We analysed how evidence-informed German development cooperation is.

And that’s what we found...
Who is responsible for today’s presentation?

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Team leader

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Evaluator

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Evaluator

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Project administrator

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Former Evaluator
How this seminar is structured

**Part I:** Our research results

Short break

**Part II:** Website launch & top 5 evidence tips

**Part III:** Time for questions
Why does rigorous evidence matter so much?

„It appears that there is in general an 80% rule. That is 80% of things don’t work. [...] So, as good Bayesians, in the absence of [rigorous] evidence [...], we should assume our programme doesn’t work.“

White (2019)
What is rigorous impact evaluation (RIE)?
What is rigorous evidence?

Diagram:
- Intervention group
- Control or comparison group
Reflection time!

Go to www.menti.com and use the code 8648 2588

When was the last time you used a product that was based on rigorous evidence?

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Results are hidden
What did we analyse and how?

What did we analyse?

1. What is the status quo?
2. What are barriers?
3. What are potential solutions?

How did we analyse it?

- Surveys
- Interviews
- Document analyses
- Secondary literature
What’s the situation in Germany for conducting RIEs?

1. First experiences with RIE & slightly increasing dynamics

2. Very few RIEs compared to German ODA volume

3. No systematic approach or strategy
What’s the situation in Germany for conducting RIEs?

Number of RIEs by sector

- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing: 23
- Health: 16
- Education: 14
- Population policies/programmes and reproductive health: 13
- Other multisector: 12
- Government and civil society: 6
- Other social infrastructure and services: 6
- Energy: 5

n=97; absolute numbers; multiple answers possible
What’s the situation in Germany for use of evidence?

What do we mean by evidence?

**Studies, evidence syntheses and evaluation reports**
that generate evidence using **scientific standards**
and methods.
What’s the situation in Germany for use of evidence?

1. Results from self-generated RIEs sometimes used at project level but not for strategic decision-making.

2. Global RIE evidence base is largely underused.

3. Project documents often refer to "impact“, but without providing any evidence for this claim.
...but GDC would like to use evidence more

"For the quality of my daily work it would be helpful if I could use substantially more evidence."

Source: own data collection (2021); n=907 development employees
What’s puzzling...

Evidence is important
Evidence is desired
?
Evidence is underused
So, what’s the problem?

Example 1: **Limited RIE knowledge**

Interview quote:

„It’s not like everyone would feel particularly well, when they are confronted with things like experiments or statistics. There is something like a barrier of know-how.“
So, what’s the problem?

Familiarity with rigorous impact evaluation (RIE) and systematic reviews (SR)

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- I have already conducted one or more RIE/ SR/ EGM myself (1) (2) (3) (4) I have never heard of this before (5) Don't know

Source: own data collection (2021); n=882 development employees
So, what’s the problem?

Example 2: **No differentiation between sources of information**

Interview quote:

„For the project manager, evidence is evidence. [...] How you get to the result is not something that the project manager cares about. Whether I can say ‘with 96.6 percent certainty it is like that’. Or I can only say, ‘in my opinion it is like that’. The project manager will treat both insights in the same way, not any differently just because one was generated with an RCT.“

...they all look the same
So, what’s the problem?

Example 3: No requirement

Interview quote

„The BMZ does not require it. So we don’t do it.“

Rules:
1. NO RULES
Our findings in a nutshell


2. The reasons are numerous and interrelated.
What’s puzzling...

- Evidence is important
- Evidence is desired
- Evidence is underused
What should we do now?

1. Identify relevant topics and evidence demands to guide RIE implementation
What should we do now?

2. Raise awareness and develop capacity on RIE evidence generation and evidence use
What should we do now?

3. Establish a public RIE database to strengthen RIE knowledge management

Launch today!
4. Install a support structure for knowledge brokering and to support RIE implementation

Synthesise existing evidence

User-friendly formats

Practical support for implementation
What should we do now?

5. Require or incentivise a systematic check of whether projects are suitable for RIE
6. Require or incentivise using the best available (rigorous) evidence
What should we do now?

7. Provide additional resources dedicated to RIE and to using (rigorous) evidence
GDC becomes more evidence-informed

Evidence is important

Evidence is desired

7 actions

Evidence is used
Time for a coffee...

5 minutes break
Recap: Our findings in a nutshell

1. Potential of evidence largely **underused**. No systematic approach.

2. The reasons are **numerous** and **interrelated**.

3. **7 actions ahead** how to become more evidence-informed
RIE & Evidence Website

Rigorous evidence database (RED)

- Now: Research findings
- Soon: more useful material

Information about our funding program

www.rie.deval.org
Let’s guide you through this
Top 5 evidence tips on how to make your own work more evidence-informed

1. Start asking questions
2. Differentiate between different sources of information
3. Use all 3 evidence products: EGM, SR & RIE
4. Mind your wording
5. Generate new RIE evidence
How can you use today‘s knowledge to make your own work more evidence-informed?
How to reach us

rie@deval.org

@DEval_RIE
Time for questions
Links to our RIE products

RIE website: https://rie.deval.org/

Rigorous evidence database: https://rie.deval.org/rigorous-evidence-database