



Evaluating & Researching University
Participation Interventions

Using Access and Participation Data in a Mixed Methods Approach

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Mixed Methods

Decade-long debate within the Development Evaluation community

Reached an uneasy consensus that a mixed-methods approach was required. Picciotto's (2012: 215–16)

Copestake argues for measurement based on the notion of 'reasonableness', involving a range of stakeholders

'This falls short of scientific certainty, but in complex situations it is often as much as we can hope for to aim higher may be counterproductive in terms of cost, timeliness and policy relevance.'
(Copestake, 2014: 417)

How can we assess effectiveness of interventions?

'what works' is a matter of judgement rather than data, and that this judgement is imbued with moral and ethical concerns' (Morrison, 2001: 79).

Using standards of evidence to evaluate impact of outreach



Mixed Methods research utilise both qualitative and quantitative approaches. A mixed-methods approach can **overcome limitations** associated with any single **evaluation design**.

Qualitative and quantitative data can be highly **complementary**: very often quantitative data will tell you **what** happened whilst qualitative will tell you **how** or **why** it happened.

Mixed methods research also has the advantage of drawing in data to reflect a **range of perspectives**

Some **common evaluation methodologies** are based on the use of mixed-methods research or **triangulation** of data from different sources

Why collect & analyse data?

Why was it decided to collect Low Participation Neighbourhood Data?

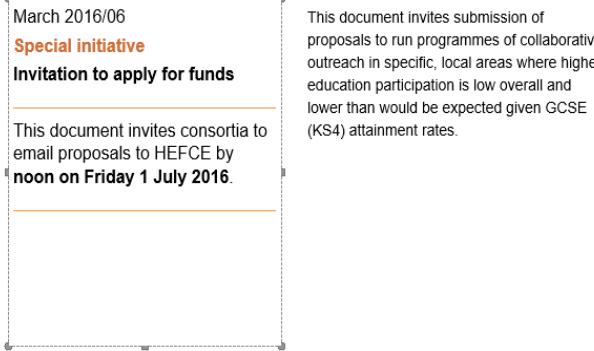
- New Labour (1997 – 2010) ideas about Social Capital
- Based on Putnam and Coleman 'communitarian' approach

*Where you live,
who else lives there
and how they live their lives—
cooperatively or selfishly, responsibly or
destructively—can be as important
as personal resources in determining
life chances*

SureStart

*The moral and social
reconstruction of our society depends
on our willingness to invest in
social capital.*

Aim higher...



National collaborative
outreach programme
Invitation to submit proposals for
funding

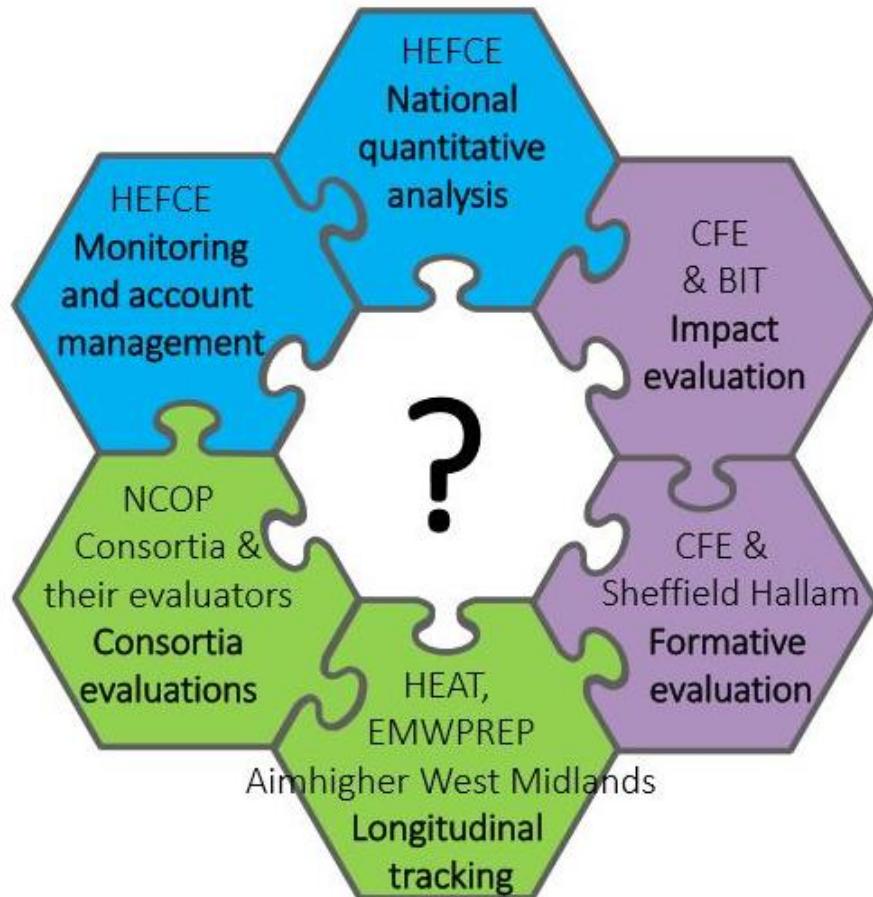
- Double proportion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds in HE by 2020
- Target government funding effectively

17.2015 UCAS .. HE entry rate for 18 year-olds from POLAR3 quintile 1 (Q1) was 18.5 per cent or 24,300 entrants. ...equates to an additional 7,700 ... required .. increase ...1,500 entrants. Current trends .. 900 entrants.

21. Recent HEFCE analysis identified gaps in local areas where HE participation is below the level expected, based on GCSE level

Crawford, C. (2014) The Link between Secondary School Characteristics and University Participation and Outcomes: DfE

NCOP: National Evaluation

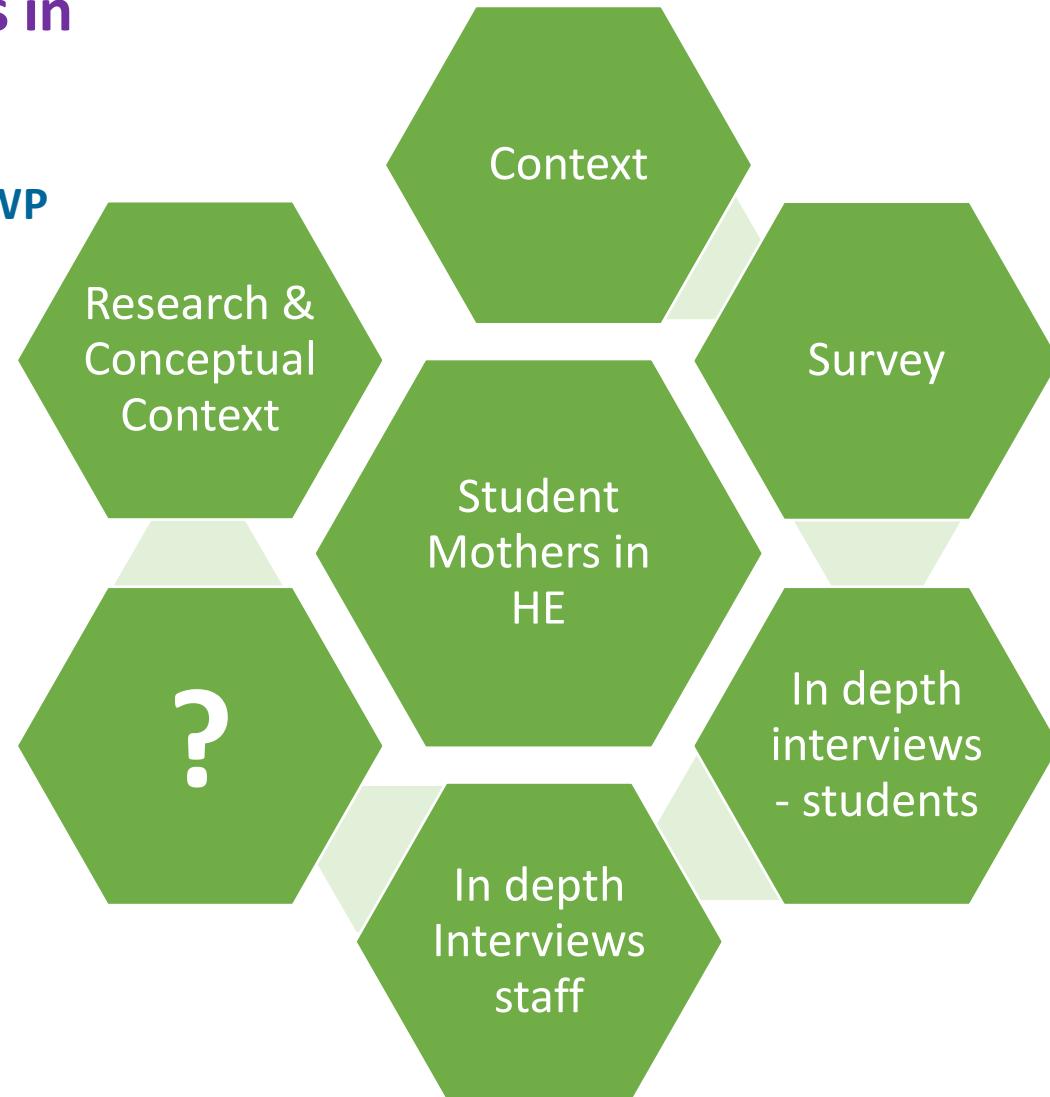


- National Collaboration Outreach Programme (NCOP)
- CFE Research
- Behavioural Insights Team (BIT)
- Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT)
- East Midlands Widening Participation Research and Evaluation Partnership (EMWPREP)

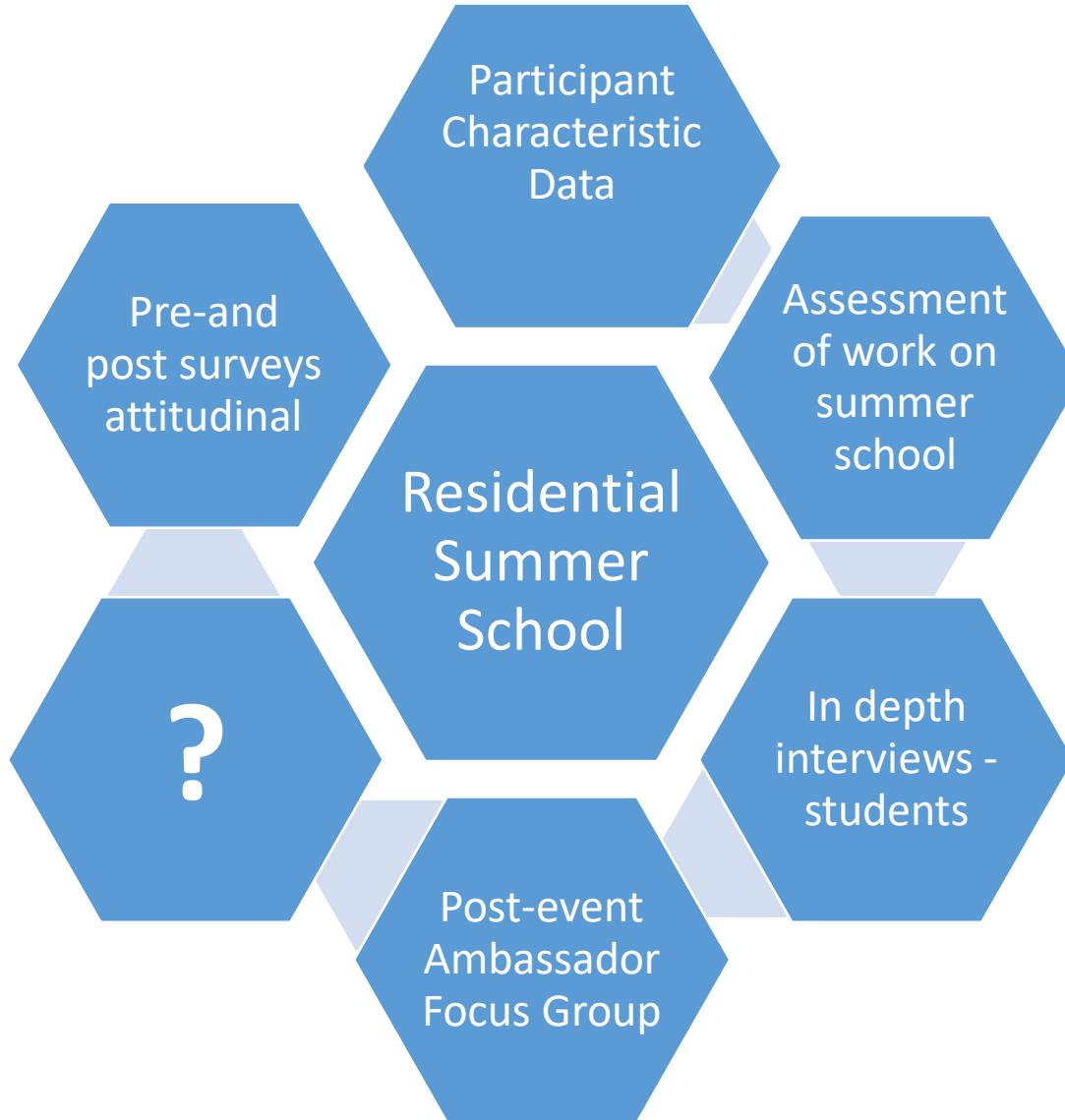
Claire Callender (2018) Student Mothers in Tackling WP & Child Poverty

in Burke, Hayton & Stevenson **Evaluating Equity and WP in Higher Education**, Trentham

*There were numerous advantages to this **mixed methods approach** and the multiple stages of data collection... The survey allowed us to collect the **same data from all participants** while the **interviews** provided opportunities to gain a more **nuanced understanding and explanation of** the survey results. The different data collection helped to **validate the findings** from a **range of perspectives**. (page 93)*



Residential Summer School: attainment-raising



NERUPI aims & mixed methods

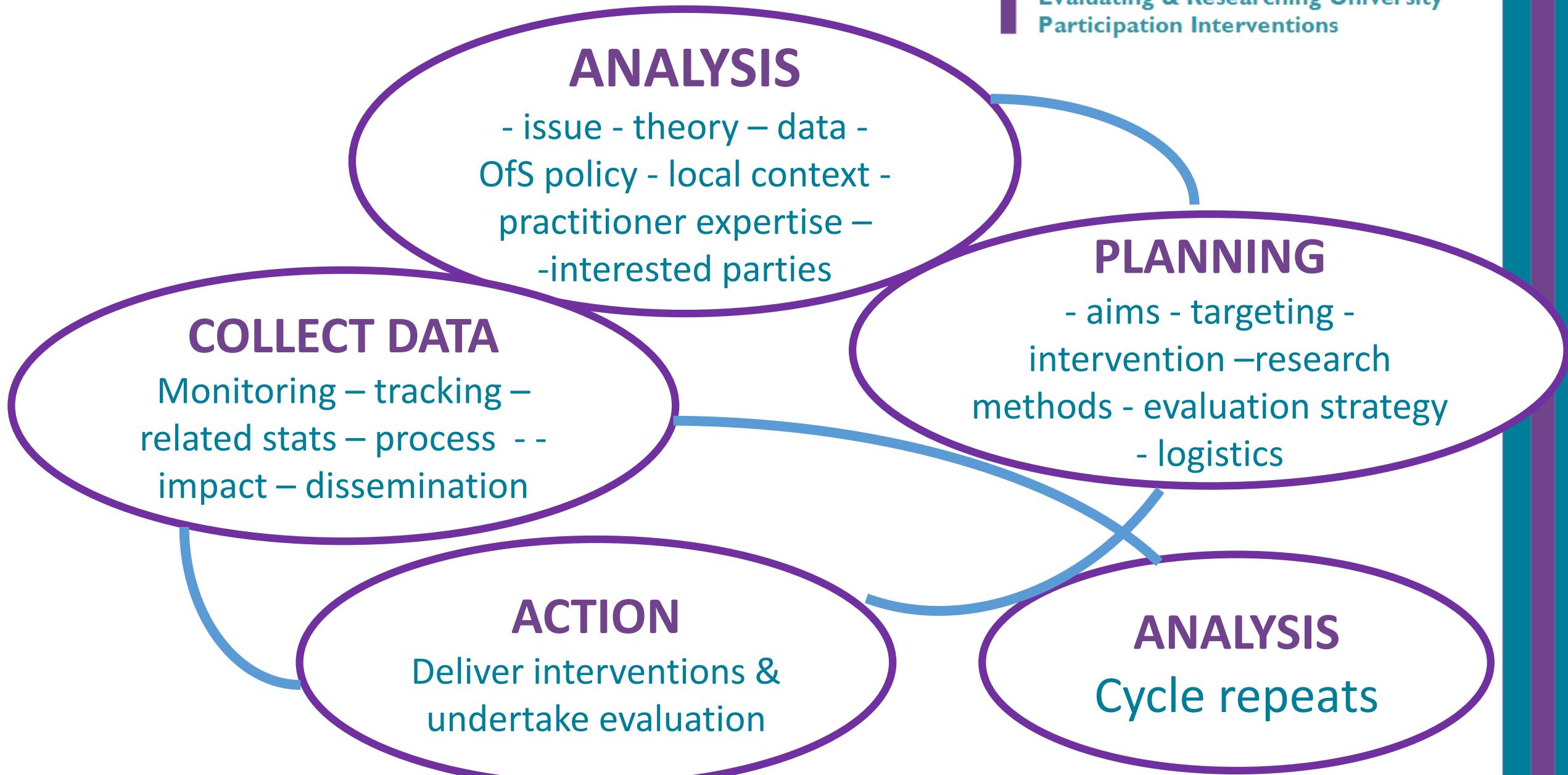
| SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC CAPITAL | | HABITUS | SKILLS CAPITAL | INTELLECTUAL & SUBJECT CAPITAL |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| PROGRESSION CURRICULUM | | STUDENT IDENTITIES | SKILLS CURRICULUM | KNOWLEDGE CURRICULUM |
| KNOW | CHOOSE | BECOME | PRACTISE | UNDERSTAND |
| Develop students' knowledge and awareness of the benefits of higher education | Develop students' capacity to navigate Higher Education sector and make informed choices | Develop students' confidence and resilience to negotiate the challenges of university life | Develop students' study skills and capacity for academic attainment | Develop students' understanding by contextualising subject knowledge |

- Designed to underpin a mixed methods approach
- Overarching set of Aims and Objectives informed by theory, research and practice
- Choice of appropriate methods according to context of intervention
- Can encompass specific intervention-based aims
- A common language for planning and reporting
- Encourages reflexivity to inform practice and theory

Change in the local context



Action research cycle for WP



Action research and mixed methods

ANALYSIS

1. Identify the problem and the research question
2. Discuss the issue with interested parties and bring into focus
3. Research the literature and the theory



PLANNING

4. Review the question and agree the objectives
5. Plan the intervention
6. Decide on the research methods
7. Plan the (continuous) evaluation

ACTION

8. Implementation of the interventions and evaluation

COLLECT DATA

9. Interpretation of the data and disseminate

