

World Vision 



Beyond Metrics:

Unveiling Hidden Mechanisms in
Local Systems Change





Working towards a vision of “**life in all its fullness**” for every child in every context.

What drives **Transformational Development?**

Ownership

Partnership

Transformed
Relationships

Governance & Social
Accountability

Resilience





BEYOND METRICS

Unveiling Hidden Mechanisms in Local Systems Change

Change in local systems does not happen because a single project succeeds or fails given defined metrics, but through the strategic practice of layering interventions. This webinar explores how a "systems-practice" lens to evaluations reveals hidden mechanisms, emphasizing relationships and context over predefined metrics.



LAUREN VAN ENK

*Technical Advisor,
Locally Led Development
World Vision*



FLORENCIA GUERZOVICH

Independent Consultant



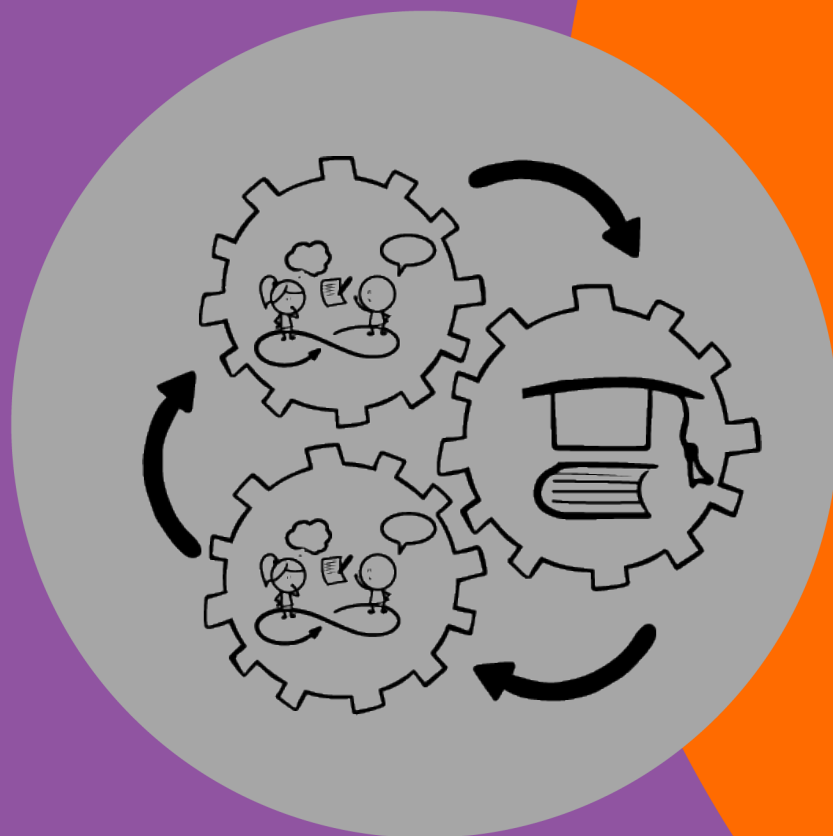
THOMAS ASTON

Evaluation Consultant



DONALD MOGENI

*Technical Director,
Social Accountability,
World Vision International*



LAYERING SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY INTERVENTIONS TO STRENGTHEN LOCAL EDUCATION SYSTEMS

An ex-post evaluation of two World Vision Dominican Republic Projects

Florencia Guerzovich & Tom Aston

September 2024

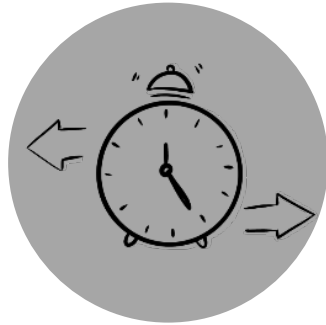


INTRODUCTION

THIS CASE IS ABOUT



A theory-based exercise using a systems lens, **bricolaging**, **process-tracing** and other relevant methods such as **comparative analysis**



Working in a **politically savvy** way with **short-term cycles** for “slow” changes



Identifying how **donors and implementing partners** can **strengthen the abilities and capacities of local agents** to unlock and sustain positive outcomes

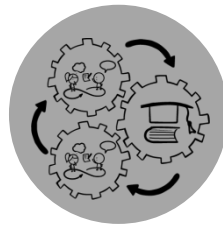


Incentivizing and supporting **useful monitoring, evaluation, learning and storytelling** for local systems **strengthening**

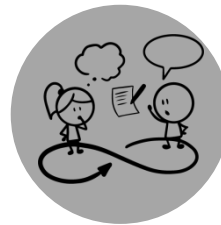
KEY IDEAS



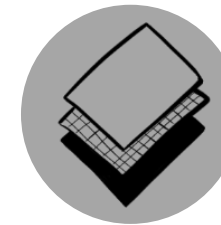
3 KEY IDEAS TO SUPPORT CHANGE THAT TAKES TIME



Systems
Strengthening



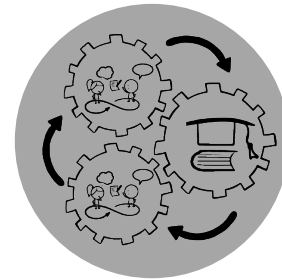
Social
Accountability



Layering &
Bricklayers



KEY IDEAS



Systems Strengthening

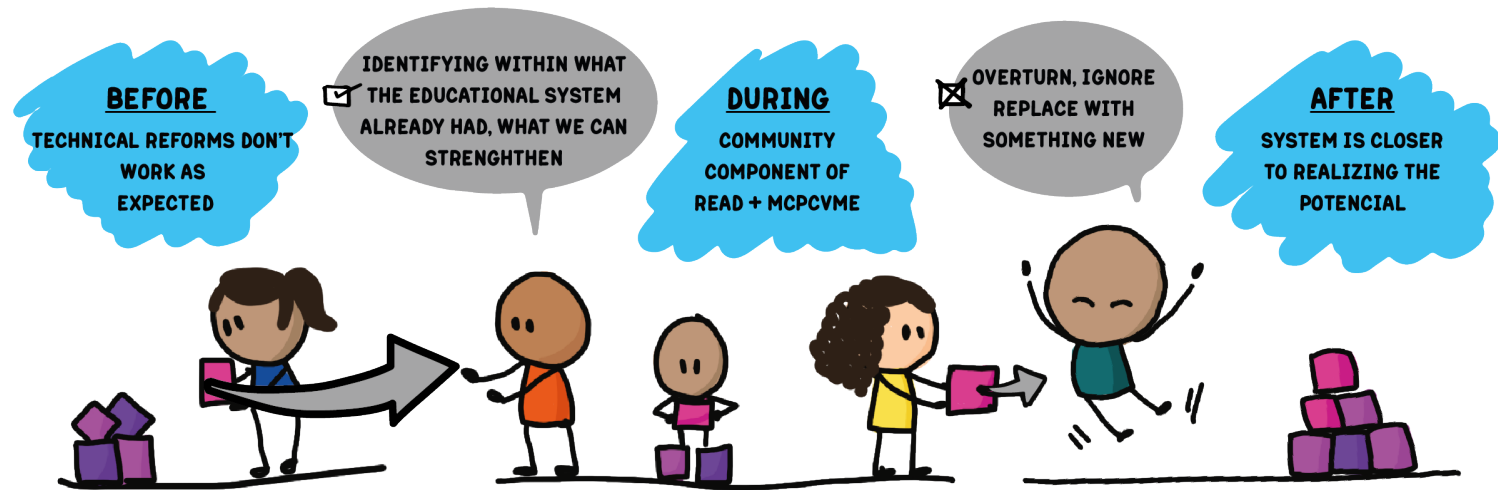
Expanding the capacities of local actors—governments, civil society, and the private sector—and the system as a whole—so that those local actors are able to better use the system to solve problems and generate outcomes.

KEY IDEAS

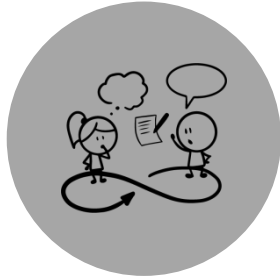


Layering

is a strategy that works within the parameters of a system by placing new elements on top of old ones in the hope that their interactions gradually shift the way the system functions over a period of time



KEY IDEAS



Social Accountability

ensures that communities are leading agents in their development story by:



Improving the quality of goods and services, making providers more responsive to citizens' needs



Primarily through monitoring and oversight of those goods and services



Citizens' collective efforts to hold power-holders to account



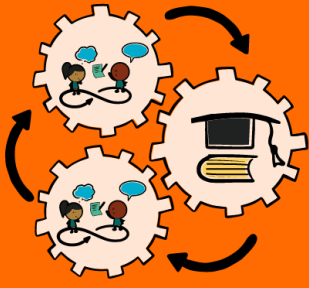
Providing a concrete mechanism to rework social contracts and strengthen local systems

CVA is World Vision's approach to social accountability

KEY FINDINGS

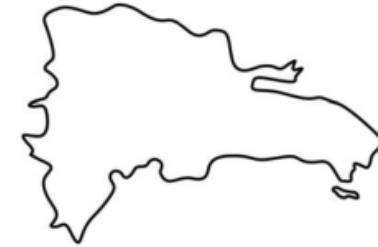


Maria Florencia Guersovich JTI



HOW DID TWO SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY PROJECTS CONTRIBUTE TO STRENGTHENING THE EDUCATION SYSTEM?

WHERE?

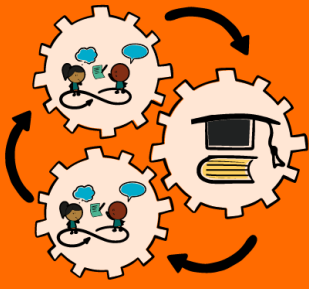


CONTEXT

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC SINCE THE LATE 1990s

- Low quality education is a constant
- Key stakeholders are moving across the system all the time
- Short term reform efforts are everywhere

KEY FINDINGS



HOW DID TWO SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY PROJECTS CONTRIBUTE TO STRENGTHENING THE EDUCATION SYSTEM?



WHAT?

FINDING

TWO APPARENTLY SILOED WORLD VISION PROJECTS:

READ +  = 

COMMUNITY COMPONENT USAID - FUNDED 2016 - 2020

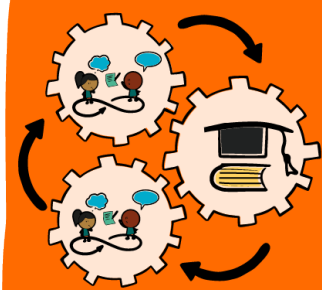
WORLD BANK/ GPSA - FUNDED 2019- 2023

ADDED UP TO SUM OF THEIR PARTS

KEY FINDINGS

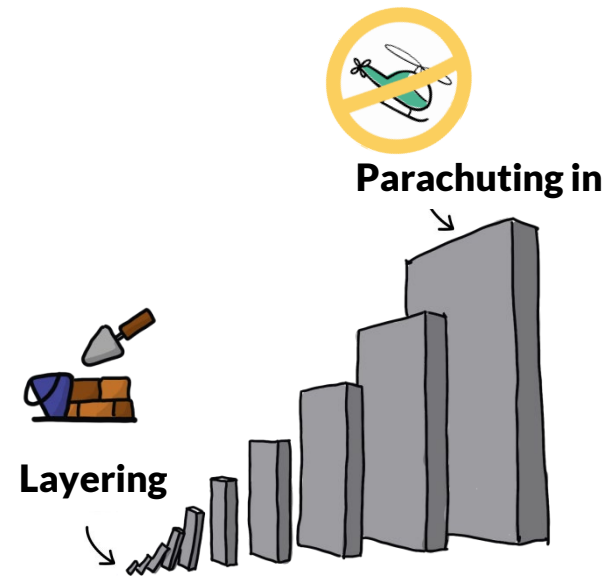


HOW DID TWO SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY PROJECTS CONTRIBUTE TO STRENGTHENING THE EDUCATION SYSTEM?



HOW?

Layering short-term social accountability projects in a longer-term process.





MICRO: SCHOOL LEVEL

KEY INSIGHT 1



Layering Social Accountability in Schools



World Vision customized its collaborative approach to social accountability for Dominican schools. Teams layered their projects on the education system and trusted the potential of people coming together to problem-solve.

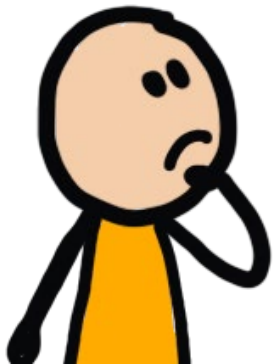
The *Leer* and MCPCVME teams cumulatively contributed to democracy & governance outcomes in sector work.

While unevenly, different schools continue to benefit from the parts of the intervention that made most sense for them.

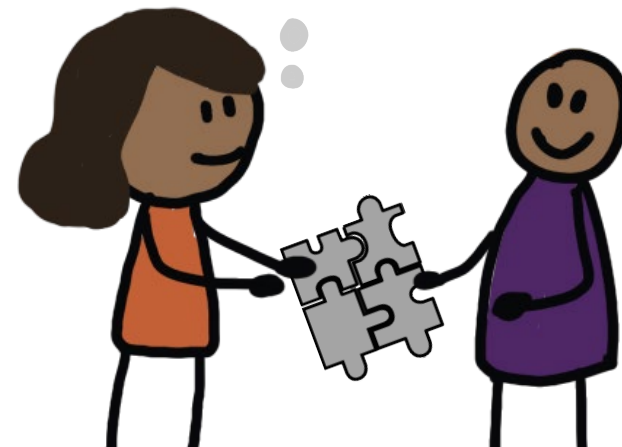
KEY INSIGHT 1

Many factors assumed to support learning are not present in the local education system

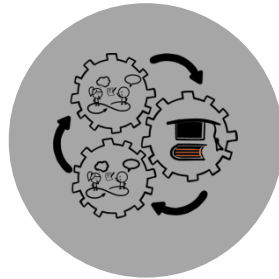
- ✗ Parents engagement
- ✗ Participatory school based management functions
- ✗ Continuity of short-term wins & more



Collaborative social accountability as an investment - address relational challenges through collective action and [problem solving](#)



PROCESS



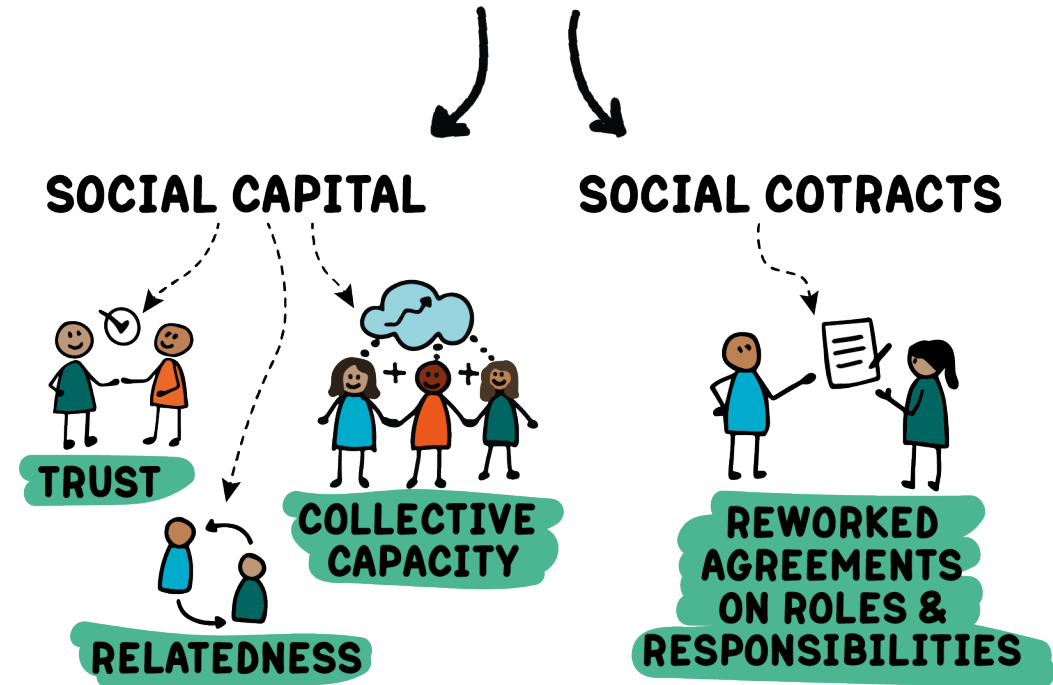
Communities seem to value these outcomes

Stronger (+functional) System

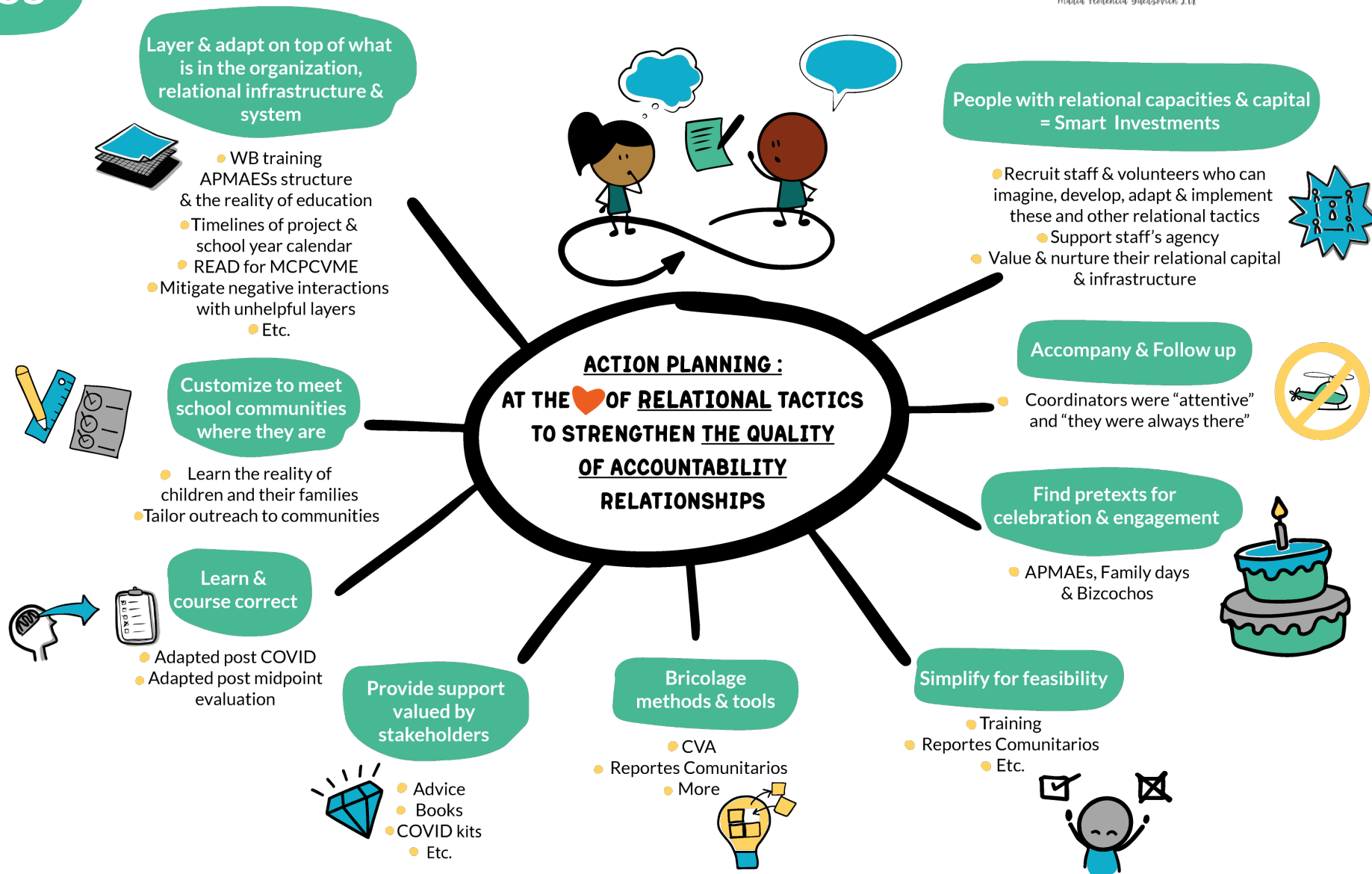


Responsive Service Delivery

STRONG FOUNDATION



PROCESS





MACRO: POLICY LEVEL

KEY INSIGHT 2



Layering Social Accountability in the Policy Process

World Vision's projects contributed to the co-production of a Protocol between authorities and civil society – this is a milestone that few social accountability interventions can claim.

The Protocol does not replace existing rules but makes productive adjustments to a pre-existing policy.

Relationships with staying power over time had an outsized influence to unlocking and sustaining positive outcomes.

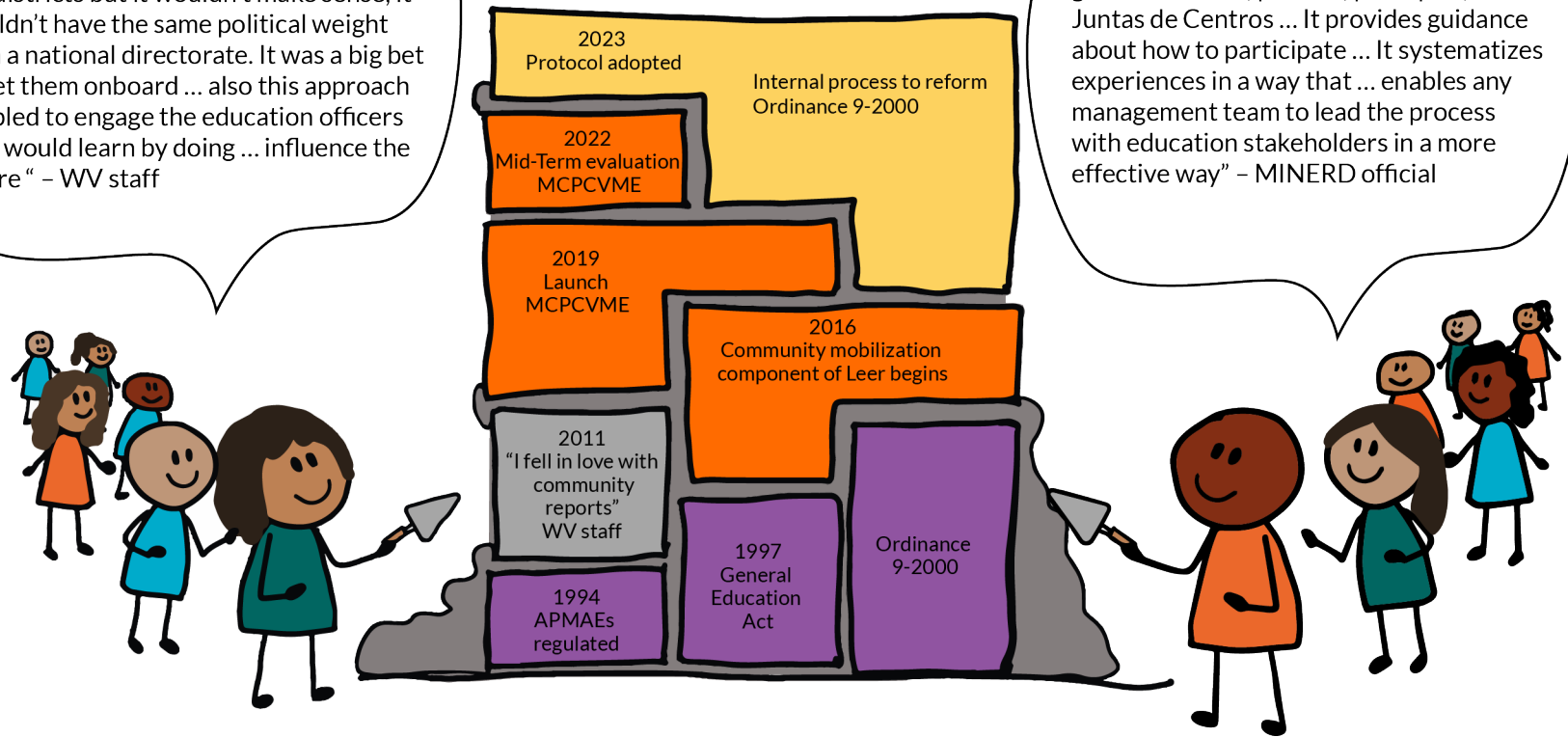
KEY INSIGHT 2

You don't build "a medieval cathedral" on your own,
Don't expect a single style, or to achieve all in a single
project cycle



"[WV] need [the MINERD staff] for at least two reasons: we could have done it with the districts but it wouldn't make sense, it wouldn't have the same political weight than a national directorate. It was a big bet to get them onboard ... also this approach enabled to engage the education officers who would learn by doing ... influence the future" - WV staff

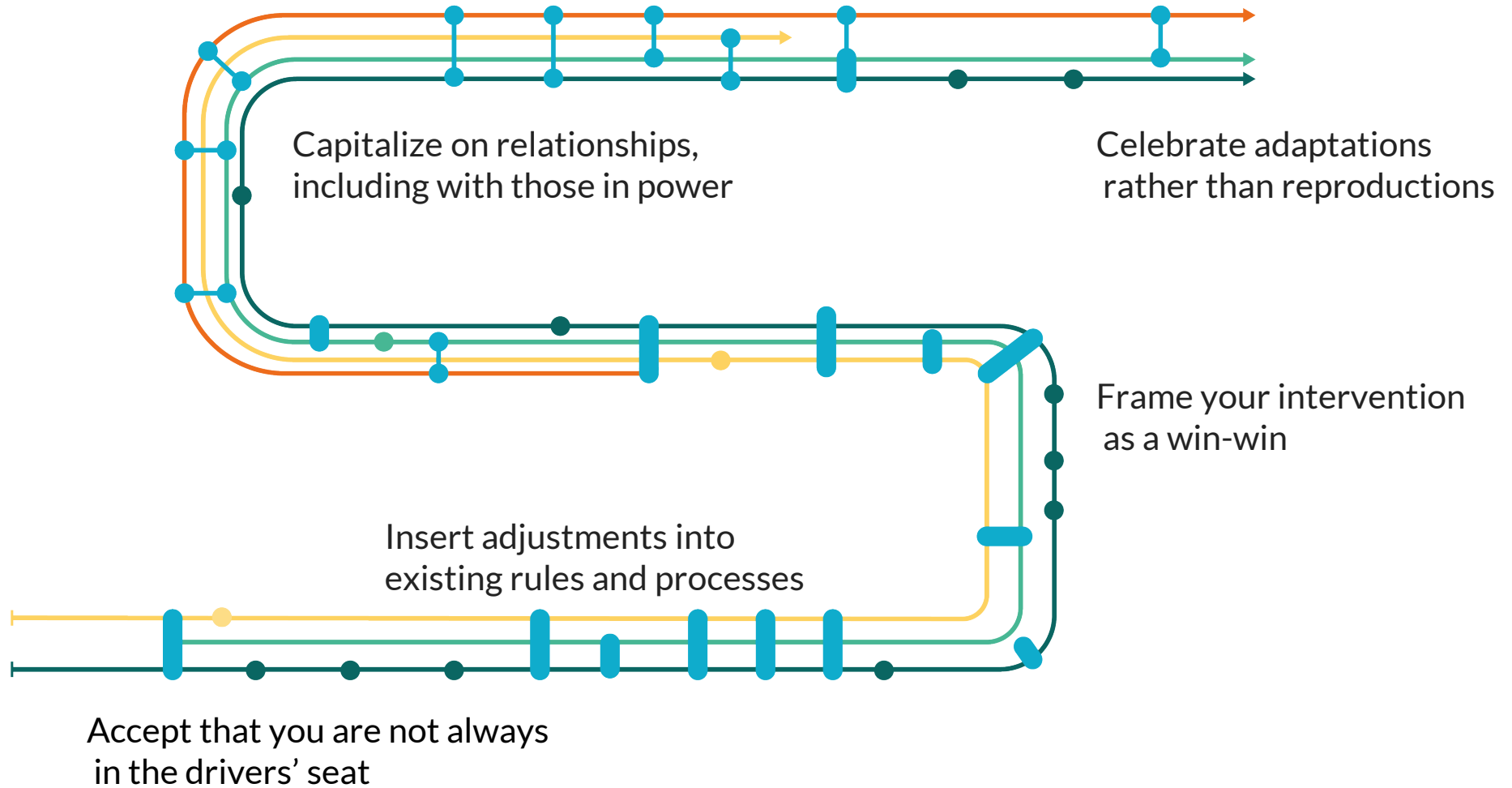
"[The Protocol] shows a path to follow... It guides teachers, parents, principals, and Juntas de Centros ... It provides guidance about how to participate ... It systematizes experiences in a way that ... enables any management team to lead the process with education stakeholders in a more effective way" - MINERD official





**Your intervention's "success" =
progress on an existing journey that
will continue after you "finish"**

KEY INSIGHT 2



KEY INSIGHT 2

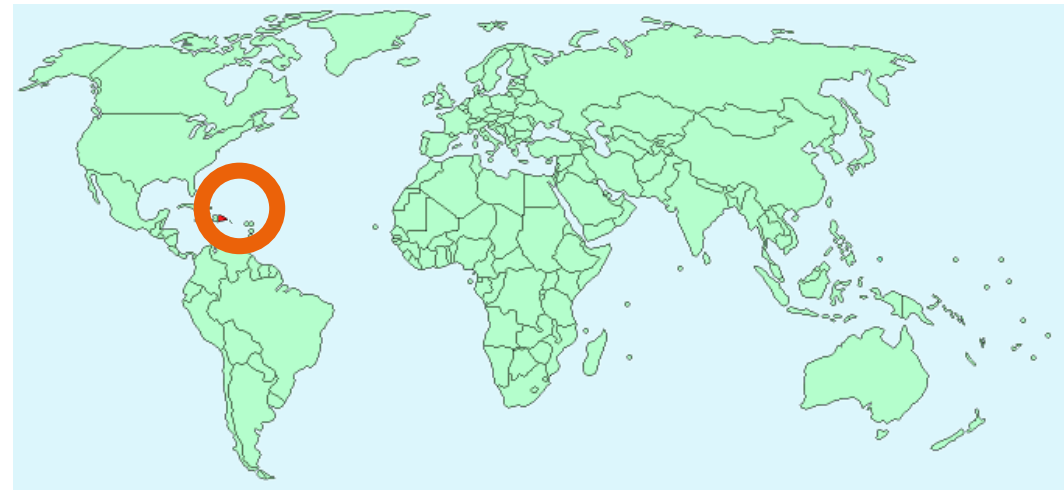


WHERE might Dominican lessons about layering TRAVEL?

Other causal pathways might fit
other education systems better

Transferable to similar political economy settings:

- Hierarchical education systems
- Frequent changes with electoral cycles due to political clientelism and short-term reform cycles
- Strong blockers
- Middle-income staffing & fiscal space



RECAP



The evaluation's main finding is that systems strengthening is a story of the contribution of actors, relationships, and relational infrastructures which are at the heart of systems dynamics.

These "bricklayers" include a small number of loosely networked, closely connected actors in civil society, donors, experts, and reformers in government who changed positions in the system during the period studied.

Collectively "bricklayers" have staying power and embark on a process that they know will take others and time, but that illustrates how social accountability projects can be a vehicle to strengthen a democratic system that delivers



EVALUATION &
CATHEDRAL THINKING

KEY INSIGHT 3



Evaluation & Cathedral Thinking

Bricklayers are anchored in the past.

Yet, they are building forward.

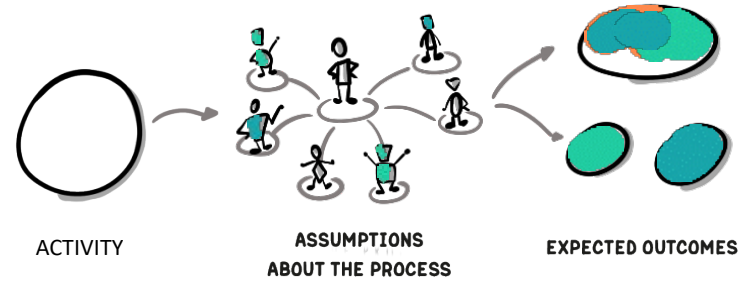
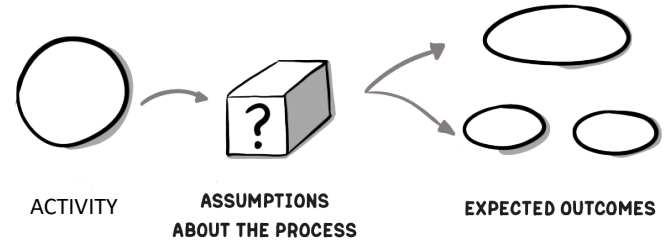
When evaluators are assessing this kind of relational change over time, incorporating cathedral thinking into evaluative judgements can support more useful evaluations.

KEY INSIGHT 3



Evaluation & Cathedral Thinking

ALL PREDICTABLE



ALL UNCERTAIN

Source: Guerzovich and Aston (2024) adapted from [Guezovich and Wadeson, 2024](#).

KEY INSIGHT 3



Smart Investments?



TRADITIONALLY

Data/ Tool / methodology as solution

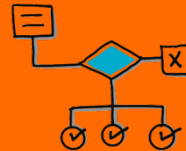
Model fidelity and control, whether investments fit with political dynamics or not

Short-term results, provided all things remain constant

Expect lack of sustainability and resilience as people and things change



Interventions



"Good" results



Time-horizons



Good results revisited

BRINGING TIME IN

Local agents as problem-solvers leveraging their relationships

Adaptation and compromises strengthen abilities and capacities for local networks to advance what they find useful

Allow for emergence and potential for longer-lasting results

Capitalize on the power of relationships and networks

KEY INSIGHT 3



It is possible to use **mid-level theory-based evaluation & mix & match tools** to **evaluate ex-post** local system strengthening over time



We could leverage insights to **inform useful monitoring, CLA & project evaluations** in real time, mid-point and final evaluations:

- *Mid-level theories of change,*
- *Outcomes & indicators,*
- *Key evaluation questions on coherence & sustainability,*
- *Others*

KEY INSIGHT 3



An exceptional (small) innovation investment enabled evaluating the system.

Gulf between change agents' systems practice and donor's "evidenced based" decision-making->

Too many evaluations miss tacit knowledge and the big picture interventions are part of.



WHAT?

- Incentivize
- Produce and
- Disseminate

more evaluations about collective local systems strengthening over time

RECOMMENDATIONS



Evaluators

Focus on causal pathways that matter in the lived experience of change agents:

Your theoretical and methodological design can help better observe patterns and outcomes that might otherwise remain unnoticed or be misconstrued





RECOMMENDATIONS



Evaluators

Assesing 1+1=3? over time?

- Consider theory-based methods for casual evaluation of systems strengthening
- Refocus from interventions as tools & methods to interventions as people & relationships that bricolage and use those tools & methods
- Grapple with contexts where change, continuity, predictability, uncertainty & ambiguity coexist
- Cathedral thinking might help: a collective movie with moving targets and changing leading actors, rather than a single win attributed to one
- Zoom in & out of casual hotspots to look at the loose connective tissue between micro and macro levels



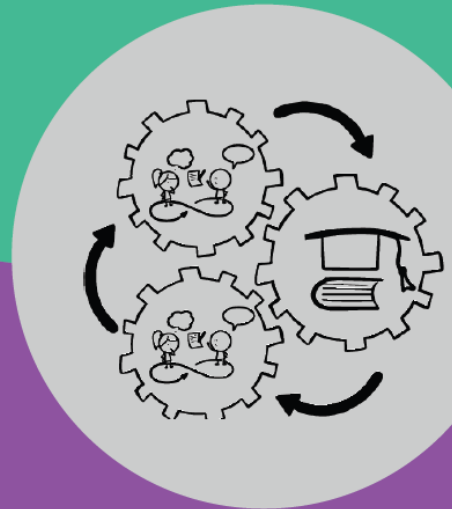
READ MORE



Ex-post evaluation of USAID- and World Bank-funded social accountability programming in the Dominican Republic

Layering **Social Accountability** Interventions to Strengthen Local Education Systems

September 2024



Florencia Guersovich
Tom Aston



<https://www.wvi.org/layering-social-accountability-interventions-strengthen-local-education-systems>



METHODS

METHODS



This is a theory-based exercise using a systems lens, **bricolaging**, **process-tracing** and other relevant methods such as **comparative analysis**

The evaluation was conducted between **April and July 2024**.

It was sponsored by **World Vision-US Accelerator Fund** and the cases, tools, and approaches reflect the desire to build the evidence base for the organization's social accountability approach as well as **support innovation in monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL)** for stronger local systems' programming.

METHODS



This is a theory-based exercise using a systems lens, **bricolaging**, **process-tracing** and other relevant methods such as **comparative analysis**

In-depth interviews and focus groups were used to collect data where World Vision implemented two projects (*Leer* and MPCVME), focusing on tracing the processes that span across both interventions:

Of the 60 schools in the MCPCVME project (2020–2023), nine were also in the *Leer* project (2016–2020) in which World Vision ran the community mobilization component.

METHODS



This is a theory-based exercise using a systems lens, **bricolaging**, **process-tracing** and other relevant methods such as **comparative analysis**



World Vision

In-depth interviews and focus groups were used to collect data where World Vision implemented two projects (*Leer* and MPCVME), focusing on tracing the processes that span across both interventions:

The evaluators interviewed or had small group discussions with 25 people at the school level. They spoke to six District and regional *Técnicos* for Community (region 4, region 6, region 15), six members of World Vision staff (management and field team), five members of the World Bank team, two Ministry of Education representatives, and members of the Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo, *Foro Socioeducativo*, *Iniciativa Dominicana por una Educación de Calidad* (IDEC), and USAID.

For additional insights, including on limits, see [the main report](#).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



World Vision-US Accelerator Fund sponsored this evaluation. We are grateful to Lauren Van Enk, Holta Trandafili, Michael Greer, Donald Mogeni, Roger Mitchell, Elicaury Bautista Bido, German Agudelo, Yusbelky Nuñez, Floraida Melo and others at World Vision team for their support and insights. Wanda del Pozo provided invaluable support for this project. We are also grateful to the contributions of staff from the World Bank and USAID and representatives of the Foro Socioeducativo *and* Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo. We are grateful to everyone who shared their experiences and insights for this piece of work, especially the principals, APMAE and *Junto de Centro* members in schools we visited: Mauricio Baez, El Quemado, Danilo Ginebra, Anibal Ponce, Alma Rosa Chotén, Club Rotario Km 4, and Los Conucos, and government staff (*técnicos*) in the districts visited and the Vice-Ministry for Decentralization. We are grateful to David Jacobstein and Andrew Meaux for useful feedback and encouragement. Deborah Eade and Juan Rizzo helped with editorial tasks and Aline Lorusso Busse and Deniz Ozgur with design support. All errors are the authors' own.

AUTHORS



Florencia Guerzovich is a consultant, thought leader, and systems convener with over 20 years' experience in working to embed evidence and learning governance and development strategies and programming from the global to the local levels. Florencia has led impact and learning work at the World Bank's Global Partnership for Social Accountability, Transparency and Accountability Initiative and collaborated with Open Society Foundations (OSF), Pact, and World Vision, among others, introducing adaptive management, political economy approaches, and applying portfolio/systems lenses to Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) and research. She also designs and delivers innovative upskilling activities through act4delivery.

Florencia has a PhD from Northwestern University in Political Science and Government and is a Member of the Independent Evaluation Panel of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, a Collaborating Researcher of Grupo Politeia, University of the State of Santa Catarina. She is Argentinean and lives in Brazil.

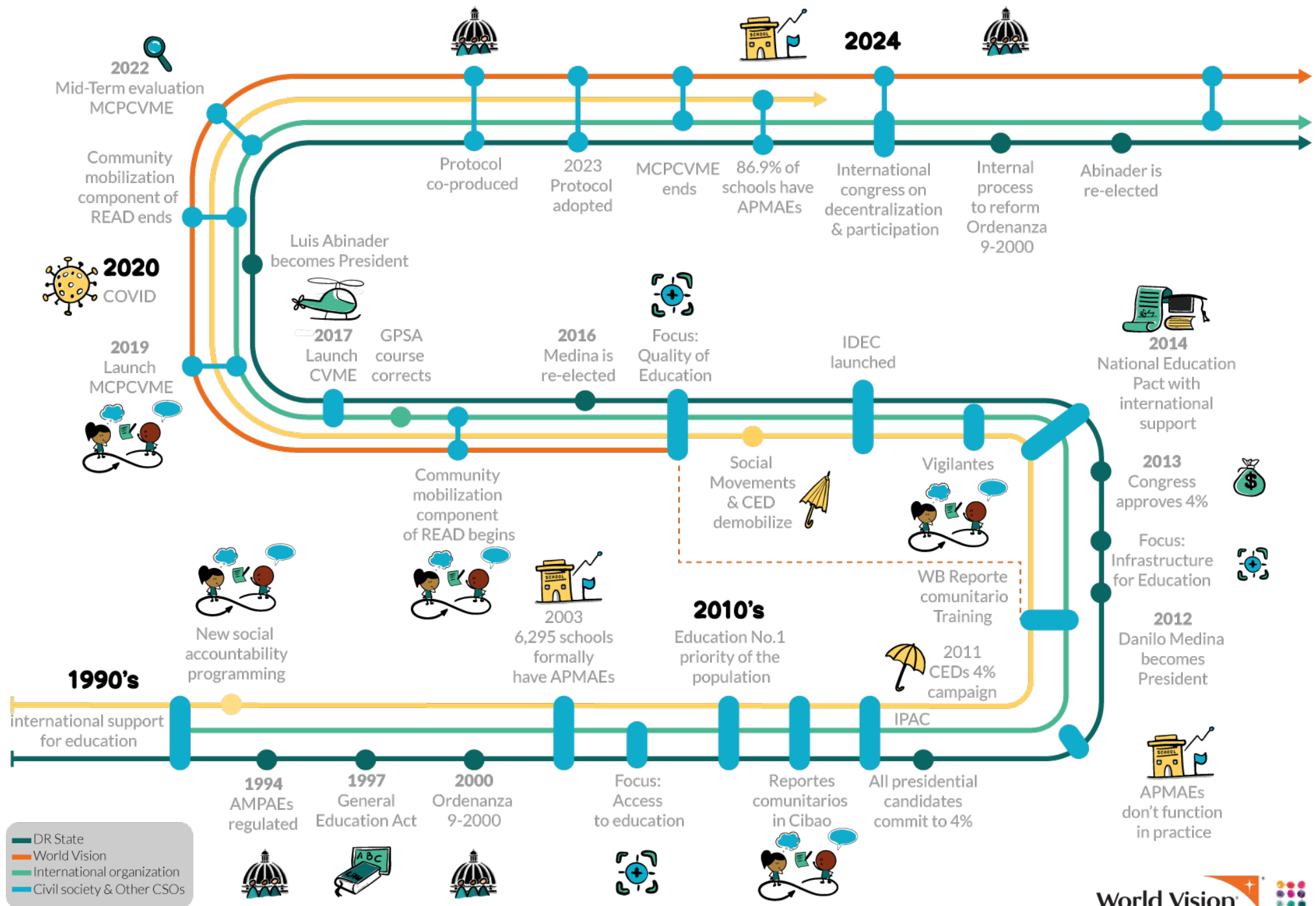
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/m-florencia-guerzovich-9b3ab74/>
<https://medium.com/@florcig>

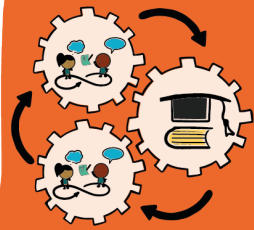
Tom Aston is a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) consultant with 18 years' experience. He is on the editorial advisory board of *Evaluation* and is an Honorary Associate at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Sussex. He was a Governance Advisor for CARE International (2012–2018) for Latin America, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), and a Learning Advisor on the Partnership to Engage, Learn and Reform (PERL) program (2020–2021) in Nigeria. He led the principles strand in the global MEL contract for the UK government's Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) and recently led several evaluations for the International Budget Partnership (IBP), World Vision, the World Bank, and has a current evaluation on anti-corruption for the Open Society Foundations (OSF). He has a PhD in Development Planning from University College London (UCL), with a thesis on the political economy of social protection in Bolivia.

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/tom-aston-consulting/>
<https://thomasmtaston.medium.com/>



ANNEXES





HOW DID TWO SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY PROJECTS CONTRIBUTE TO STRENGTHENING THE EDUCATION SYSTEM?

CONTEXT

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC SINCE THE LATE 1990s:

- Low quality education is a constant
- Key stakeholders are moving across the system all the time
- Short-term reform efforts are everywhere

FINDING

TWO APPARENTLY SILOED WORLD VISION PROJECTS:

READ

+



ADDED UP TO
SUM OF
THEIR PARTS

COMMUNITY
COMPONENT
USAID - FUNDED
2016 - 2020

WORLD BANK/
GPSA - FUNDED
2019 - 2023

NEW APPROACH TO EX-POST EVALUATION CHAPTER 2



1. Put front and center the people & relationships that are:
 - The interventions
 - The thread that ties the system together
2. Bring intertemporality
3. Think of outcomes as moving and modulating targets that contribute to systems strengthening thanks to their coherence

GLOSSARY

Layering: is a strategy that works within the parameters of a system by placing new elements on top of old ones in the hope that their interactions gradually shift the way the system functions over a period of time

Resonance: Change happens by finding resonances with system change makers through deliberation, compromise & coordinated collective action

BRICKLAYERS EXERCISE THEIR AGENCY BY LAYERING SHORT-TERM PROJECTS & REFORM EFFORTS ON TOP OF EACH OTHER

At the school level, layering was used to strengthen relational infrastructures as well as to recombine and rearrange social accountability tools methodological principles and practices



Contributed to strengthening school-based management, new practices in some schools communities (i.e. emergent outcomes which are effectively adaptations of the original input original intervention, CHAPTER 3)

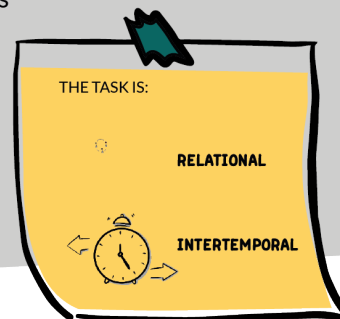
Layering helped to dynamize, stretch and provide new meaning to existing laws regulating participation in school-based management



Strengthening the system was about enhancing the functionality and leveraging the plasticity of some of its parts

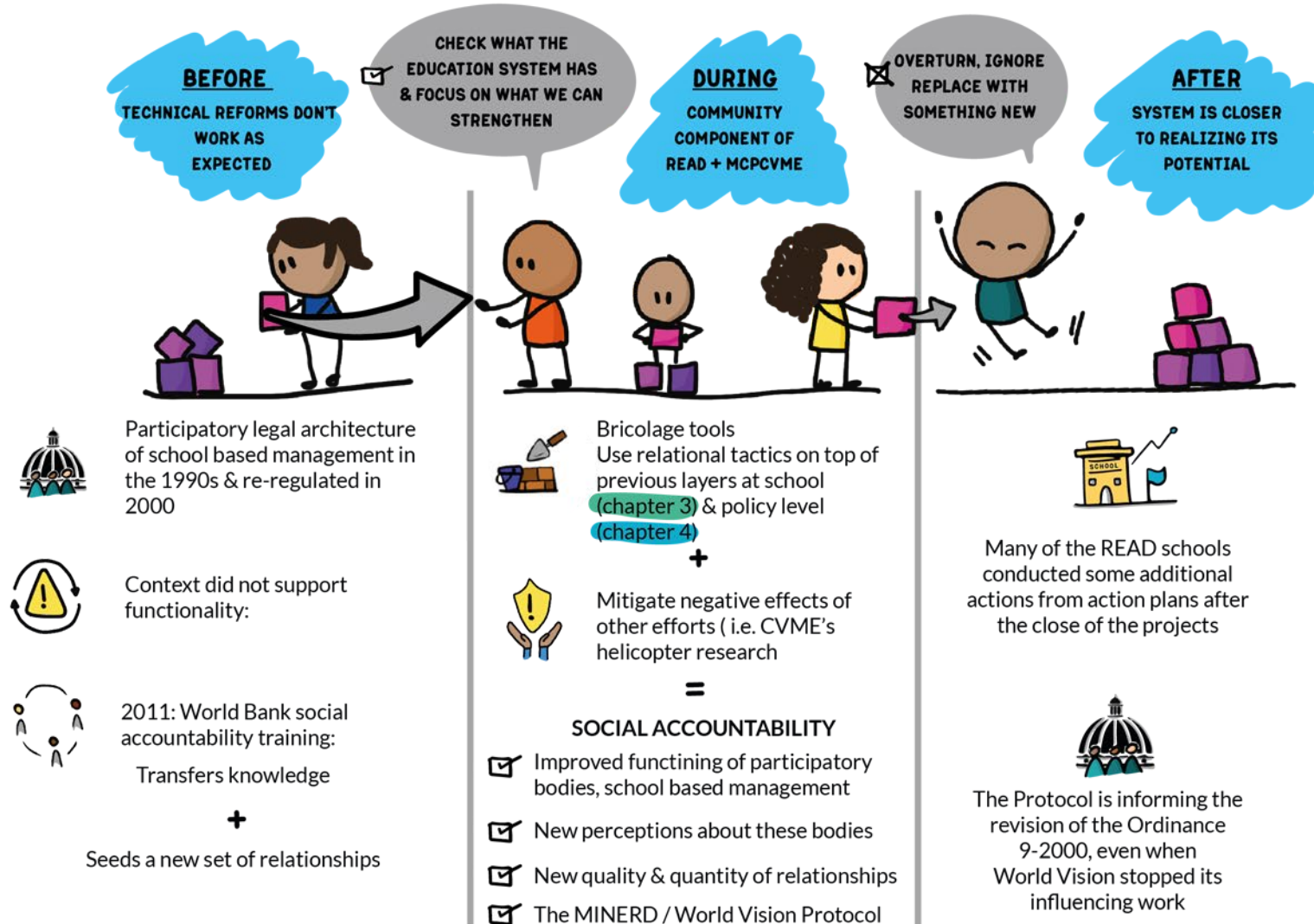


Key MINERD authorities and staff re-imagine and reach an agreement about how existing participatory structures might be put to work better in practice. Those agreements are codified in a MINERD / World Vision document that continues to inform discussions about reform efforts (CHAPTER 4 for Resonance at work via layering)



BRICKLAYERS (WV STAFF + PARTNERS) LAYERING

DIRECTION & FUNCTION TO SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT REGULATION



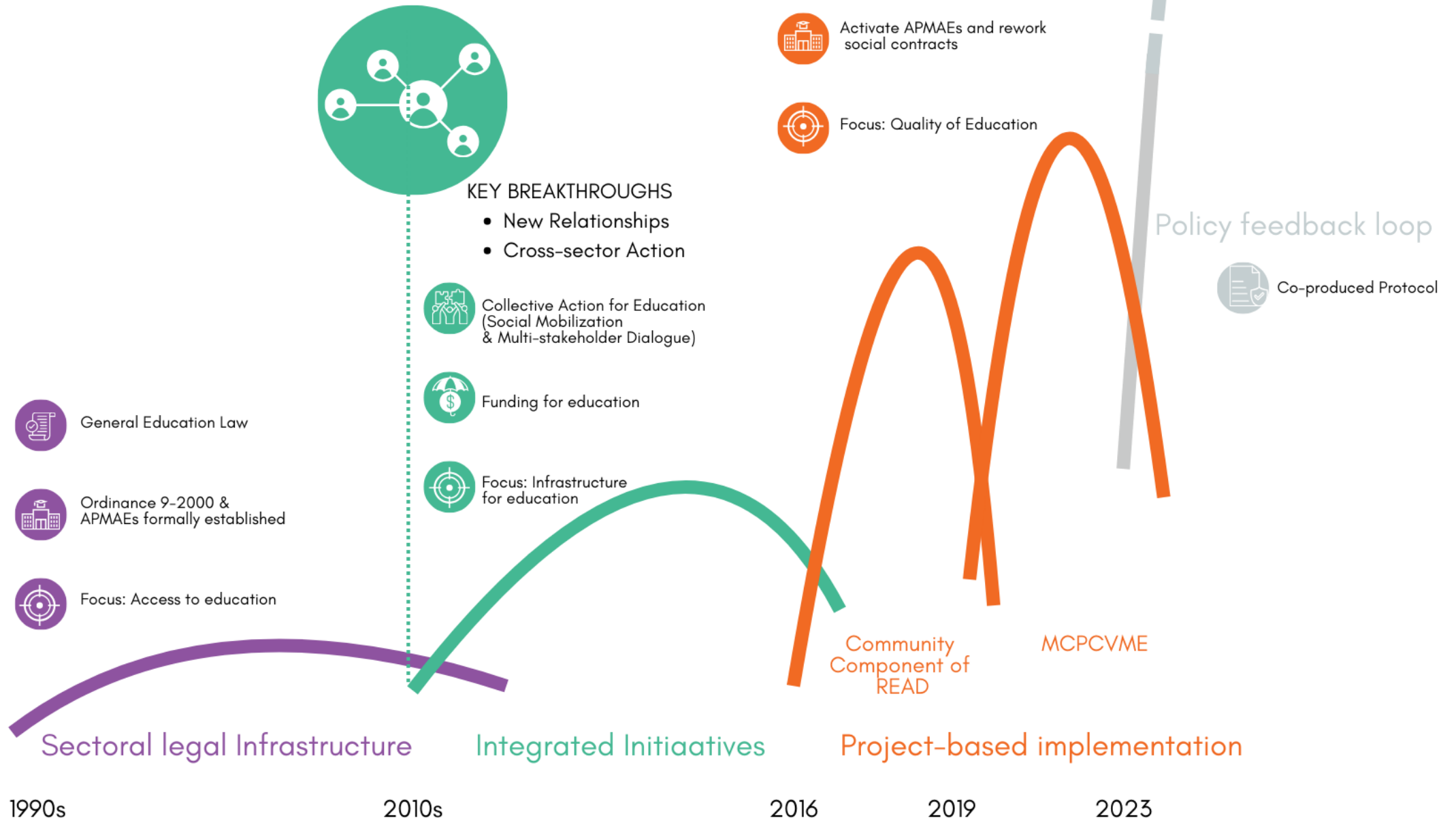
SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY INTERVENTIONS CONTRIBUTED TO EDUCATION SYSTEM STRENGTHENING VIA A RELATIONAL AND INTERTEMPORAL PROCESS

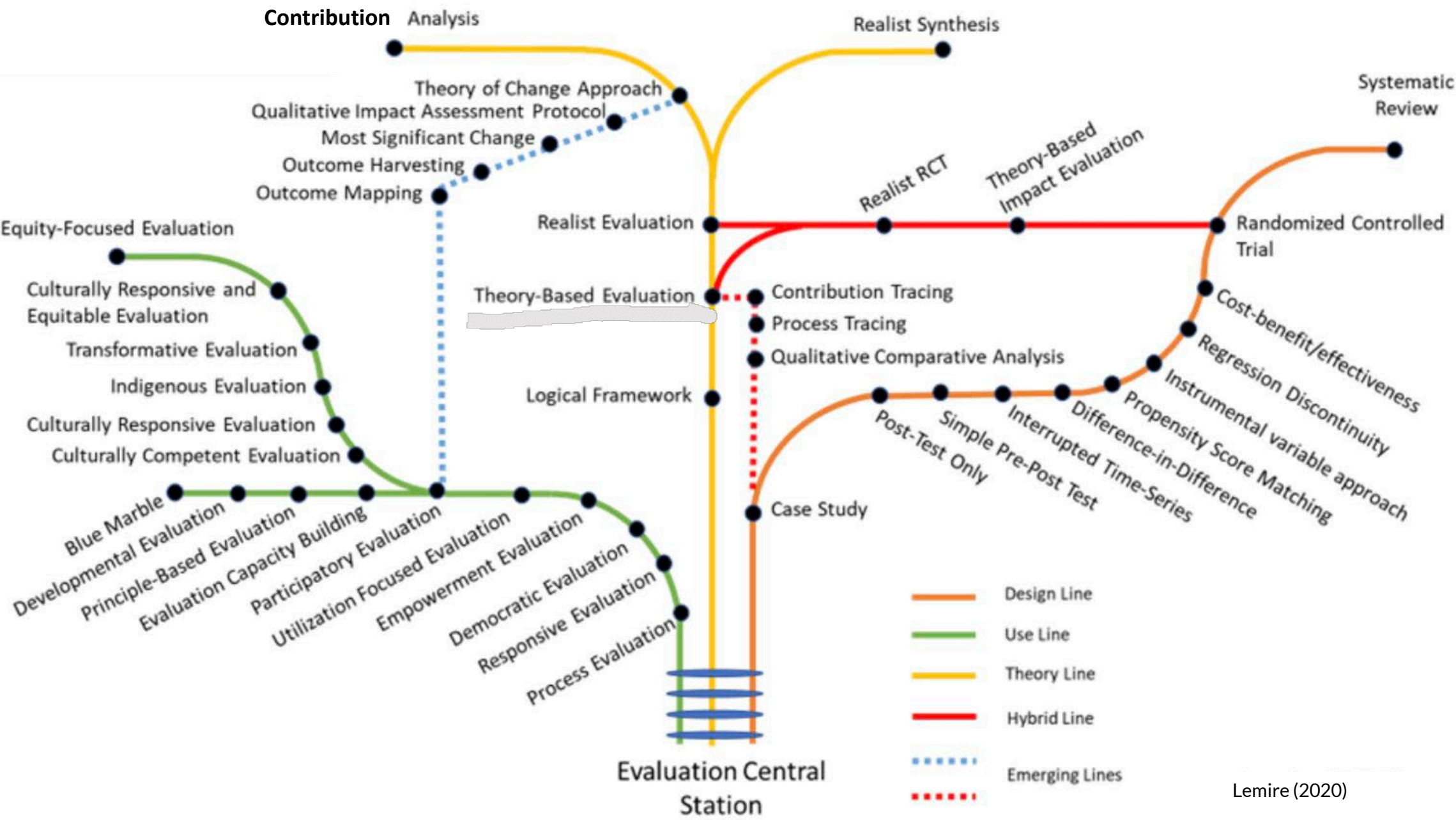
FOR EVALUATORS ASSESSING

1+1 = 3? *over time!*

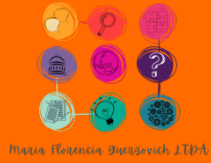
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- Cathedral thinking might help: a collective movie with moving targets and changing leading actors, rather than a single win attributed to a single actor
- Zoom in & out of casual hotspots to look at the loose connective tissue between micro and macro levels (chapter 2)

LAYERING SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY INTERVENTIONS TO STRENGTHEN THE LOCAL EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC





Lemire (2020)



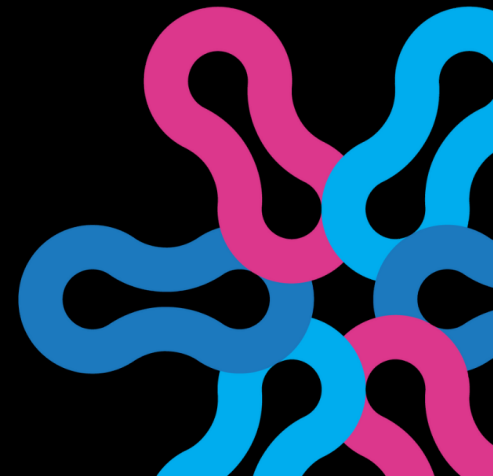
World Vision®

Beyond Metrics

Donald Mogeni

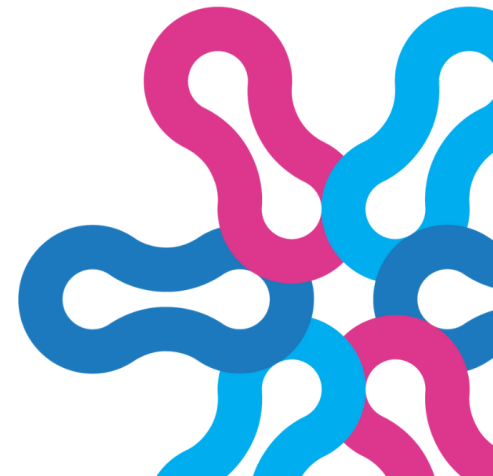
Technical Director –
Social Accountability

Application of Study
Findings:
Next steps for CVA
(& Local Systems
Strengthening)



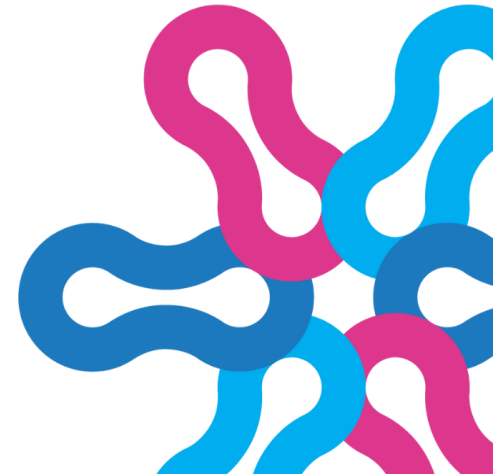
Social Accountability at **World Vision**

- Social accountability acknowledged both as a driver of sustainability within WV programs as well as a key approach towards strengthening governance
- Implemented primarily through Citizen Voice and Action, Participatory Budgeting, Social Audits
- CVA implemented currently in **73 programs** across **42 countries**.



Outcomes Across WV Programs

- **Improved Service Delivery**
 - Education: Increased accountability in schools has led to better teacher attendance, reduced dropout rates, and improved infrastructure (e.g., classrooms, sanitation).
 - Healthcare: better-equipped health facilities, increased availability of medicines, and improved health worker responsiveness.
 - Water & Sanitation: Enhanced community monitoring has resulted in more functional water points and better sanitation practices.
- **Construction of Citizenship**
 - Increased awareness among community members about their rights and entitlements, formation of active citizen groups (parent-teacher associations, health committees) that hold authorities accountable.



Outcomes Across WV Programs (cont)

- **Strengthened responsive and accountable localities and states**
 - Local governments have increased budget allocations for key services (education, health) due to community advocacy, improved transparency in public fund utilization (CDF in Kenya, Malawi, Zambia), reducing corruption risks.
- **Policy & Systemic Changes**
 - Adoption of social accountability mechanisms in local governance structures (counties in Kenya). Influenced national policies in some countries to institutionalize community participation in service monitoring.
- **Development of inclusive and cohesive societies**
 - Improved inclusion of marginalised groups; growth in social cohesion across different groups; especially in fragile states or contexts of high inequalities.
 - Women and youth gained leadership roles in advocacy efforts (Youth in Climate Change in Tanzania), children's voices increasingly included in discussions affecting their well-being (e.g., child monitoring of School Meal Programs in Malawi, Tanzania, CAR, Sri Lanka).



What are we **learning**?

- Develop theories of change that take advantage of learning by doing
- Locate individual projects as practice and/or policy experiments which can be scaled up to wholesale practice or policy change where possible through support from both grants and private funding
- Increased understanding of how interventions contribute to long-term local systems change, thereby supporting stronger programming on local systems within WV programs
- Strengthening how we look at and incorporate political economy dynamics within specific accountability challenges in various sectors



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