

Evaluation as a mobiliser of change

NERUPI: Making Spaces in Higher Education:
Exploring Possible Selves

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Evaluation as dialogue

“Nor yet can dialogue exist without hope. Hope is rooted in men’s incompletion from which they move out in constant search – a search which can be carried out only in communion with others. Hopelessness is a form of silence, of denying the world and fleeing from it.... Hope, however, does not consist in crossing one’s arms and waiting”.

Freire, P. (1970: 2000: 91-92).

Strategic vision

Evidence and evaluation is used effectively by the Office for Students and higher education providers to drive improvements in access and participation.

What needs to change

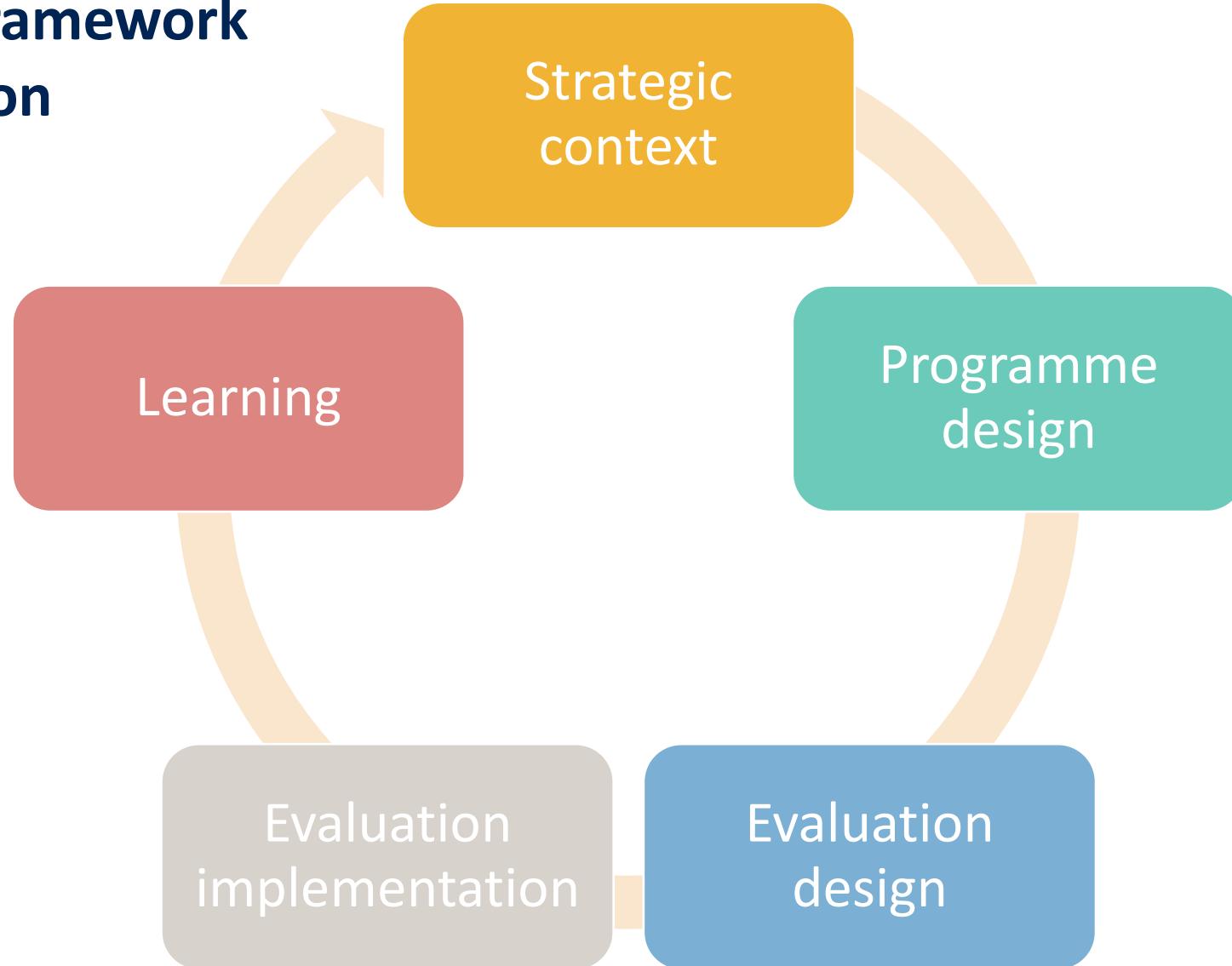
We have outlined three core outcomes for the OfS and higher education providers:



Sector engagement and enhancement

- TASO - evidence-based practice in higher education
 - Call for evidence (30th June)
 - Academic and practitioner panels (14th July)
 - Partnership research (in development)
 - Evaluation
- NCOP capability building
- Strategic approach to effective practice
 - Mapping work, defining priorities
 - A-Z effective practice pages
 - Email app@officeforstudents.org.uk if you have examples of effective practice that has been evaluated and you want to share

Five point framework for evaluation



Strategic context

- **Support**
 - Is evaluation regularly and routinely discussed in A&P meetings
 - Do you have a strategic committee overseeing evaluation of A&P work?
- **Culture**
 - Are your staff aware of importance of evaluation?
 - Do you have an evaluation framework that covers all of you're A&P work?
 - Do you periodically review your practice and evaluation approach?
- **Skills**
 - Do you have the right skills in place to undertake evaluation?
 - Do you collaborate with your academic departments to undertake evaluation?
 - Do you provide opportunities for your staff to develop their evaluation skills?

Programme design

- **Rationale for programmes**

- Do your programmes have clear and specific objectives?
- Can these be measured directly or through proxies?
- Are your programmes underpinned by evidence?
- Can you refer to evidence of impact elsewhere or research literature?

- **Indicators and measures**

- Do your programmes have agreed deliverables?
- Are you clear how you will measure success?

- **Research strategy**

- Is evaluation agreed at programme/project specification stage?

Evaluation design

Evaluation must be built in as part of your delivery approach rather than as an afterthought or additional activity

- How are you making sure that your evaluation method will answer the question you are asking?
- Do you embed evaluation at the start of designing projects/programmes? For example, agreeing the evaluation approach and action plan as part of the overall project specification.
- Have you embedded methods and processes for collecting data into your design?
- Do you prepare formal evaluation plans to ensure most effective delivery? This could include specifying what data will be required and when, and different people's roles and responsibilities.
- How do you identify where to look for the expertise that you need?

Evaluation implementation – what does good look like?

- **Data collection**
 - Practical planning - standard project management tools
 - Understanding timing and dependencies for resources
 - Ethics and data protection
 - Validating data collection tools
 - Identifying how you will access existing data sources
 - Practicalities of data collection (*e.g. selecting tools, timing, logistics, data entry*)
 - Longitudinal tracking systems
 - Agreeing data sharing protocols with other stakeholders
- **Resources**
 - Understanding required resource details
 - Financial planning and budgeting
- **Identifying and managing risks**

Learning

How might we:

- **Interpret evaluation results**
 - Be transparent and critically aware of the evaluation research design limitations?
 - Be careful with causal impact claims when drawing conclusions?
 - Triangulate findings from different sources?
 - Compare findings with existing evidence?
- **Use evaluation**
 - Clarify and plan how you will use findings?
 - Mechanisms to translate findings in to practice to improve future impact?
- **Share evaluation results internally**
 - Plan how you will share and engage others internally with findings?
 - Return to activity/programme outcomes - do results show change as expected?
- **Share externally**
 - Commit to sharing findings externally (*what works, how it works, what doesn't work*)

Thank you for listening

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