Embedding M&E is appealing as it should increase collaborative strategic learning

It is hypothesised that integrating M&E approaches will

- improve strategic efficiency (reducing duplication in effort and make collaboration easier)
- enhance organisational resilience and sustainability (improve the timely identification of strategic opportunities and challenges)
- improve strategic execution and enhance effectiveness (impact) by informing leaders to make right operational adaptations at the right times

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