

Promoting Commitment to Evaluate

Miguel Székely
February 2013



About 3ie

The International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie) works to improve the lives of people in the developing world by supporting the production and use of evidence on what works, when, why and for how much. 3ie is a new initiative which responds to demands for better evidence, and will enhance development effectiveness by promoting better-informed policies. 3ie finances high-quality impact evaluations and campaigns to inform better programme and policy design in developing countries.

The **3ie Working Paper series** covers both conceptual issues related to impact evaluation and findings from specific studies or systematic reviews. The views in the papers are those of the authors, and cannot be taken to represent the views of 3ie, its members, or any of its funders.

This Working Paper was written by Miguel Székely, Director, Institute for Innovation in Education, Tecnológico de Monterrey.

About this paper

This is part of a series of exploratory papers to help develop and test a theory of change behind 3ie's commitment to evaluation project (c2e) and answer the question of how policymakers can take credit for demanding their programme to be evaluated? This is part of 3ie's effort to focus on evaluation use and find alternative incentives to generate demand led research and increase the likelihood of having a policy impact.

We hope that the discussions and consultations around the papers will help us improve our method and pressure development agencies, government departments, private aid funders and large international NGOs to improve their evaluation practices and infuse more evidence based policymaking. Updated information on the c2e project can be found at: <http://www.3ieimpact.org/en/evaluation/c2e/>

Acknowledgements

This paper is prepared for the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie). The author thanks Gonzalo Hernandez, Director of CONEVAL, and Federico Reyes Heróles, President of Transparencia Mexicana and member of the Board of Transparency International, for useful conversations on the arguments presented in the document.

Photograph: Frederic Noy/UNHCR

3ie Working Paper Series Production Team: Rajesh Sharma and Kanika Jha

© 3ie, 2013

Contact

International Initiative for Impact Evaluation
c/o Global Development Network
2nd Floor, West Wing, ISID Complex,
4, Vasant Kunj Institutional Area,
New Delhi – 110070, India
Tel: +91-11-2613-9494/6885
www.3ieimpact.org

PROMOTING COMMITMENT TO EVALUATE

Miguel Székely

Institute for Innovation in Education

Introduction

Evaluation is a powerful tool for improving the performance of public policies. Yet, in the realm of development policy, the amount of evidence available (supply) and its use (demand) are still limited.¹

The 3ie initiative has been quite successful on working on the supply-side of the problem. It has contributed by socializing existing evidence on the impact of development policies, it has offered policy makers and development practitioners a window to submit evaluation proposals, and it has made funding and technical support available for researchers to perform impact evaluation. Investing in supply has been effective because it solves two important issues: on the one hand, it provides resources where funds for knowledge generation are scarce or inexistent, and on the other, it socializes a resource that is valued, but that few are willing to finance individually because of its public good nature.

Even though there is still a long road to follow for generating enough evidence in different contexts, the 3ie has already started setting the ground for addressing the demand-side by exploring the construction of a commitment to evaluate index (c2e). The c2e is an indicator of the production and use of evaluative evidence by development agencies and governments in low and middle income countries. It is intended to provide recognition for countries that dedicate effort for designing and executing policy supported by evidence, and this is intended to generate incentives for others to do the same.

The hypothesis is that when the greater supply of knowledge on what works is met by increased demand for evidence by policy makers, development policy will be more effective and will contribute to better the living conditions of the poor in the developing world.

The aim of this paper is to provide elements for defining and implementing the c2e index. Particularly we intend to draw from relevant initiatives to propose processes and identify the incentives which exist or may be created for developing country policy makers to value, build ownership, and buy-in the c2e initiative. A parallel effort will develop the c2e index.

The paper is divided into five sections. The first section briefly comments on the reasons that policy makers might have for *not* joining an initiative such as the c2e index voluntarily, as well as the mechanisms through which demand for the index can be induced. Section 2 identifies the main actors involved in the process of joining an initiative such as the c2e. Section 3 analyzes some relevant reference points for devising the c2e strategy. Section 4 examines some of the desirable characteristics of the c2e index and of the environment in which it will operate, to make the buy-in by decision makers more likely. Section 5 concludes by putting forward a specific proposal for launching the c2e initiative.

¹See Székely, M. "Toward Results-Based Social Policy Design and Implementation", Center for Global Development, 2011 for a detailed discussion.

1. Incentives for joining the c2e initiative

Although the benefits of generating and using evidence for improving policy are quite evident, it is also clear that the situation of under use and production may well respond to rational decisions, rather than to policy maker´s incompetence. The rationality comes from the fact that evaluation also entails costs, and these may outweigh its potential benefits. The following subsections discuss these issues in the context of the c2e initiative.

The costs of producing and using evidence for improving development policy

Following Székely (2011)², there are at least 6 clear reasons why policy makers might choose not to invest, or under invest in performing evaluations. The first has to do with costs, since it is necessary to invest resources for developing good quality evaluation studies. When financing is limited, a moral dilemma arises on whether funding should be allocated to evaluating impact, or to benefiting more people. The obvious argument in favour is that evidence will allow to improve effectiveness to benefit larger populations in the future, while the argument against is that when needs are so severe, diverting funding away from a beneficiary might make the difference between a human being´s life and death.

The second is time. Producing credible evidence requires time for design, the generation of base line data, allowing for the intervention to produce its effects, generating ex-post information, and finally analysing and reporting results. All of this might even imply years of investment that go beyond political cycles, and might discourage even strong advocates for evaluation since they will not be able to reap the benefits of the initiative.

The third is the presence of interest groups, which are critical especially in the case of experimental designs. The definition of control and treatment groups for evaluation might be perfectly justifiable from a methodological point of view, but explaining program non-participants (which could be an influential interest group) that they have been excluded from a benefit because they were not “randomly selected”, while others have, is not an easy task and may create enough opposition to make the evaluation unfeasible.

The fourth are the normative factors, including official rules and regulations that impede using program resources for evaluation. The fifth are institutional impediments, which can be of at least two kinds. The first is when governments are designed around the concept of measuring expenditures and inputs, and the mandate to evaluate outcomes or agencies that can perform them, may therefore be non-existent, making it impossible and in some cases even illegal to carry them out. The second is that even in the case when evaluation is permitted there might be institutional technical limitations that reduce the capacity to undertake impact evaluations. The sixth is politics. Generating information on the effect of policy action is risky because while positive results can be capitalized, non-favourable results may back fire by providing political opponents with ammunition. Providing sound evidence on program impact in politically competitive environments may be equivalent to singing a government´s death sentence.

²Op.cit.

As for the use of evidence, there are also potential costs. Perhaps the most important is that because of its nature, evaluation will most likely identify areas for improvement that alter the status quo. When the change implies affecting the interest of specific groups, their political weight can obstruct action, which will require of an investment of political capital by authorities to move forward. When the political weight of opposing groups is greater than the government's available political capital, evaluation efforts might become obsolete, or only an academic exercise that is not able to impact reality. A related reason is that it is common that operators and practitioners become "constituencies" of the program to which they have devoted years of effort and experience, and they can openly oppose to change and make evaluation use effectively impossible. When evaluation is set as a condition for receiving resources in these circumstances recipients might more openly oppose to it and view evaluation exclusively as a burden.

Under use also tends to be observed in political systems that do not have rewards for good practice. For instance, when re-election is not allowed, there might be fewer incentives to introduce change (which always has its costs) by using solid evidence, if there will be no system of reward. An additional element is technical capacity. Even when there might be will, if policy makers, program operators, and practitioners do not have the capacity to translate new knowledge into improved design and implementation, even the best evidence may be useless.

In sum, there are several costs inherent in policy making that explain why decision makers might deliberately under use and produce evaluation. In this context, the question for the c2e initiative is whether it should try to gain supporters through offering mechanisms that reduce some of the costs involved, or if it should focus on increasing the benefits from more use and production. The next subsection discusses some of the options.

Incentives for participating in the c2e initiative

The 3ie already supports countries on lowering some of the costs outlined above. Specifically, by financing evaluation studies it has contributed to lower the financial burden of knowledge generation –which is the first of the 6 reasons for under-investing identified above- and it has also put in place mechanisms for developing local technical capacities–which is an important barrier for enhancing the use of evidence for improving policy. Intervening in these areas seems to have been a good decision, since addressing other costs such as the influence of interest groups, the limitations of normative and institutional arrangements, the resistance to change by local actors, or the promotion of changes in political systems to introduce rewards to performance, would have been much more difficult, costly, and time intensive.

The best alternative for the c2e seems be to follow along the same lines, in the sense that rather than working on reducing the costs involved, it could be more efficient to devise ways for increasing the benefits of using and producing impact evaluations. Specifically, rewards could be offered for the countries that agree in participating in the measurement and publication of the c2e index, under the hypothesis that such incentives could alter local cost-benefit equations and turn the balance towards more use and production.

Three clear areas for offering incentives are:

- a) Cash for participating in the c2e initiative: This would consist on using financial resources as incentive. Specific mechanisms could include:
 - Aligning the 3ie to the c2e. This would imply modifying the rules of operation of the 3ie, establishing that only countries that agree and collaborate in the production of the c2e index remain eligible for financing.
 - Negotiating with other institutions that have partnered with the 3ie, including private donors, financial institutions, and Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), so that they agree to facilitate access to technical cooperation and non-reimbursable funds to those that participate in the c2e initiative.
 - Negotiating with partner donors and MDBs to simplify administrative and procurement procedures in loan or aid disbursement for countries participating in the c2e scheme.

- b) Symbolic Rewards for participating in the c2e initiative: This would involve announcing an annual award for countries that officially join c2e, and also to those that follow good practice in specific evaluation areas. At least two possible schemes can be identified:
 - The 3ie launches an Annual Prize that involves public statements of recognition published in the local media of the countries that are awarded; it delivers a trophy and written statement for making the award official.
 - The 3ie in association with partner institutions of international relevance launch an Annual Prize with similar characteristics as the above. Partner institutions can include those that are already collaborating with the 3ie, plus other international institutions that have made efforts for promoting the use and production of evaluation, including the DAC Network on Development Evaluation, and the MDB Evaluation Cooperation Group (described below).

- c) Publication of rankings that provide recognition for effort and “penalties” for indifference or low progress: This consists on launching a publication that measures the c2e index and ranks countries accordingly. Under the assumption that the c2e index includes information on both, data provided nationally, as well as international indicators, those countries that actively participate in providing information for the measurement, and make progress in the value of the c2e, will be able to capitalize their good practices through an internationally renowned publication. As in the case of symbolic rewards, the publication can be launched by the 3ie individually, or could be endorsed by other international partner institutions.

Evidently, these are non-exclusive options, and the best strategy for the c2e might well involve the three elements. In terms of the pros and cons, even though the first option might be the most effective in promoting support for the c2e index in the short run, it has the drawback that its success does not necessarily guarantee long term commitment to evaluation. Policy makers responding to a monetary incentive might be more interested in access to finance and may conceive the c2e initiative as a means to funding rather than valuing it in itself. The second and third option might take more time for consolidating but are more in line with the spirit of the c2e index and may have longer lasting consequences.

2. Relevant actors for the c2e initiative

There are a number of relevant actors that can promote the buy-in of these incentives by policy makers. They can be broadly grouped in three categories of external, local, and governmental.

The first group refers to international private and public institutions that can openly advocate for countries to participate in the c2e initiative. The most immediate for reaching out are the 3ie Members and partners who are already "on board", and who can be asked to contribute to each of the three mechanisms discussed in the previous section. For instance, they can help financing 3ie initiatives aligned to the c2e, or they can directly introduce incentives in their funding mechanisms for promoting c2e through technical cooperation funds, aid, and administrative simplification in loan disbursement. Their role in granting symbolic rewards and the publication of rankings would consist in endorsing both activities actively. The main benefit from the support of these actors is that a broad network of relationships and mechanisms can be triggered in favour of c2e. The cost of doing so is that the credit of important and visible "products" such as an international award or a renowned publication will be shared among all stakeholders, rather than by the 3ie only.

The second group includes the series of local actors that influence government decisions, including Congress, the media, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), interest groups, and the general public. Interest for the c2e index through them can create pressure on authorities for which the value of a symbolic award or a publication with country rankings will increase. If sufficient dissemination of the benefits of the 3ie is achieved, pressure may also be created to participate in the c2e to be able to access 3ie funds. Working with local actors in developing countries along these lines would go to the heart of the c2e initiative since its promotion could create a real demand for more evaluation use and production, with long-lasting results. The drawback in this case is that to be effective, this strategy would require reaching out to a large (and perhaps unmanageable) number of actors in each country, which might be unfeasible with the resources available to date.

Reaching for the third group of actors (government officials and policy makers) could also be an effective way of promoting the c2e initiative. Given the profile of developing country policy makers, the task would necessarily include of an immersion (or training) process to create consciousness about the c2e index, identifying local *champions* that can become leaders, and targeting directly the individuals identified in each country to convince them to join. Their willingness would be expected to depend on the amount of financial incentives, the attractiveness of the symbolic rewards, and participation in a publication with rankings.

For attracting the three groups of actors, at least two broad strategies could be followed. One would involve intensive promotion across all possible developing countries to start out with a world initiative, while the other could consist of initially targeting selected countries that are thought of as being more prone to joining, and after a critical mass of countries is integrated, then invest on attracting the rest. The following section discusses some examples of each of these possibilities.

3. Relevant experiences for informing the c2e initiative

The introduction of financial incentives and offering a symbolic award to those that join the c2e are processes that can be designed more or less straightforwardly. The main question is whether the 3ie decides to search for international partners for support, or not. Some decisions have to be taken, including the definition of the levels of monetary incentives, the type of prizes and award categories that will be offered (for instance, recognition for participating in c2e could be complemented with special awards to best practices, or to the introduction of impact evaluation in new sectors, etc.), but once taken, the time for implementation can be relatively short, and the main issue will be dissemination.

One important reference for designing the details of launching a symbolic award is the Mexican National Council for the Evaluation of Social Policy (CONEVAL), which every year awards different categories of prizes for entities in the federal and state governments that follow good practice or innovate in the evaluation of their social programs. The establishment of various categories allows for distributing credit and recognition across a large number of public sector offices, and has become a valued prize which public officials consider worth pursuing.

The third mechanism involving the launch of an international publication with country rankings seems more challenging, since recognition to high performers inevitably goes hand in hand with discredit and a risk of being exposed for low performers. Countries with low performance can openly oppose to the initiative and to their inclusion in a c2e report, and could even try to sabotage it. The viability of this option depends to a large extent on the institutional endorsement of the publication. Although the 3ie by itself could be ready to launch an annual report, it seems desirable to at least explore partnerships with other renowned international institutions that could add credibility and prestige (the next section identifies some potential partners).

There are already a number of international reports on development indicators that are useful as reference for designing a possible c2e Report. On one extreme, there are statistical compendiums that systematize data without necessarily producing country rankings or offering a value judgment derived from the indicators. The World Development Indicators by the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund's International Financial Statistics are good examples. Both collect data on a wide array of sources and issues and make information accessible for further analysis. One can certainly derive conclusions from the data, but an important feature is that these publications by themselves do not constitute a source for evaluating country performance. Most countries in the world have participated in providing information for these publications from the outset and they are now well established sources. An important feature is that these sources do not generate much controversy with their yearly publications since they do not qualify countries.

At another extreme, there is a group of international publications, which have flourished in recent years that explicitly aim at measuring and comparing development results. As opposed to statistical compendiums, these do include value judgments; they rank countries, and they inherently evaluate performance through their indicators. These outlets usually provide information under the idea that each country will take its own policy decisions to improve in the dimensions that they consider relevant, and the data provided is a source of guidance to assess each case relative to others. One of the best

known examples in the realm of development indicators is the Human Development Index (HDI) published yearly through the Human Development Report by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), which gathers data from secondary sources to construct the summary HDI index and classifies countries according to their level. The yearly publication of the report is an expected event in many developing countries, and the results now have considerable impact in local politics and policy making.

Another influential initiative has been the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that have been adopted as measures of development achievement in the international community.³ Although reported annually by the UN, they are also supported and endorsed by most multilateral institutions. The MDGs have had considerable impact in the real world by providing useful guidance for policy action, and influencing the behaviour of individuals and institutions by re-directing their efforts towards quantifiable impacts. One of its distinctive characteristics is that before launching the MDG initiative, the UN went through a long consultation and promotion process with its member countries, which resulted in world-wide participation. The MDG follow-up requires detailed national data that countries provide, and with which the UN measures progress. As compared to the HDI countries are not ranked by comparing each other but are followed for measuring the distance for reaching the targets set for the year 2015.

A relevant experience can also be found in the area of education, where the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) initiated the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in the year 2000, which measures student's educational achievement in a set of countries and ranks them accordingly. There are some interesting differences with the HDI and MDGs that are worth highlighting. One is that rather than going for a world consensus for launching the program, it started with only a small set of around 30 countries which participated voluntarily, and given the impact of evaluating education quality for guiding education policy, more countries have joined in each round. In the most recent round in the year 2012, around 70 countries were included. A second difference is that while the MDGs and the HDI do not require of the generation of new data, PISA creates a new database of individual student assessments performed on a sample of the total population. This is a costly process financed by participating countries. Since the amount of resources required is not negligible, participating in PISA is now taken in the international community as a sign of government's will to improve their education systems.

A similar initiative has been launched by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) through the Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), which are also based on individual student assessments taken voluntarily in participating countries with the objective of providing data on education quality. The number of countries participating has been also increasing over the years as in PISA.

³The MDGs were agreed in the late 1990s with the objective of setting homogeneous outcome targets for developing countries for the period 2000-2015. They are officially followed up by the United Nations System, and reported by all countries joining the initiative. MDG 1 refers to reducing extreme poverty by half; MDG2 refers to achieving universal primary school; MDG3 refers to promoting gender equality for women; MDG4 implies reducing child mortality; MDG5 refers to improvements in maternal health; MDG6 has to do with combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; MDG7 refers to ensuring environmental sustainability, while MDG 8 is about developing partnerships for development.

One of the main differences between the HDI and MDGs on the one hand, and PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS on the other is the strategy for attracting country participation. The former started out with a wide consensus and ample membership while the latter has been gradual and has built a base that now has a critical mass of countries that imposes costs for non-participants. As judged by the number of countries joining recently, peer pressure by participating members can provide strong incentives for others to join.

A third type of reports which are more similar in spirit to the c2e initiative, are located somewhere between the two extremes of statistical compendiums and measuring development results. These concentrate on measuring progress on intermediate indicators and processes that are expected to impact development, but that are not final outcomes in themselves. Two clear examples are the World Competitiveness Report (WCR) by the World Economic Forum, and the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) by Transparency International. The first of these two publications uses country level data gathered through their own country offices and from official sources to provide a measure of the level of competitiveness in the economy. Competitiveness by itself is not a measure of success, but it is widely agreed that it can be an important determinant of development prospects. As such, it has gained growing attention over the years, and has increased coverage substantially, reaching 139 countries to date. Its central elements of success are the perception of competitiveness being central for development, and the endorsement by the World Economic Forum.

The case of the CPI by Transparency International has some similarities since corruption in itself is not a development outcome either, but it is thought to influence development prospects importantly through its effect on public spending and investment. In this case another element of interest is the link between corruption and democracy, which provides the CPI with additional interpretations in the arena of politics. As with the WCR, the CPI publication started out with a rather reduced number of countries, but has attracted advocates effectively to the extent that after 15 years of its launching, it now covers 150 countries.

The CPI is perhaps the closest example to what the c2e initiative intends to achieve, since it is not directly connected to development results compared to other cases such as the WCR. However, the c2e index has the additional complexity that higher commitment to evaluate does not guarantee in itself improved performance since it depends on many other elements such as outlined in Section 1 (the costs of using and producing evaluation). In addition, the CPI's link with the issue of democracy makes it more closely related to a public good that is widely valued. Therefore, greater effort would be needed to generate advocates for the c2e as compared with these other experiences.

Because of its similarities, the successful experience of the launch and expansion of the CPI entails important lessons that can be useful for the c2e index. In a nutshell, the lessons are:

- i. The CPI was launched by Transparency International in 1995, so it was endorsed from the outset by a powerful institution with high credibility and exposure to the media.
- ii. The CPI is calculated by using existing information produced by other international organizations, so it did not require investments in creating new data. This made the publication viable, and its sources unquestionable.

- iii. Transparency International promoted the creation of National Chapters, which consisted of opening country offices managed by non-governmental organizations that play the critical role of promoting the CPI locally. Country offices have now generated new data at the local level which allows for disaggregation across states and other geographical units, so the initiative has expanded its reach considerably. The strategy for opening country chapters consisted in identifying a small group of countries that valued the CPI and were receptive to the initiative and facilitated their creation. After a critical mass of country chapters were developed peer pressure pushed for opening country offices in other nations.
- iv. The CPI publication is accompanied by an annual symbolic award open to the private and public sector in countries that develop good practices on lowering corruption. Awards are granted in the Annual Meeting of Transparency International and are widely disseminated in the media. This has significantly contributed to the buy-in by governments, even in cases where authorities were highly reticent. Rewarding good practice even in environments with high levels of corruption has helped change local dynamics toward reducing corruption practices.
- v. Other international organizations have started using the CPI as criteria for allocating aid and investment grants, and even for conditioning loans and technical cooperation.
- vi. The publication started with less than 40 countries for which data was available, and it grew up to 150 countries in 15 years. A critical element was the peer pressure by international organizations and partner countries for the generation of the data necessary for computing the index.
- vii. Each year with the publication of the index countries with low performance or deterioration in the rankings are offered a strategy for improvement as well as follow up mechanisms to facilitate progress. National offices have been critical for making this possible. Public recognition is also given for improvement, even when starting low in the ranking.

4. Partners and principles for implementation

The case of the CPI illustrates that the c2e endeavour will require a well- defined strategy in at least four dimensions to guarantee success. The first is institutional support. The 3ie is still a rather young initiative which has already achieved considerable success but that will need additional partners to guarantee world coverage and impact. Institutions such as the Inter-American Development Bank, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which are already members of 3ie could be invited to have more prominent roles in the launch of the c2e index. Partnerships with other related institutions can also be pursued.

Specifically, alliances with the DAC Network on Development Evaluation and the MDB Evaluation Cooperation Group (ECG) could be considered. The DAC Network of the OECD was established with the purpose of increasing the “effectiveness of international development programs by supporting robust, informed and independent evaluation”, which coincides with the spirit of the 3ie and the c2e initiatives. This Network brings together evaluation managers and specialists from the OECD country member agencies, as well as multilateral development institutions. The ECG brings together the main multilateral development institutions with the purpose of developing good practice standards for program evaluations related to their loan portfolio. These two partners added to the current 3ie members could build a strong institutional platform for sponsoring a symbolic award for c2e participants, and endorsing the yearly publication.

The second dimension is the construction of the c2e. The way in which the index is conceived and implemented will be a strong determinant of its attractiveness. Drawing on the experience of the CPI briefly, a feasible option would be to start with a simple definition that can be documented through existing international sources. An obvious area to consider is the participation of countries in international assessment of development results, including the aforementioned HDI, MDGs, PISA, TIMMS, PIRLS and others. A second area could consist of documenting local practices through easily obtainable data such as the presence of legislation for evaluation, the existence or not of norms for the inclusion of evaluation in public spending, the existence of institutions with the mandate of evaluating development policy, etc. This type of data could be provided directly by country counterparts. Having an index combining both elements would have the advantage of guaranteeing access to some basic information (from international sources) while allowing for country participation (through national indicators).

A third dimension has to do with the principles through which the c2e index is constructed. Critical elements for attracting policy makers are that the c2e index: (a) uses underlying information that is widely available and is easily accessible; (b) is easily understandable; (c) follows common sense in its construction; (d) provides answers on whether countries have commitment to evaluate; (e) uses solid and statistically robust information for its construction; (f) is replicable; (g) clearly informs on the policies that can improve its value; and (h) can be linked to clear goals and results.

A fourth critical dimension is local receptiveness among potential participants. Political will among country counterparts is an essential element for success. But it is equally important that the data produced locally is technically solid, that there is local demand for policy evaluation, that there is awareness among the media for gaining support, that there are institutions to support the country to make progress and improve its c2e index,

and that the objective of the initiative is clearly communicated. An efficient dissemination strategy will be key for attracting support among policy makers.

5. A proposal for launching the c2e initiative

The analysis in the previous sections suggests that a successful launching of the c2e initiative should include external pressure, local actors, and country government officials for its success. It should consider the three areas where incentives for increasing the value of using and generating evaluation can be devised (namely financial incentives, symbolic awards and an annual publication). It should be able to attract international partners that add prestige and credibility to the initiative. It should be gradual, and start with a smaller number of countries that would be receptive to the initiative, rather than waiting for a world consensus for its launch. It should follow a set of clear principles that guarantee transparency and a link with government decisions. And it should be using already available data that does not require substantial financial investments and has solid technical endorsement.

Specifically, we put forward the following proposal:

- I. Create a board of partner institutions to consolidate the c2e initiative. Participation of institutions such as the DAC Network on Development Evaluation, the MDB Evaluation Cooperation Group, as well as international private foundations, multilateral financial institutions, and UN agencies such as the UNDP, would be desirable. High profile individuals such as Nobel Prize winners could also be considered for the board.
- II. Conceive the c2e as an initiative with three components: (i) financial incentives for participation (mainly through 3ie resources); (ii) the launching of a symbolic award in an annual meeting that is sufficiently ample to reach a significant number of countries; and (iii) a yearly publication reporting the c2e index. These outlets reinforce themselves for making c2e attractive.
- III. Convene a group of high profile academic experts for endorsing the c2e index. An initial proposal of the index can be developed (our suggestion is to follow the principles outlined in the previous section) and feedback from the experts can be used for its refinement. It is desirable that the c2e index includes international data already available, as well as country data that can be easily gathered.
- IV. Define a way of presenting the c2e index that is acceptable to countries. One option is to simply rank countries by their index value. Another alternative –which has been followed by the MDG approach–, is to set targets by country or for groups of countries, and measure each country's progress for achieving the predefined goal, irrespectively of the improvements or deteriorations by others.
- V. Invite national institutions that are currently members and associate members of the 3ie to become national chapters of the initiative. Participating institutions already cover 24 developing countries where the effort can be initiated.
- VI. Launch non-governmental country chapters with four mandates: (i) advocate for the c2e initiative locally; (ii) collect and send the national data required for the construction of the c2e index; (iii) inform, guide, and attract government and specific policy makers for support; and (iv) offer local authorities guidance for improving the value of the index. The initial group can create peer pressure for the incorporation of other countries.

- VII. Launch a call for submitting proposals to compete for the symbolic award. The award could be presented at a first Annual Meeting, with the endorsement of the partner institutions. Dissemination in the media of each country would be pursued by the national chapters, which would actively search for projects or policies that could be submitted to the award.
- VIII. Announce the publication of the c2e index through the Annual Meeting with intensive dissemination in the media by the 3ie, its partners, and national chapters.
- IX. Consider a bi-annual publication of the report if the components of the c2e index are not sensitive to short term decisions.

Publications in the 3ie Working Paper series

Promoting Commitment to Evaluate by Miguel Székely, Working Paper 19, February 2013

Building on what works: commitment to evaluation (c2e) indicator by Carlisle J. Levine and Christelle Chapoy, Working Paper 18, February 2013

From impact evaluations to paradigm shift: A case study of the Buenos Aires CiudadaníaPorteña conditional cash transfer programme by Gabriela Agosto, Eduardo Nuñez, Horacio Citarroni, Irma Briasco and Nicolás Garcette, Working Paper 17, August 2012

Validating one of the world's largest conditional cash transfer programmes: A case study on how an impact evaluation of Brazil's BolsaFamília Programme helped silence its critics and improve policy by Gala Díaz Langou and Paula Forteza, Working Paper 16, August 2012

Addressing attribution of cause and effect in small n impact evaluations: towards an integrated framework by Howard White and Daniel Phillips, Working Paper 15, July 2012

Behind the scenes: managing and conducting large scale impact evaluations in Colombia by Bertha Briceño, Laura Cuesta and Orazio Attanasio, Working Paper 14, December 2011

Can we obtain the required rigour without randomisation? by Karl Hughes and Claire Hutchings, Working Paper 13, August 2011

Sound expectations: from impact evaluations to policy change by Vanesa Weyrauch and Gala Díaz Langou, 3ie Working Paper 12, April 2011

A can of worms? Implications of rigorous impact evaluations for development agencies by Eric Roetman, 3ie Working Paper 11, March 2011

Conducting influential impact evaluations in China: the experience of the Rural Education Action Project by Mathew Boswell, Scott Rozelle, Linxiu Zhang, Chengfang Liu, Renfu Luo, Yaojiang Shi, 3ie Working Paper 10, February 2011

An introduction to the use of randomized control trials to evaluate development interventions by Howard White, 3ie Working Paper 9, February 2011

Institutionalisation of government evaluation: balancing trade-Offs by Marie Gaarder and Bertha Briceno, 3ie Working Paper 8, July 2010

Impact Evaluation and interventions to address climate change: a scoping study by Martin Prowse and Birte Snilstveit, 3ie Working Paper 7, March 2010

A checklist for the reporting of randomized control trials of social and economic policy interventions in developing countries by Ron Bose, 3ie working paper 6, January 2010

Impact evaluation in the post-disaster setting by Alison Bутtenheim, 3ie Working Paper 5, December 2009

Designing impact evaluations: different perspectives, contributions from Robert Chambers, Dean Karlan, Martin Ravallion, and Patricia Rogers, 3ie Working Paper 4, July 2009. Also available in Spanish, French and Chinese

Theory-based impact evaluation by Howard White, 3ie Working Paper 3, June 2009. Also available in French and Chinese.

Better evidence for a better world edited by Mark W. Lipsey University and Eamonn Noonan, 3ie &The Campbell Collaboration, 3ie Working Paper 2, April 2009

Some reflections on current debates in impact evaluation by Howard White, 3ie Working Paper 1, April 2009

For the latest 3ie working papers visit:

http://www.3ieimpact.org/3ie_working_papers.html