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SPRING

Online training, 21.02.2023

Policymaker Academy

Embracing evidence in local-level migrant integration policymaking

IN

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The Migration Policy Institute Europe (MPI Europe), established in Brussels in 2011, is a nonprofit, independent research institute that aims to make migration and migrant integration policies more effective through research and connecting stakeholders.

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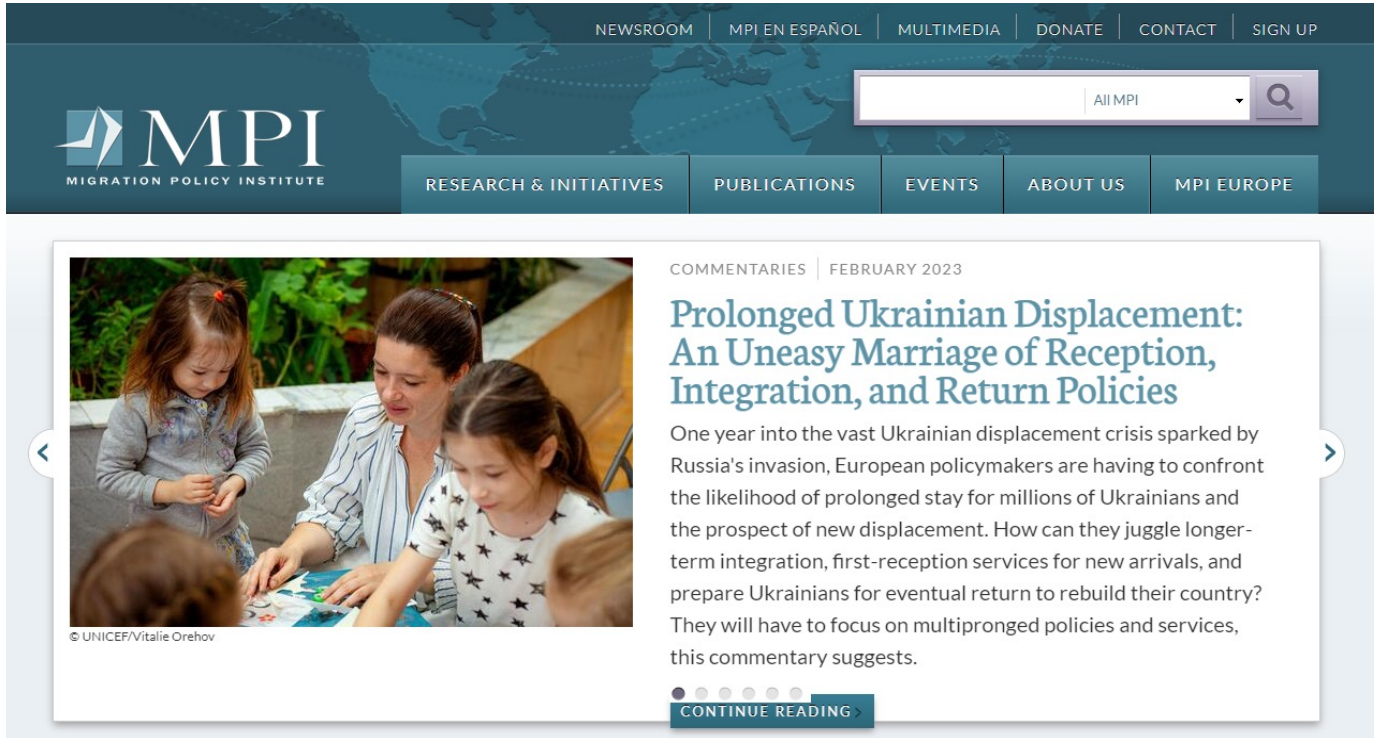

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Policymaker Academy Overview

1. What is EIPM and why is it important?
2. Finding and Assessing Evidence
3. Policy Evaluation

10-minute break

4. Amplifying Impact through the Dissemination of Evidence
5. Using Funding to Promote an Evidence Culture
6. Engaging Stakeholders in EIPM
7. Wrap up and next steps

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WHY evidence-informed policymaking?

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A boom in evidence-informed policymaking, yet.. Migrant integration is falling behind

- Shifting policy goals and target groups, long-term impact
- Highly politicised & politically sensitive
- Integration policies often forged in the heat of crisis
- Complex and fragmented playing field
- Limited resources & capacity

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What is evidence-informed policymaking?

The policy cycle

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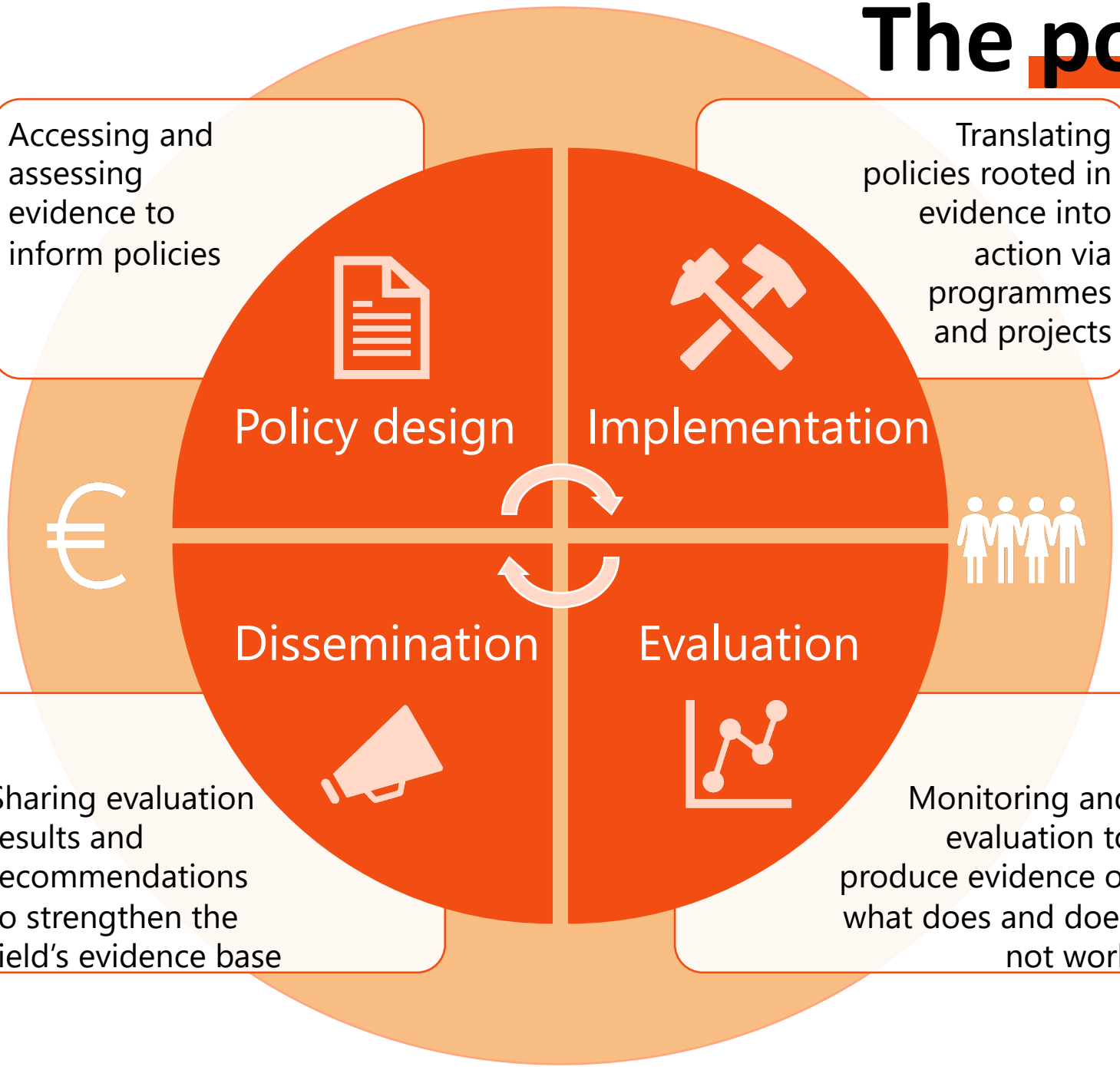

Accessing and assessing evidence to inform policies

Translating policies rooted in evidence into action via programmes and projects

Sharing evaluation results and recommendations to strengthen the field's evidence base

Monitoring and evaluation to produce evidence of what does and does not work

Sufficient **funding** is needed throughout the cycle to apply evidence-informed practices

Effective **stakeholder involvement** is important throughout the policy cycle

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REFLECTION

1) Is your team interested in evidence-informed policymaking? How could you convince them?

NEXT STEPS: Have a conversation with team members about the benefits of evidence-informed policymaking.

2) Has your organisation used evidence-informed approaches in the past? Were parts of the policy cycle overlooked and why?

NEXT STEPS: Identify which areas of the policy cycle need most work and prioritise those in today's policymaker academy.

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Finding and Assessing Evidence to Support Policy Design and Implementation

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Why use evidence in policy design and implementation?

- **To identify gaps.**
- **To understand what works under which conditions.**
- **To build political buy in for the implementation or scaling a practice.**

REFLECT: Think about...how do you use evidence in your organisation?

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Different types of evidence

- On migrant integration policies and practices (status quo)
- On migrant integration outcomes (needs and gaps)
- On the impact of a specific policy on integration outcomes

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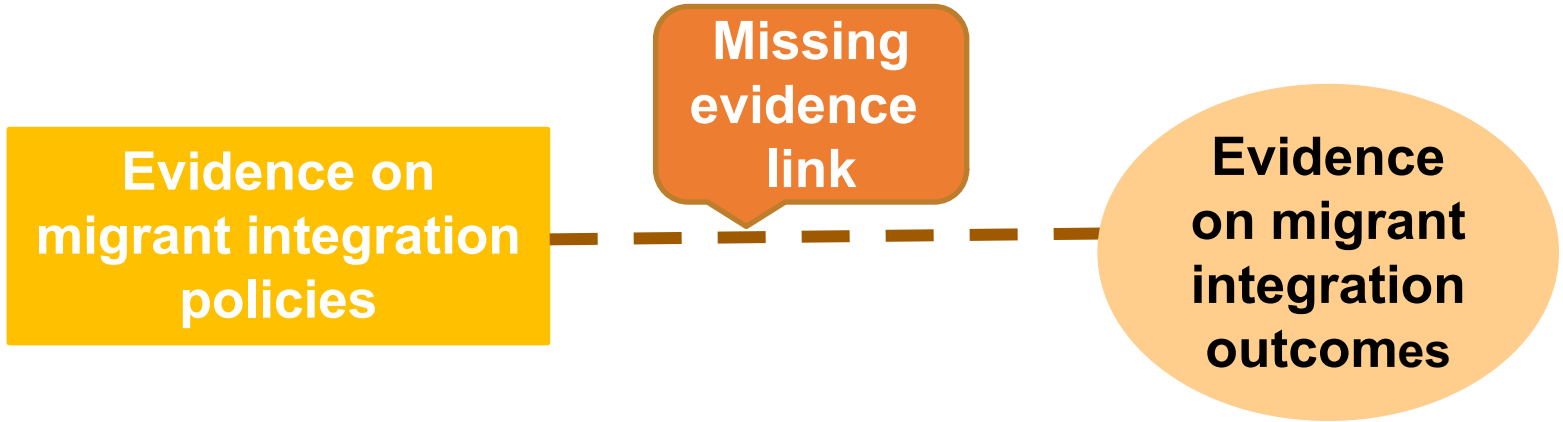
Different types of evidence

On migrant integration policies and practices (status quo)

On migrant integration outcomes (needs and gaps)

On the impact of a specific policy on integration outcomes



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Developing a search strategy

1. Determine search objectives:

- To include a topic on the policy agenda?
- To convince stakeholders to allocate funding for scaling a practice?
- To build political buy in to change existing policies?
- To identify gaps and improve existing policies?

2. Set inclusion and exclusion criteria:

- Time period
- Geography and contextual similarity
- Target group
- Thematic focus (key words)

REFLECT: Think about...how does this process compare to the one you or your organisation follow when searching for evidence? Can this be a good tool for you to spread in the organisation?

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Assessing evidence

Evidence collected should be assessed based on:

- **Quality**
- **Relevance**
- **Transferability**

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Assessing the quality of a piece

Not all evidence is created equally...

Example hierarchy of evidence quality

Level (highest to lowest)	Type of evidence
1	**Systematic reviews and meta-analyses:** These studies systematically assess the outcomes of multiple policies addressing the same issue.
2	**Randomised controlled trials with definitive results:** RCTs randomly assign individuals to either benefit from a policy or not, with the latter group acting as a control group. This allows researchers to isolate whether changes in specific outcomes were caused by the policy. (See Section 3 for more on RCTs.)
3	**Randomised controlled trials with nondefinitive results:** These RCTs have, for example, a limited sample that does not provide unequivocal proof of a policy's impact on integration.
4	**Cohort studies:** This is a type of longitudinal study in which a group of people (e.g., potential beneficiaries of a policy) are followed over a period of time.
5	**Case-control studies:** These are observational, not randomised studies comparing the integration outcomes of two groups, but they do not establish a link between outcomes and policy.
6	**Cross-sectional surveys:** These surveys are conducted a one point in time and target a specific group of interest (e.g., beneficiaries of a policy). It is not possible to use their results to establish causality between outcomes and policy.
7	**Case reports:** These are detailed reports produced using existing information on a policy, what it seeks to achieve, and the target beneficiaries.

Source: Julia Brannen, ed., *Mixing Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Research* (Aldershot, UK: Avebury, 1992).

Hierarchies of evidence are typically used to determine the quality of a single piece.

E.g

- **Paper X: ranking 6**
- **Paper Y: ranking 1**

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Assessing evidence around a practice

Integration course A

- 3 "low quality" pieces showing high impact
- 2 medium quality pieces showing limited impact
- 1 high quality piece showing no impact
- 1 high quality piece showing limited impact

Integration course B

- 2 high quality evidence showing high impact
- 1 high quality piece showing limited impact
- 1 medium-quality pieces showing limited impact

→ **Implement?**
Which course?

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Assessing the relevance and transferability of evidence

It is not just about quality and impact...

- **Scalability and transferability**
- **Cost-effectiveness**

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TO DO: A look at diagnostic tools

Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement

The Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement's self-assessment tool *Is Research Working for You?* can be used to gauge staff's capacity to find, assess, present, and apply research.

URBAN INSTITUTE

The Urban Institute's *Research and Evaluation Capacity: Self-Assessment Tool and Discussion Guide* measures organisational capacity to engage with research and evaluation.

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REFLECTION

1) How do you and your office typically identify evidence to inform policy design and implementation? What type of evidence you typically collect and to what extent do you rely on it and how do you assess it?

NEXT STEPS: Write down 3 things you learnt about utilising evidence in policy design/implementation that you would like to share with your team

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Evaluation to Strengthen Ongoing and Future Integration Programmes

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Evaluation approaches

- **Process evaluation**
- **Impact evaluation**
- **Value-for-money evaluation**

REFLECT: Has your team ever conducted an evaluation? Which type of evaluation approach did you use and why?

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How do I choose the right evaluation approach?

Why are you conducting an evaluation? What is your goal?

To gauge how a policy's implementation is going

Process evaluation

To evaluate a policy's effectiveness

Impact evaluation

I have…

Sufficient data & statistical expertise

(Quasi-)experimental approaches, such as…

- Randomised controlled trials
- Interrupted time series analysis and difference-in-differences
- Regression discontinuity design
- Propensity score matching
- Synthetic control methods
- Instrumental variables or natural experiments
- Timing of events

Limited data

Theory-based impact evaluations, such as…

- Realist evaluation
- Contribution analysis
- Process tracing
- Bayesian updating
- Contribution tracing
- Qualitative comparative analysis
- Outcome harvesting
- Most significant change

To see if a policy is worth what is invested in it

Value-for-money evaluation, such as…

- Cost-effectiveness analysis
- Cost-benefit analysis

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Impact Evaluation: Example

- Integration course A
  - 100 participants
  - 60 found a job
- Integration course B
  - 100 participants
  - 30 found a job

REFLECT: Which integration course is more effective? Why?

Integration practice → Integration outcome

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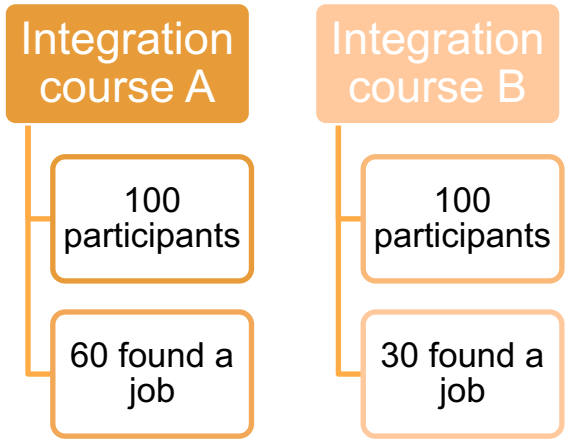
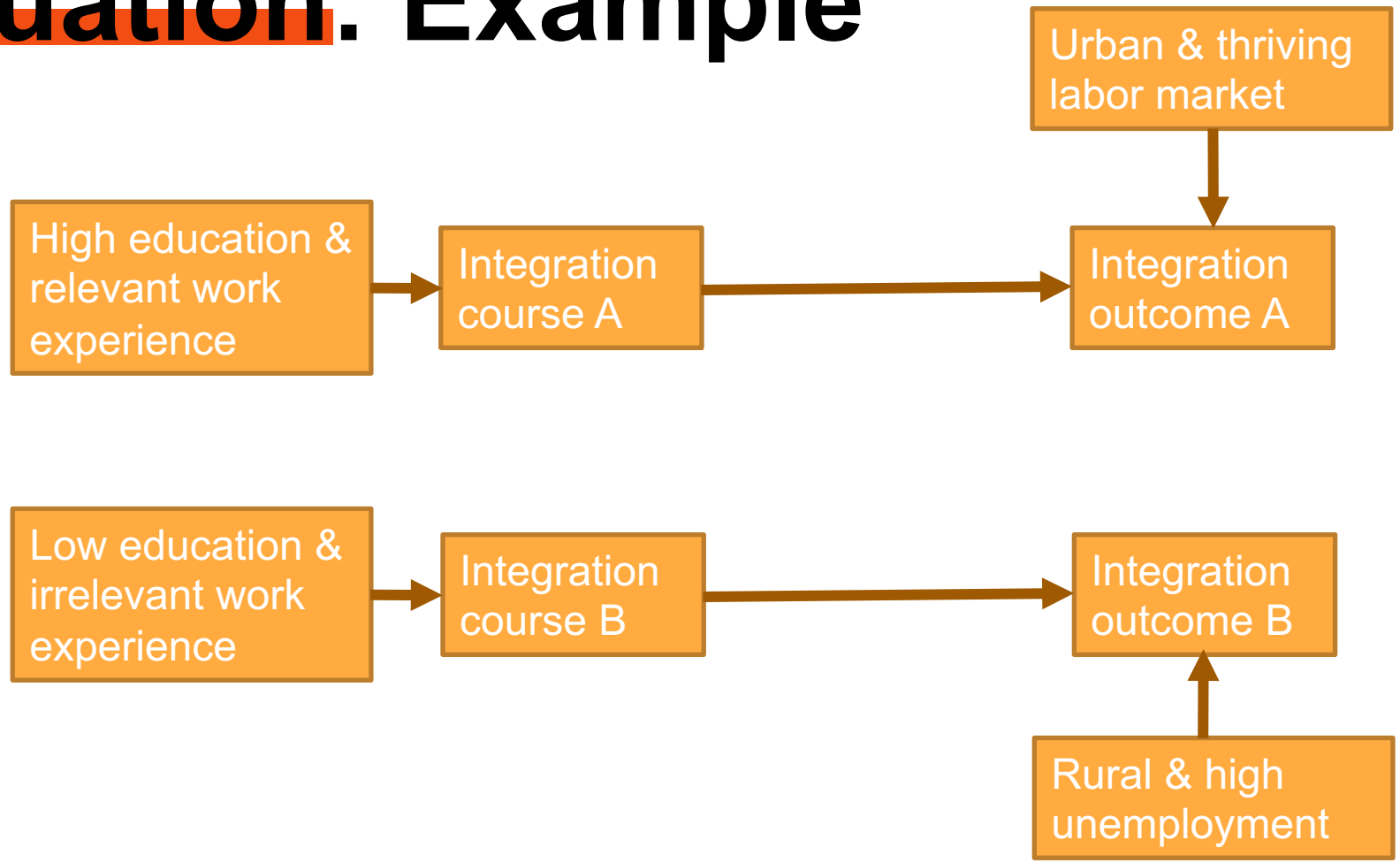
Impact Evaluation: Example





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Impact Evaluation: Challenges

1) *Unobserved counterfactuals*: What would the integration outcomes have been without this practice/policy?

2) Correlation is NOT causation

Selection bias: Incomparable groups, observed correlation was caused by differences in the two groups

Confounding factors: A third factor is related to both the integration practice and integration outcomes and creates an artificial relation between the integration course and integration outcomes

REFLECT: Which challenges do you face to test whether integration practices are effective?

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How to evaluate the impact of an integration practice?

- **Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs), comparing control to treatment group**
- **Quasi-experimental approaches**

Interrupted time series: **Look at changes in trends over time when a policy launches, ends, or changes**

Regression discontinuity design**: Comparing individuals close to an arbitrary threshold (age, in a different municipality)**

Propensity score matching**: Creating a similar comparison group using statistics**

REFLECT: Which of these strategies could be used to overcome the challenges you identified on the previous slide?

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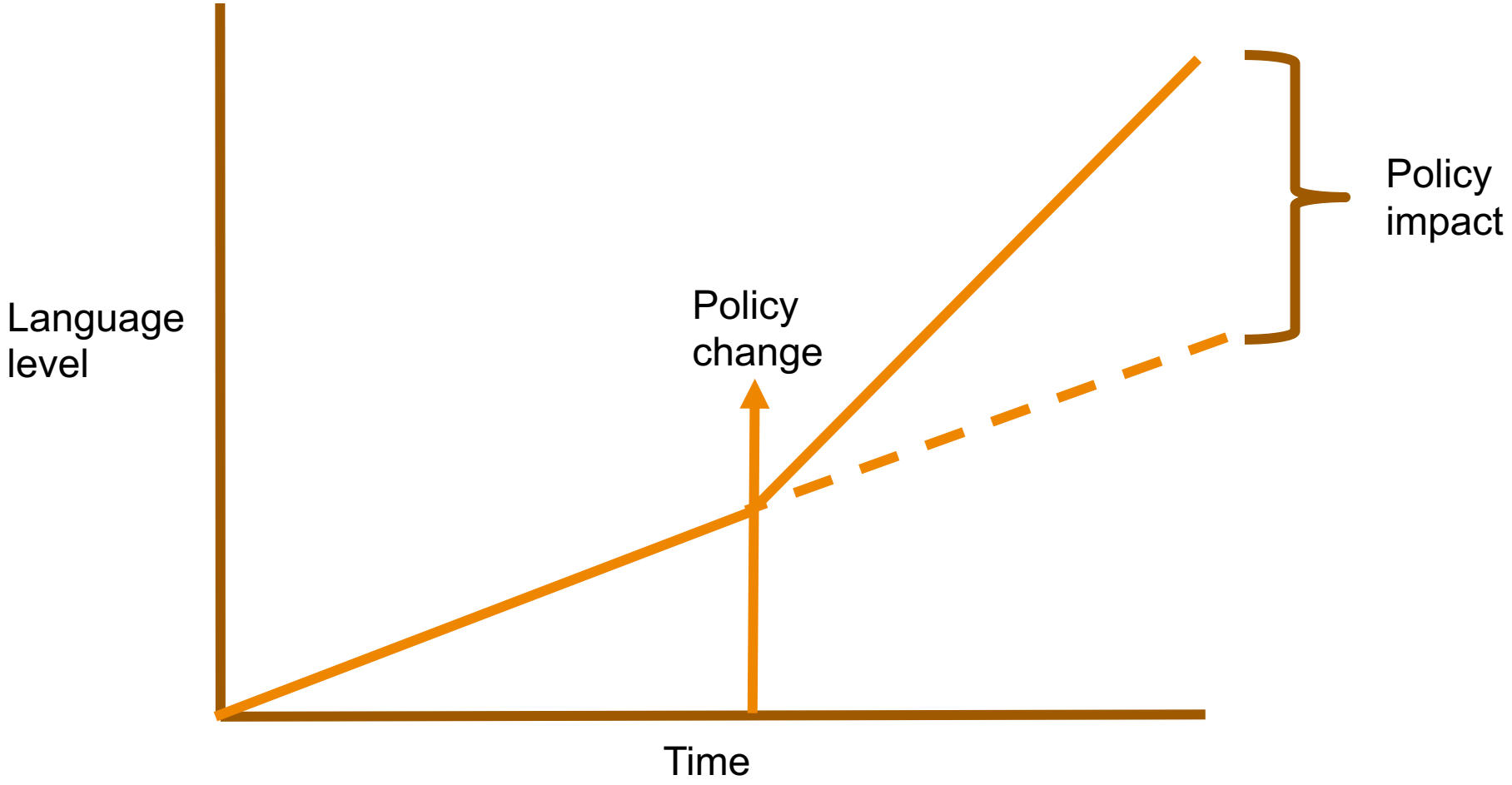
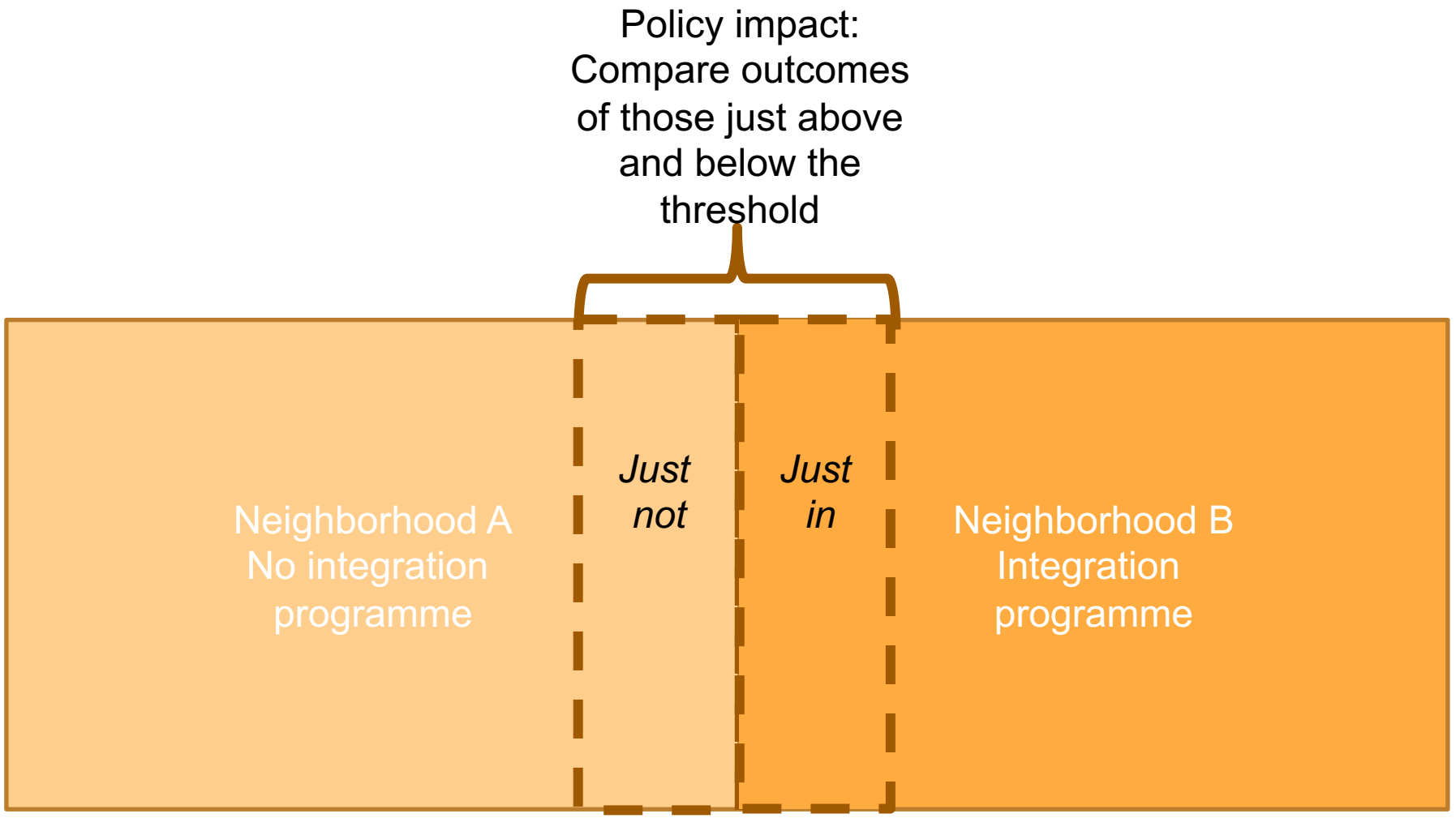
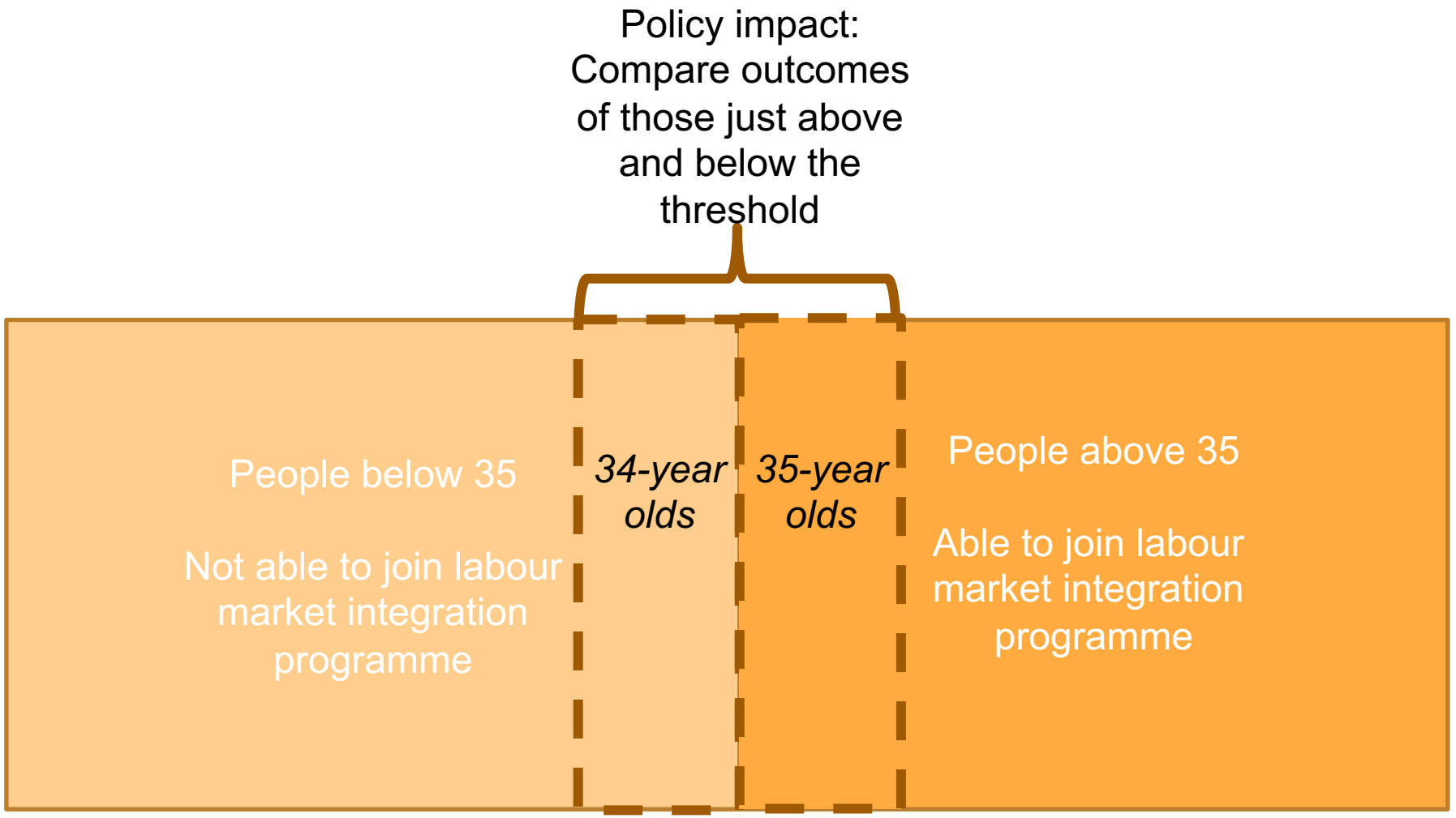
Quasi-experimental impact evaluation: Interrupted Time Series



Quasi-experimental impact evaluation: Regression discontinuity design



Quasi-experimental impact evaluation: Regression discontinuity design 2



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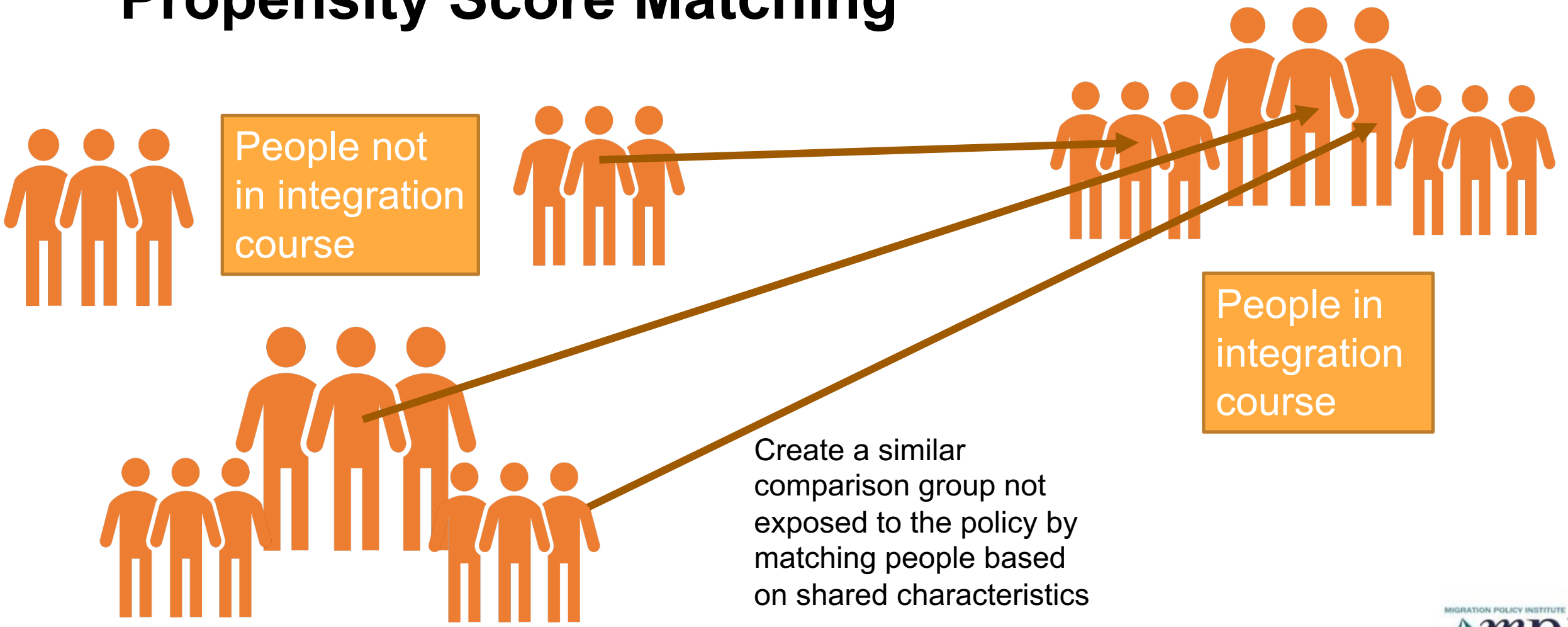
Quasi-experimental impact evaluation: Propensity Score Matching



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Cost-benefit analysis case study - Refugee policy in Amsterdam

Goal: Improve the 2016–18 Amsterdam Approach refugee integration programme

The analysis measured all extra costs for activities targeted to refugees (e.g., programme management, training) against all extra benefits (e.g., less unemployment benefits, higher tax revenues)

The programme's benefits were found to exceed its costs by 50%. For every euro invested, there would be a €1.50 euro return

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REFLECTION

1) Which evaluation approach will help your organisation to make integration practices more effective?

NEXT STEPS: Identify the integration practice you would like to evaluate and which evaluation approach should be used.

2) What are the most important challenges facing your organisation when evaluating integration policies?

NEXT STEPS: Identify which strategies could help your team overcome those challenges and what action you need to take to implement these strategies.

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Amplifying Impact through the Dissemination of Evidence

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Why disseminate evidence?

> **Unless disseminated, even the most high-quality evidence will not ensure improvements or scale policy impact**

- **A dissemination plan can help ensure that efforts to create high-quality evidence pay off by timely and effectively reaching out the right audience**

REFLECT: Think about the evidence (e.g. reports) your office/organisation produces, with whom do you share it and how? When do you start thinking about dissemination?

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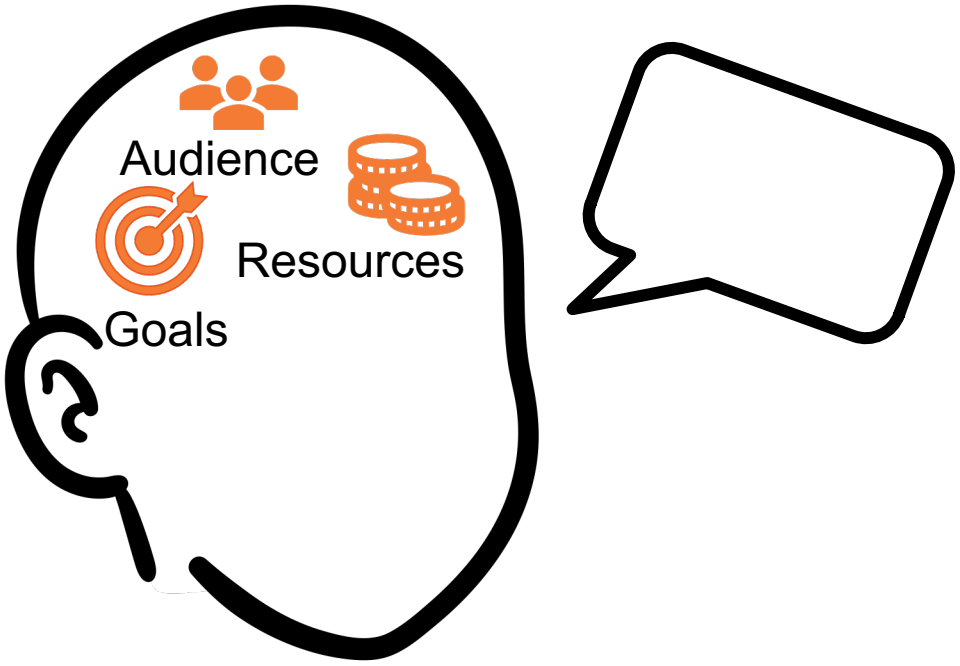
Developing a dissemination plan

- Step 1. Set your goals
- Step 2. Identify your audience
- Step 3. Understand your resources



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🎯 Step 1. Know your goals

- **What are you trying to achieve with your dissemination activities?**
- **What are your short-term objectives?**
- **What are your medium- to long-term objectives?**

REFLECT: Think about evidence (e.g. reports) produced by your office/organisation, with which goal do you share it with other stakeholders?

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Step 2. Know your audience

- **Which key stakeholders do you need to inform about a project evaluation's results? What do they need to know?**
- **What type of communication will be most effective?**
- **When is the opportune moment to reach out to each stakeholder?**

REFLECT: Think about evidence (e.g. reports) produced by your office/organisation, with whom do you share it and why?

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Choosing the right communication tool(s) for your audience and purpose

The Canadian Health Services Research Foundation follows the 1:3:25 rule.

For every 25-page report, they publish:

- **a 1-pager covering the report's main findings and key lessons for policymakers**
- **a 3-page executive summary with slightly more detail**

REFLECT: Do you have different communication tools or strategies to reach different audiences?

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Step 3. Know your resources

- What resources (budget, staff, and time) are needed and available to support dissemination?
- Who will be in charge of leading dissemination activities?
- Are there any actors within your network or community who are also well connected to your key audience and can support dissemination?

REFLECT: Do you have a budget and staff for dissemination? Do you work with other people from your network?

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Innovative dissemination strategies: think people

People around you may be the most valuable assets for effective dissemination

Ideas for dissemination:

- **Securing policy advocates**
- **Working with knowledge brokers**
- **Becoming a policy entrepreneur**

Securing policy advocates

- Working with people of influence in a policy area can help build credibility around the research piece and incentivise its use.
- Policy advocates typically only work in the dissemination stage of the cycle

The UK *What Works for Children's Social Care* introduced an Evidence Ambassador Programme to facilitate access to evidence to social work teams and encourage its use.

- Evidence Ambassadors are practitioners already working in local authority social work teams
- They help put evidence produced by the What Works Network on the table of social workers who may not have time to explore new research or learn how to implement latest evidence in their work.

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Working with knowledge brokers

- **Knowledge brokers seek to promote interaction and dialogue between researchers and practitioners or policymakers by acting as intermediaries**

- **Knowledge brokers typically work close to decision makers from early on**

> **E.g. MPI Europe not only produces its own research, but many times also acts as a knowledge broker by facilitating policymakers' access to evidence and informing the design of policies. Sometimes, it also works with other researchers to flag research gaps flagged by policymakers.**

REFLECT: Do you work with or know anybody else who may be a knowledge broker?

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Becoming a policy entrepreneur

- Becoming a policy entrepreneur typically requires collecting and disseminating evidence about the positive impact of a specific programme.
- Policy Entrepreneurs normally work with policy makers at a late stage of the cycle.

Under the VIA programme, evidence experts involved in the programme acted as policy entrepreneurs to promote the programme:

- **Raising awareness among policymakers about the problem the programme aimed to tackle by compiling and sharing data on how labour market opportunities differed between Dutch natives and people with a migrant background**

- **Creating momentum and interest around their programme and facilitated discussion on how relevant stakeholders could help address the gaps the research showed**

REFLECT: Have you or anyone at your office acted as a policy entrepreneur?

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REFLECTION

1) What challenges or barriers have you identified when trying to disseminate recommendations or evaluation results?

NEXT STEPS: Create a list of barriers identified.

2) Does your organisation have a dissemination strategy? E.g. do you follow any of people-focused strategies shared or do you ever use online international platforms to share learnings or talk to stakeholders from other cities/regions/countries?

NEXT STEPS: Think about 3 to 5 ways in which your organisation could support the expansion of an evidence base in migrant integration practices through a better dissemination strategy.

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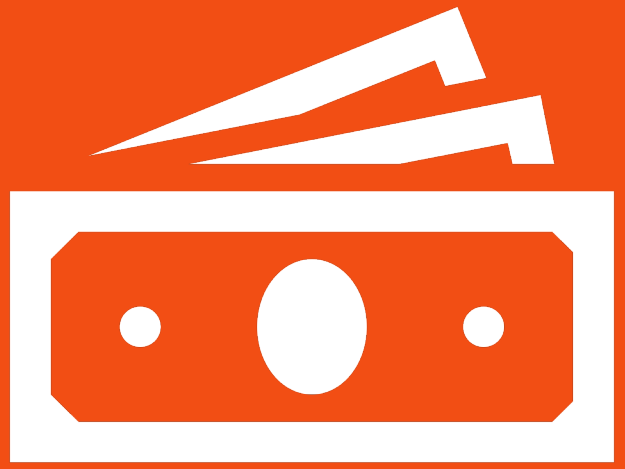
Using Funding to Promote an Evidence Culture



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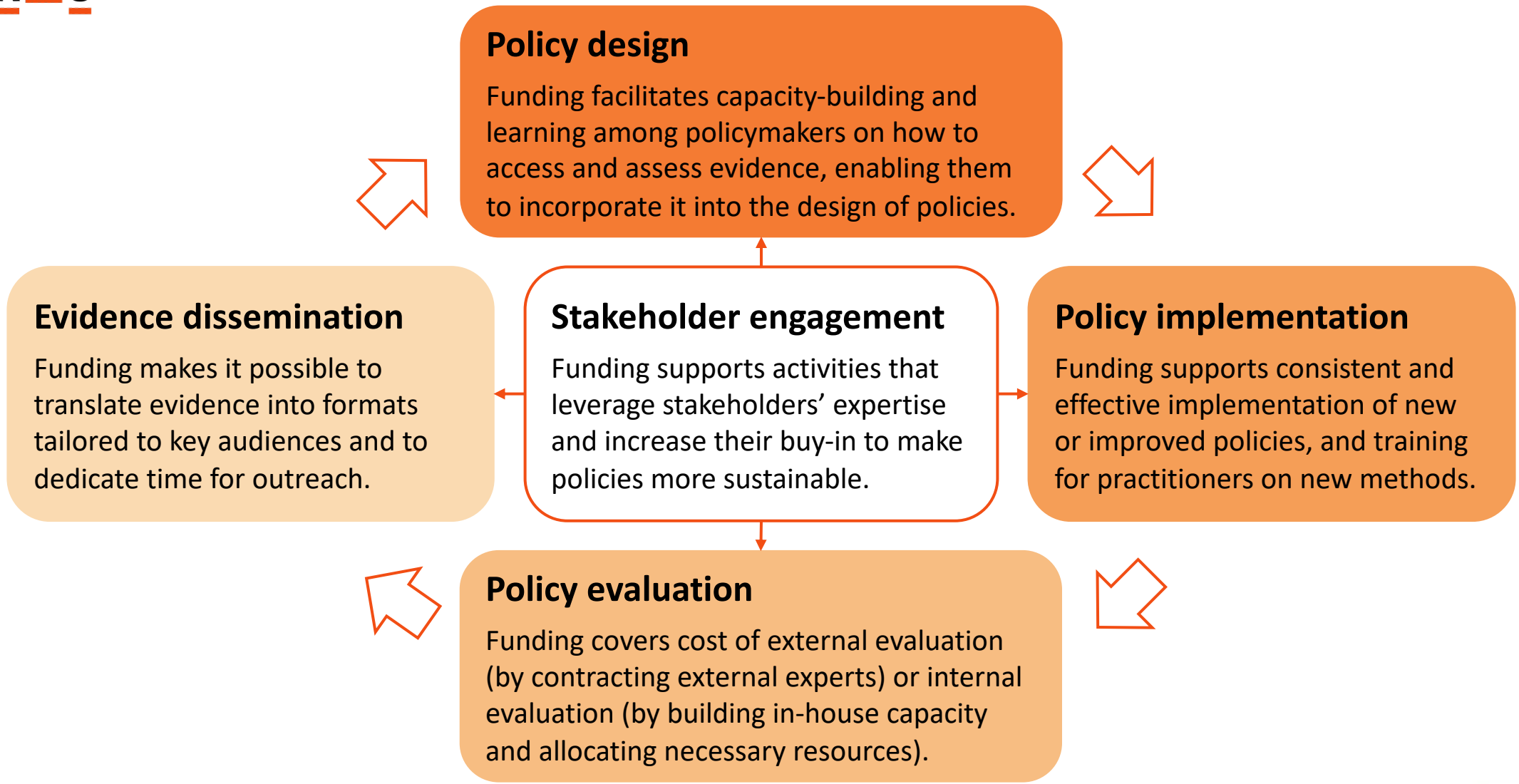

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EU funding opportunities

EU funding opportunities and resources for migrant integration activities

Name	Description	Integration areas	Scale of projects funded
European Website on Integration	The site's funding section provides an overview of EU funds for migrant integration for the 2021–27 period. It is also possible to identify funding opportunities by Member State.	All	Transnational and national
Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund (AMIF)	AMIF funding supports third-country nationals in the early stages of integration and actions that support Member States' integration capacity.	Education, training, employment, housing, social integration, health care, child care	Transnational and national
Erasmus+	Erasmus+ funding goes to individuals and organisations to support initiatives that equip participants with the skills and qualifications to meaningfully participate in society.	Culture, sports, education, training, and youth (e.g., integration of migrants into school system through sport, youth work, etc.)	Transnational and national
Citizens, Equality, Rights, and Values (CERV) Programme	CERV funding promotes equality and civic and human rights to sustain and further develop open, rights-based, democratic, equal, and inclusive societies based on the rule of law.	Social inclusion, violence prevention, antidiscrimination	Transnational
European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)	Funding aims to have a longer-term impact on access to inclusive mainstream services.	Education, employment, housing, social integration, health care, child care	National
European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)	Funding aims to support economic, social, and territorial cohesion within the European Union.	Regeneration of marginalised neighbourhoods, education infrastructure development for migrants and refugees, and access to mainstream services in education, employment, housing, social care, health care, child care	National
Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD)	Funding aims to support disadvantaged populations, such as migrants experiencing homelessness.	Access to food and basic material assistance	National
European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)	Funding to support rural areas and the European Union's agrifood and forestry sectors.	Housing, health care, education, and employment	National

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migrationpolicy.org

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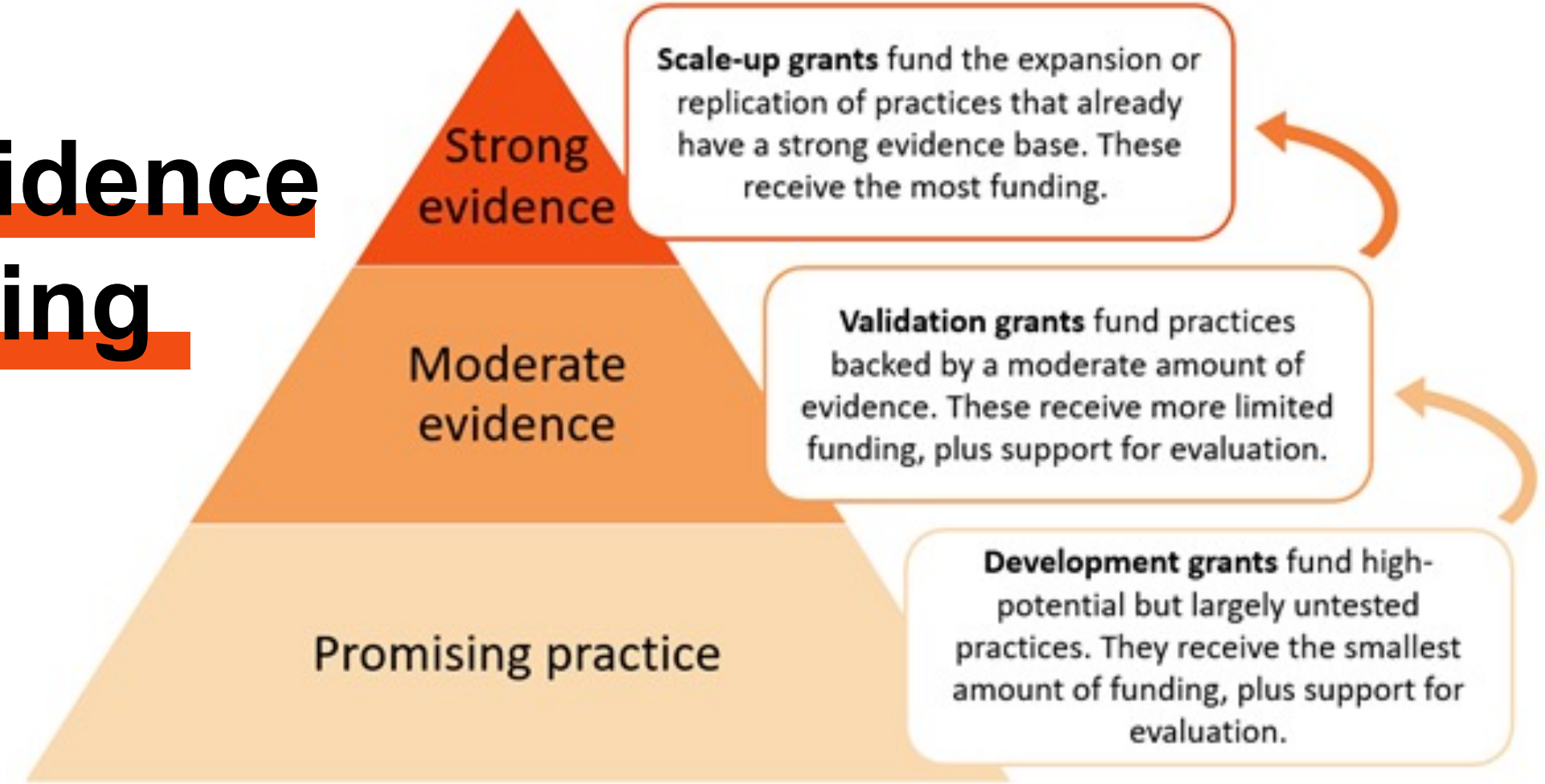
Tiered-evidence grantmaking



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Tiered-evidence funding in practice: The Investing in Innovation (i3) Fund

- The U.S. Department of Education i3 programme allocates funding based on evidence on the expected impact and scale of an intervention
- The stronger the evidence, the larger the grants awarded
- External evaluation findings: 73% of the 67 evaluations conducted under the programme met the previously established What Works Clearinghouse evidence standards

i3 investing in innovation

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Pilot projects

- Aim: Test a new policy on a small scale, with the aim to scale it up or extend the policy if it is successful
- Reduce risks & costs involved with launching new large-scale programmes
- The evidence generated can be used as a proof-of-concept to secure new funding
- Great for testing innovative integration approaches

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Pilot projects in practice: The VIA Programme

Verdere Integratie op de Arbeidsmarkt

- The VIA programme, launched in the Netherlands in 2018, is an evidence-informed programme that uses pilot projects to promote the labour market integration of people with a migration background
- The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment has helped VIA secure a 10 million euro budget for pilot projects, evaluations, and the scaling up of effective pilots
- Some stakeholders funded parts of the projects' implementation

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Social impact bonds

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Social impact bonds in practice: The Kotouttamisen (KOTO) Project

- Launched in 2017 in Finland, the nationwide KOTO SIB project promotes labour market integration of 2,500 migrants
- Impact evaluations: RCTs comparing tax collection and unemployment benefits between nonparticipants KOTO participants
- If successful, the project will save the Finnish government up to €70 million over six years and the government will pay 50% of any money saved back to the investors

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REFLECTION

1) What are the biggest challenges that your organisation is facing to fund effective integration policies and evidence-informed policymaking? Which stage of the evidence-informed policymaking cycle requires funding the most?

NEXT STEPS: Create a ranked list of the areas that have the most pressing need for funding.

2) Which funding strategy could help your organisation to overcome these challenges?

NEXT STEPS: Write down 3 concrete steps that you could take to use these funding strategies to build more effective integration policies.

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Engaging Stakeholders in Evidence-Informed Integration Policymaking

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Why engage multiple stakeholders in the policy cycle?

> **Stakeholder engagement should be more than a box-ticking exercise**

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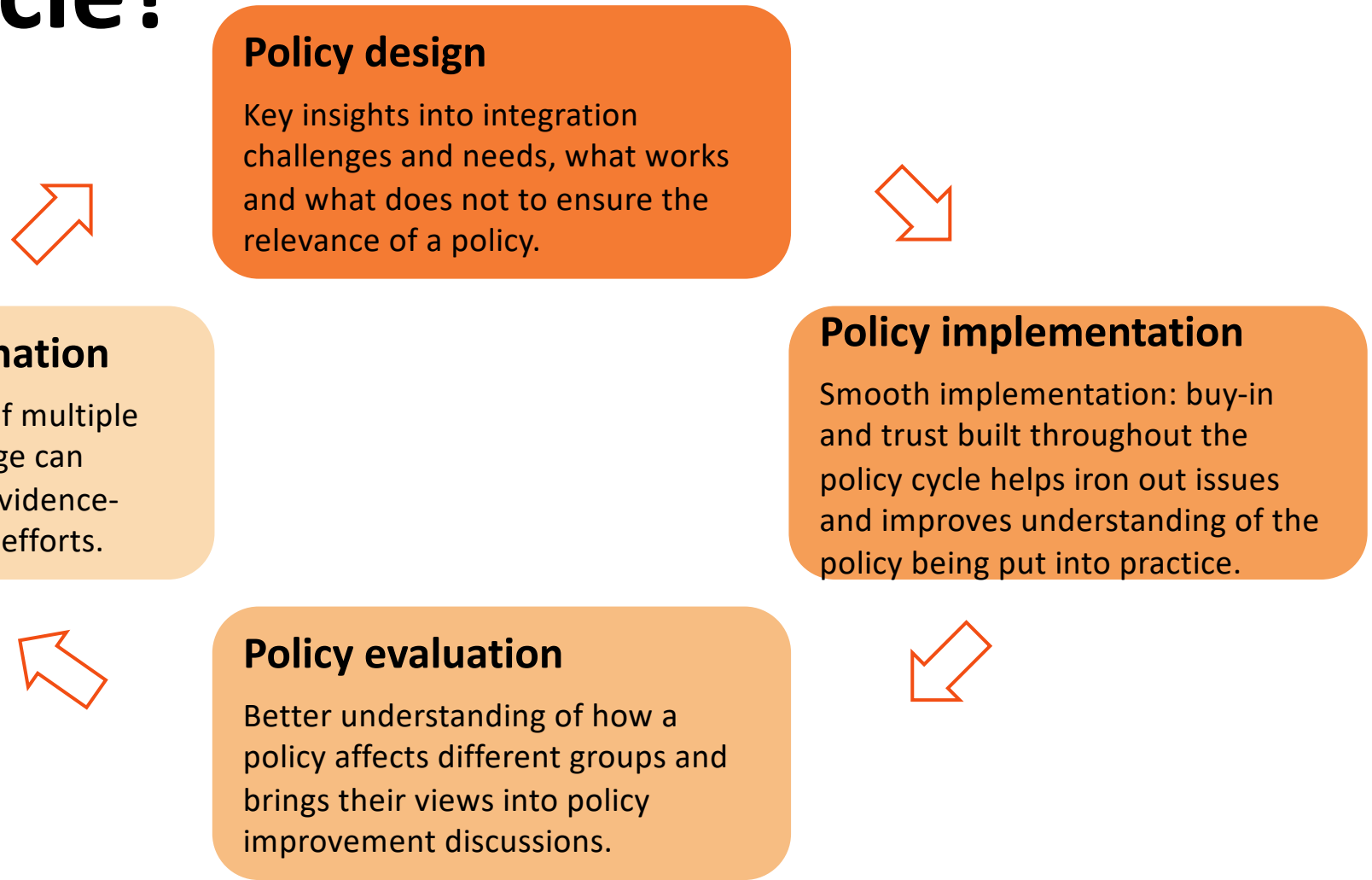
Why engage other stakeholders in the policy cycle?



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Engaging a diverse group of stakeholders

Among others:

- **Policymakers**
- **Researchers**
- **Programme beneficiaries (migrants and refugees)**
- **Practitioners**

REFLECT: Is there a group you normally include or you typically leave out? Why?

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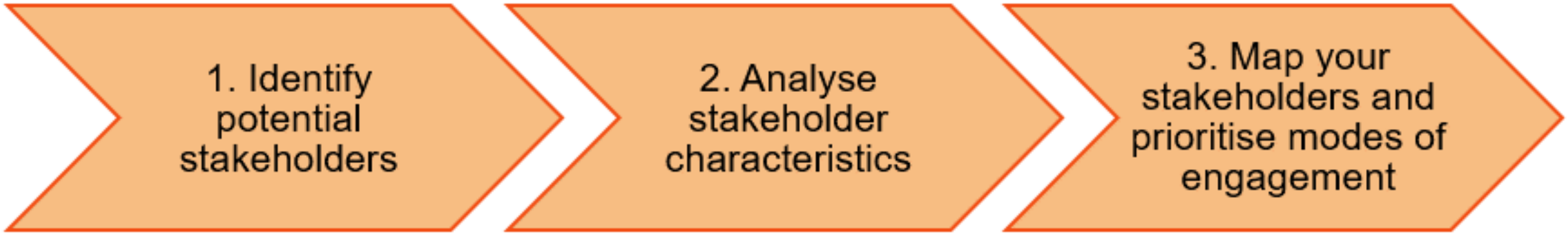
Producing a stakeholder mapping



REFLECT: What questions do you ask yourself when deciding who to engage in the design or evaluation of a policy? What attributes or characteristics do you assess from those stakeholders?

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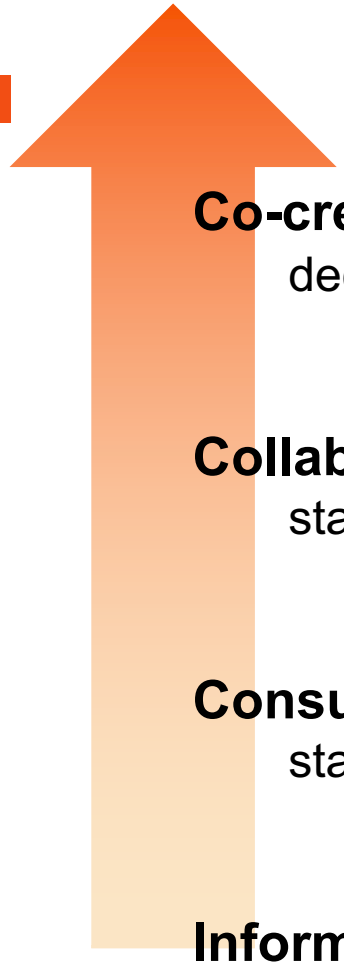
Varying degrees of stakeholder engagement

REFLECT: Which level of stakeholder engagement does your office/organisation typically pursue?



Co-create – Empower stakeholders to make decisions, alongside policymakers

Collaborate – Partner with stakeholders at each stage of the policy cycle

Consult – Obtain feedback and input from stakeholders

Inform – Provide information to stakeholders

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Securing meaningful engagement of migrants and refugees

- Involve them in the policy cycle and take their insights into consideration
- Set structures where they can express ideas or suggestions on a regular basis
- Disseminate opportunities where migrants and refugees can influence decisions that affect them
- Provide interpretation and translation/digital support if needed
- Compensate them

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Securing meaningful engagement of migrants and refugees

The *National Intercultural Health Strategy* in Ireland introduced several strategies to better engage migrants and refugees, including through:

- **organising consultations during the evening to prevent conflicts with work**
- **using different consultation formats, including big workshops, surveys, small focus groups, and individual interviews**
- **providing transport and childcare to secure participation**
- **providing interpreters to overcome potential language barriers**

REFLECT: Does your office/organisation follow any strategy for meaningful engagement of beneficiaries?

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REFLECTION

1) Do you typically engage multiple stakeholders? How do you identify them?

NEXT STEPS: Think about different areas of the policy cycle in which you could diversify stakeholder engagement and how.

2) Were you familiar with the idea of meaningful stakeholder engagement? What did you find most interesting or useful?

NEXT STEPS: Think about what improvements your organisation could make to secure the inclusion of migrants and refugees in evidence informed integration practices.

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Evidence-Informed Integration Policymaking

Next steps

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Towards sustainable and effective integration policies

- Evidence is important at each stage of the policy cycle, from design to implementation, from evaluation to dissemination
- Foster an evidence culture that promotes mutual learning & collaboration
- Next steps:
  - What concrete steps can you take in your organisation to embrace an evidence culture and make migrant integration policies more effective?
  - What other resources would you need to help you with this mission?

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Promoting Evidence-informed Immigrant Integration Policymaking

www.integrationpractices.eu

migrationpolicy.org

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Toolkit for Evidence-Informed Migrant Integration Policymaking

www.migrationpolicy.org

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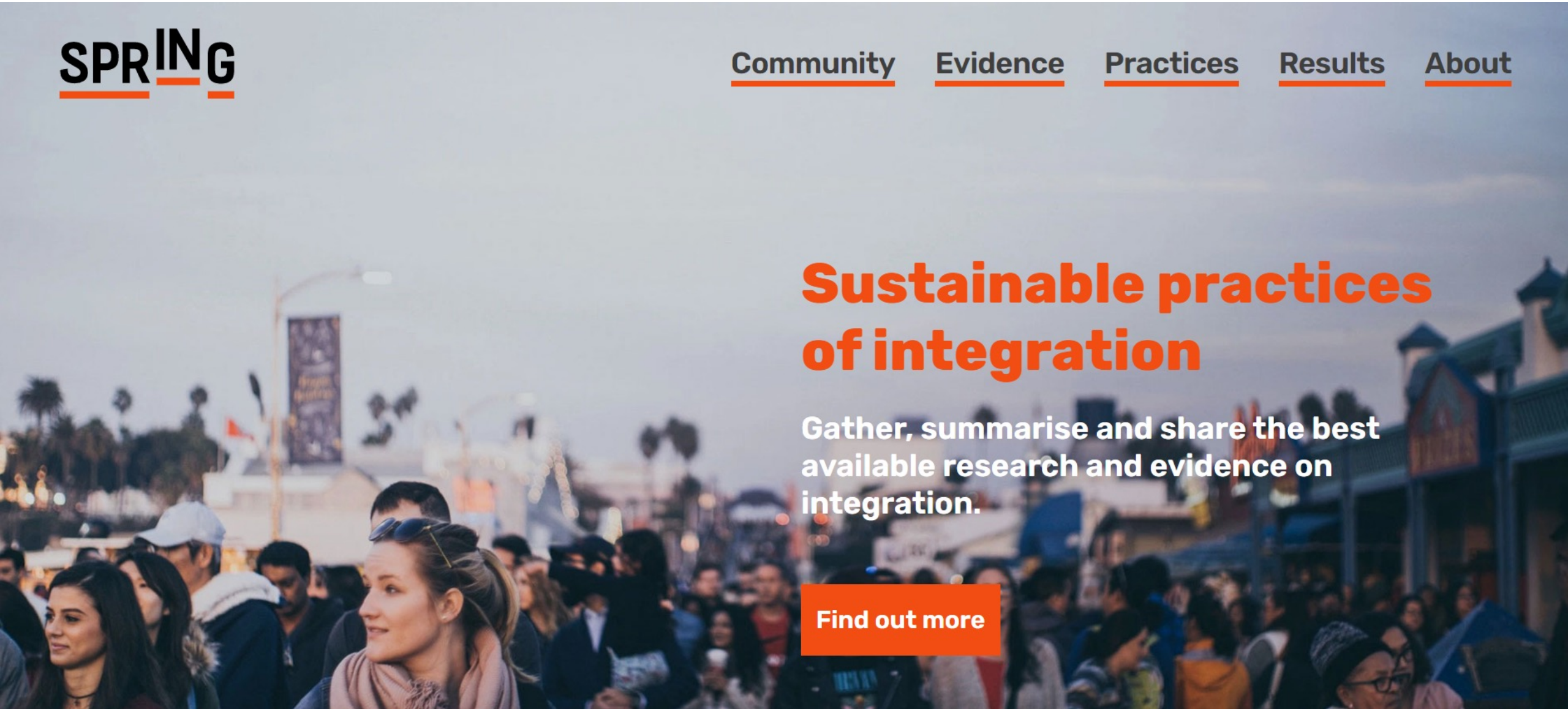

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