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Are Evaluations White Elephants?
Analysing Evaluation Use in the Philippines' Basic Education Sector

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List of Acronyms

ANSA-EAP	Affiliated Network for Social Accountability in East Asia and the Pacific
BEMEF	Basic Education Monitoring and Evaluation Framework
CMS	CheckMySchool Program
DBM	Department of Budget and Management
DepEd	Department of Education
EBP	Evidence-based Policymaking
GPP	*Gulayan sa Paaralan* Program (School Vegetable Patch Program)
ICC	Investment Coordination Committee
IE	Impact Evaluation
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KCFI	Knowledge Channel Foundation, Inc.
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MES	Monitoring and Evaluation Staff [of NEDA]
NEDA	National Economic and Development Authority
NEPF	National Evaluation Policy Framework
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OG	Operational Guidelines
PDD	Project Development Division [of the Department of Education]
PIDS	Philippine Institute for Development Studies
PMS	Program Management Service [of the Department of Education]
PRD	Policy Research Division [of the Department of Education]
PS	Planning Service [of the Department of Education]
PSM	Public Sector Management
RBM	Results-based Management
SBFP	School-based Feeding Program
SEDIP	Secondary Education Development and Improvement Project
SW	Severely Wasted [Children]
SY	School Year
TEEP	Third Elementary Education Project
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WB	World Bank

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Abstract

Evaluation, a form of social science research, has featured in the field of governance and development for decades; but even with its increasing popularity, there has been limited inquiry into the actual use of evaluations towards more informed policymaking. This study aims to analyse the role that evaluations play in the Philippine government, specifically in the process of planning and designing development programs. The basic education sector was chosen as a case study for this research, focusing on the Department of Education (DepEd). This study combined organisational perspectives with the Institutional Analysis and Development Framework as an analytical framework to investigate the purpose of evaluation studies and how their findings were used by DepEd in informing the design for basic education programs. Technical and political constraints faced by the Philippine government in producing and using evaluations were also explored, particularly in the context of implementing the government's policy on results-based management. This is a qualitative study undertaken through key informant interviews, textual analysis, and a desk review of secondary data. The study finds that evaluation research now plays a more substantial role in public sector management, but that the interests of different actors in the arena – donors, government agencies, NGOs, consultants, and funders – provide different dimensions to the purpose of evaluations. Within the Philippines' basic education sector, evaluation findings have been used as one of but not the main driver for policy decisions; specifically, evaluations have been used to report accomplishments, improve program design, and legitimise certain interventions. Finally, the study finds that evaluations are not necessarily white elephants; there is great potential for their use in public sector management, but technical and political constraints faced by government particularly in the production of quality evaluations need to be taken seriously and addressed, so as not to see public funds for evaluations go to waste.

Relevance to Development Studies

Results-based management is an increasingly popular strategy in public sector management, and the resources that governments are allocating towards producing results, such as through evaluations, have been increasing with it. But despite its popularity, there have been limited and dated studies on the use of evaluation research for the improvement of development planning and program design, more so in the Philippines. While this study does not endeavour to measure the impact of evaluations on improving public sector management, it does aim to address fundamental concerns – that is, to determine first and foremost, whether evaluations are even used, in what ways they are used, and what factors within public sector organisations affect evaluation use towards better planning and design of development interventions.

Keywords

Ex-post evaluation, impact evaluation, results-based management, evidence-based decision-making, education, program design, organisation perspectives, Philippines

Chapter 1
Introduction

"The most powerful learning comes from direct experience. [...] But what happens when we can no longer observe the consequences of our actions? Herein lies the core learning dilemma that confronts organizations: **we learn best from experience but we never directly experience the consequences of many of our most important decisions**" (Senge 1990: 23).

While Peter Senge wrote this in the context of the private sector, the same can be true for development work, wherein governments, civil society organisations, and even private firms make decisions to improve the quality of people's lives, but are not, themselves, the beneficiaries of these decisions. At least, not directly. Nonetheless, it is important to know the results of these decisions, learn from them, and try to improve decision-making for the future, as development work is continuous and evolving. For situations like these, learning can be achieved through research, through studies, or through what we call ex-post evaluations.

Evaluation, as used in this paper, is the "systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and results of programs to make judgments about the program, improve or further develop program effectiveness, inform decisions about future programming, and/or increase understanding" (Patton 2008: 39). There are various kinds of evaluations, especially in the field of social science; some typologies are based on purpose, while others are based on methodology or timing. Ex-post evaluations, a category based on timing, are conducted at the end of a program (immediately or years later), or even after a certain phase of a long-term program is completed. A specific (and popular) kind of ex-post evaluation is the impact evaluation – usually defined as a study which assesses whether results can be observed and whether these can be attributed to the program which sought to bring about said results.

There has been a growing demand in the last decade for the conduct of ex-post evaluations in the Philippines, in some part due to the public's calls for transparency in a corruption-ridden bureaucracy, but also for purposes of learning and improvement in development work. The latter is aligned with the Philippine government's policy on results-based management (RBM) which they have communicated through various policy documents[1]. RBM is an approach applied by the Philippines in public sector governance that integrates human and financial resources, processes, and measurements to improve decision-making, with the goal of achieving targeted outcomes, learning, and adapting (ADB 2015). Measurements include program assessments and evaluations that seek to obtain evidence on results they have achieved, and under RBM, findings should inform policy decisions (i.e., evidence-based decision-making).

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[1] Some official documents / publications which communicate this policy are the Philippine Development Plan 2011-2016 (NEDA 2011), the Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022 (NEDA 2017), and the Memorandum Circular establishing the National Evaluation Policy Framework (NEDA and DBM 2015).

But over the years, it hasn't been apparent whether evaluation studies conducted and commissioned for public sector programs have indeed been used towards better design and implementation of programs, if they have been used for purposes other than learning and improvement, or even if they have been used at all. With the introduction of a dedicated annual fund for evaluations in the Philippines' national budget[2], it is important to investigate whether any and sufficient value is gained in exchange for the money being put into evaluations by taking stock of how evaluations have been used in the past, and whether the current organisational environment in Philippine government agencies allows evaluations to play a substantial role in the development process.

1.1. What is the Problem?

Over 40 years ago, Carol Weiss, a prominent figure in the field of evaluation, raised a concern about the utilisation of social science research – specifically, that according to both social scientists and policymakers, most studies barely make a mark in the policymaking process[3] (Weiss 1977: 532). In her own words:

> "There is a pervasive sense that government officials do not pay much attention to the research their money is buying" (Weiss 1977: 532).

But the uncertainty of utilisation at the time did not preclude the conduct of social science research, including evaluations. Weiss (1977) claims that research spending was considerable, but that their use in policy decisions was difficult to ensure and even more difficult to measure.

Today, with a heightened focus on RBM and measuring results since the Millennium Development Goals were adopted in 2000 and more so after the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted in 2015, the demand and need for evaluations has significantly increased and so has the amount of public funds going into evaluation research. As previously mentioned, an evaluation fund was introduced in the national budget specifically "to conduct studies that will tell the government whether a program is working or not, and whether it addresses the issue that it aims to address" (Interview PIDS3). But 40 years after Weiss brought attention to the minimal use of social science research, can we say that public spending on research won't go to waste this time around? With a significant amount of money being dedicated to increasing evaluation practice in the Philippines in the name of RBM, and in the midst of the country's many development problems, there is cause to assess the significance of evaluation studies for government agencies in the Philippines and whether or not they are used in practice as an input to policymaking. This issue is relevant because the Filipino people deserve a government that is transparent about and accountable for how public funds are spent.

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[2] A PHP250 million (roughly USD4.5 million) 'M&E Fund' was appropriated for the first time in the NEDA budget in 2015.

[3] Weiss' claims were made in the context of social science research utilization in the United States Federal Government, based on reports from the US Congress and other academic publications on the subject.

1.2. Contextual Background

1.2.1. Evaluations in the Philippine Public Sector: A Brief History

For the past 40 years, various kinds of evaluations have been conducted for public sector programs in the Philippines. In the early 80's to '90s, most evaluations were conducted for programs funded through Official Development Assistance (ODA), and these evaluations were usually carried out by donors (Adil Khan 1992). In the same period, the government, through the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS), also undertook some of their own evaluations, but mostly on policies. The PIDS, a government-owned and controlled corporation that serves as a socioeconomic policy think tank, conducts policy-related studies on a wide range of topics with the intention of providing policymakers with sound research evidence to guide them in decision-making. They started to venture into impact evaluations of development programs in the early 90's, which was also around the time government started taking steps to strengthen efforts on monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

One of these steps was the creation of the Project Monitoring Staff within the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA). While NEDA was created in 1972 to serve as the country's central planning agency, its reorganisation in 1987 to include a monitoring staff effectively gave it the mandate to conduct M&E of development policies and programs. Under the Project Monitoring Staff, an Ex-post Evaluation Division was also established primarily to undertake impact evaluations of completed programs. The World Bank, one of the top ODA donors to the Philippines then and now[4], worked with NEDA to try and establish a system for conducting ex-post evaluations given the latter's then-new mandate, but to no success. While monitoring activities took off both at the level of NEDA as an oversight agency, at the level of implementing agencies, and even at the level of NGOs as government's monitoring partners at the grassroots level, NEDA's evaluation mandate remained on paper, as the Ex-post Evaluation Division merely engaged in the coordination of donors' evaluation activities instead of conducting impact evaluations themselves, citing a lack of funding and trained personnel as major causes (Adil Khan 1992). Two decades later, NEDA was once again reorganised and the Project Monitoring Staff became the Monitoring and Evaluation Staff (MES). Curiously, the Ex-post Evaluation Division was disbanded in the new organisational structure, and no evaluation-focused division within MES took its place.

Evaluations thus continued to be carried out primarily by donors such as the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) – consistently the largest source of ODA loans to the Philippines – and the World Bank, among others. There were, however, issues with regard to the receptiveness of the Philippine government to donor-driven evaluations. Disagreements between program management staff and donors with regard to scope, methodology, and findings of evaluations precluded the

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[4] An annual review of the ODA Portfolio in the Philippines is conducted by NEDA. The reports, which include a ranking of the top donors of foreign aid, may be accessed through the NEDA website at < http://www.neda.gov.ph/official-development-assistance-page/ >.

former's use of these studies, which they also saw as "fault-finding" exercises meant to uncover budget misuse or issues in program implementation (Adil Khan 1992: 37-39). It is interesting to note that this was already about a decade after Weiss alerted us to the causes for neglect of social science research – one being that "there are often fundamental cleavages in values between social scientists who do research and policymakers who are expected to use it" (Weiss 1977: 543).

To enhance the Philippine government's capacity to eventually conduct their own evaluations, and perhaps to address government distrust of externally-led studies, donors started to take a more participatory approach to evaluations in the late 1990s, as enabled by national policy. With the passing of the Philippines' ODA Act in 1996, evaluation practice in the country became more frequent as ex-post evaluations and impact assessments of completed programs were formally included as a form of ODA to the Philippines. This meant that the Philippine government could participate in evaluations as part of technical cooperation programs with certain donors to improve the government's evaluation capacity. By 2012, for instance, JICA had conducted 13 joint evaluations with NEDA, particularly on infrastructure projects (JICA 2012: 33).

To further strengthen what the government calls its 'results focus' (NEDA and DBM 2015: 2), a memorandum circular establishing a national evaluation policy framework (NEPF) was issued to all government agencies in July 2015. The policy framework aims to govern the practice of evaluation within the bureaucracy and it mandates, among other things, that all programs and projects "implemented by [the national government and] supported by local and foreign funds are evaluated at least once at the end of their life cycle or as frequent as necessary" (NEDA and DBM 2015: 3). Section 6.1.4 of the memorandum circular also mandates concerned implementing agencies to: (i) provide appropriate management response to the evaluation findings; and (ii) ensure that results of the evaluations are used as inputs to planning and budgeting processes. One would think that with the issuance of such a policy, the government's drive towards evaluation production and use has once again been revitalized since M&E was first included as a NEDA mandate in 1987. Unfortunately, as of date (i.e., more than three years into the policy's issuance), the Inter-agency Evaluation Task Force which should lead the implementation of the policy has yet to be formed.

Implementation setbacks, however, do not seem to stop initiatives on other fronts. In the same year that the NEPF was issued, the M&E Fund to be administered by NEDA-MES was appropriated in the national budget to "finance various M&E initiatives that will gauge development interventions' successes, extract lessons from [program] implementation, and enhance existing ICT and database management systems" (NEDA 2017: 1). The Fund has since been appropriated annually, though amounts vary every year depending on what NEDA requests and what Congress approves. Even within the budgets of implementing agencies, evaluations are now being allocated for. With an increase in the number of evaluations led by government agencies in recent years, and with broader participation even in donor-led evaluations, it would be interesting to see whether these studies are now better utilised and in what way/s.

1.2.2. Investigating an Unlikely Case: Evaluation Use in Basic Education – the Country's Biggest Sector

Every year, the largest slice of the national budget is allocated to the education sector, as mandated by the Philippine Constitution. As such, the government's main implementing agency for the basic education sector, the Department of Education (DepEd), has also received the biggest budget among all government agencies annually. The Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017-2022 states, however, that elementary and secondary achievement rates remain unsatisfactory, targets in enrolment rates have not been achieved, student-teacher ratios remain high, and basic educational facilities in many areas are absent, among other challenges persisting in the sector (NEDA 2017: 141).

Despite the amount of investments going into the sector and the challenges that persist within it, education has not been a focus of government- nor donor-led evaluations. World Bank-led evaluations that the Philippine government participated in have focused on social welfare programs[5], while JICA-led evaluations have focused on infrastructure, agriculture, and the environment[6]. Meanwhile, out of the 17 programs that are in the pipeline for impact evaluations under the M&E Fund, only one is on education (NEDA-MES 2018: 2). With limited available evaluation research on education and without a functioning evaluation framework governing the sector, it would be interesting to see whether and how actors in the sector – particularly DepEd – allow evaluations to contribute to their decision-making processes. If significant evaluation use can be observed in an organisation that does not get much priority for evaluations, perhaps generally the same can be said of other government agencies that have not been getting much attention in terms of evaluation practice in the country.

Two cases will be analysed to determine whether and how evaluations were used by DepEd – the School-based Feeding Program (SBFP) and the Third Elementary Education Project (TEEP). Both DepEd programs underwent impact evaluations, the former by government, and the latter by JICA as a funder of the program. These two impact evaluations are the most often cited evaluations for education programs in local M&E conferences, and this choice was also made to represent the two types of programs and evaluations based on funding – with the SBFP being a locally-funded

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[5] Major World Bank-led impact evaluations in recent years have been on the 'Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program', a conditional cash transfer program (report accessible through https://www.dswd.gov.ph/download/Pantawid-Pamilya-Impact-Evaluation-2012-Report-Final.pdf) and the KALAHI-CIDSS program that aims to alleviate rural property through a Community-Driven Development approach (report accessible through http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/654321468294947152/pdf/690940Revised00port0Complete0lowres.pdf). Both programs are implemented by the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

[6] A list of JICA-led ex-post evaluations of ODA-funded programs in the Philippines can be accessed through https://www2.jica.go.jp/en/evaluation/index.php?anken=&country1=Philippines&area2=&country2=&area3=&country3=&field1=&field2=&field3=&start_from=&start_to=&search=Search.

program whose evaluation was government-led, and the TEEP being an ODA-funded program whose evaluation was donor-led. Details on the programs can be found in Annexes 1 and 2.

1.3. Research Objectives

By answering the questions below, this research aims to help the Philippine government – where the researcher is currently employed – to reflect on its practices with regard to the production and use of evaluations, and to analyse where there may be gaps in the implementation of its evaluation policy.

1.3.1. Research Questions

The main question that this research will seek to answer is: **What role do evaluations play in the planning and design of basic education programs in the Philippines?**

In order to structure data and analysis towards responding to the main question, the following sub-questions will also be addressed:

i. Which actors are involved in the conduct of evaluations for basic education programs in the Philippines?

ii. What types of and for what purpose (stated and actual) are evaluations of basic education programs undertaken?

iii. How are findings and recommendations of evaluation reports used by the Department of Education in informing the design for basic education programs?

iv. What technical and political constraints does the Philippine government experience in the production and use of evaluations?

1.4. Study Limitations

This research will only cover the use of ex-post evaluations and how their findings feed into the planning phase of the public sector management cycle, specifically in the conceptualisation of programs and their implementation design. Given the government's policy on results-based management, the study will only look at ex-post evaluations, especially impact evaluations, as these are the types of evaluations that are prioritised for implementation under the M&E Fund. The focus of analysis on only the planning phase is due to time and resource constraints. There are separate oversight agencies for planning and budgeting, and evidence-based decision-making in budgeting in the Philippines already has a long history of being studied (ADB 2015; APCoP-MfDR 2011; Dean 1986; Parsons 1957). This research also does not look into whether and why there may be a mismatch between decisions made by the planning and budgeting agencies, nor will it seek to determine whether use of evaluations have resulted in positive impacts for program beneficiaries. Finally, because there are multiple actors involved in managing the education sector, this study will only cover

basic education (i.e., primary and secondary levels) for which the Philippine government has only one main implementing agency – the Department of Education.

1.5. Organisation of the Study

This paper is structured as follows: Chapter 1 provided a contextual background on the topic and the nature of the research problem, a brief history of and overview of major actors involved in evaluation practice in the Philippines, the research questions, and the limitations of the study; Chapter 2 will provide a discussion of the major concepts in evaluation, evidence-based policymaking, and the theoretical and analytical framework with which findings of the research will be analysed; Chapter 3 will describe the methodology used for data gathering and analysis; Chapter 4 will present findings on the first three research questions on the conduct and use of evaluations; Chapter 5 will discuss and analyse findings on the fourth[7] research question on constraints in the production and use of evaluations; and Chapter 6 will conclude the study, provide policy recommendations, and articulate the study's contribution to theory.

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[7] The fourth sub-question is discussed in a separate chapter as it deals with technical and political constraints in evaluation work that do not apply solely to the basic education sector but to the public sector as a whole.

Chapter 2
Key Concepts in Evaluation, Evidence-based Policymaking, and the Study's Analytical Framework

This chapter will discuss three main concepts/themes as they are necessary towards understanding the findings of this research (to be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5), namely: (i) types of evaluation and their uses; (iii) the politics of evaluation; and (iii) evidence-based policymaking. Literature on the first theme will be useful in analysing the types of evaluations that exist, and to see which of these are present in evaluation practice in the Philippines. The second theme delves into the political nature of evaluation and the factors behind evaluation work that need to be analysed to better understand why evaluations are conducted. Finally, the third theme looks at what evidence-based decision-making means, particularly in the policymaking sphere, and this contributes to analysing how RBM through evaluations is practiced in the Philippines. The analysis will be framed by combining two perspectives from Organisation Theory with the Institutional Analysis and Development Framework.

2.1. Types of Evaluations and their Uses

Much of the literature agree on at least three main types of evaluations according to purpose: judgment-oriented or summative; improvement-oriented or formative; and knowledge-oriented or conceptual (Bamberger et al. 2012: 21; Lucas and Longhurst 2010: 30; Patton 1997: 65-70). *Summative evaluations* are primarily concerned with assessing the merit or worth of a completed program in terms of how well it was able to achieve its intended results. This type of evaluation usually caters to policymakers, donors, or the public itself, towards showing accountability for the use of taxpayers' money. *Formative evaluations*, on the other hand, give more focus on how to improve the way a program is implemented, rather than looking at whether or not it has achieved its targets. As such, it makes sense to conduct formative evaluations when there is still time to change the design of a program, to adjust certain processes of implementation, or even at the end of a program phase in case there are plans about upscaling or starting a new phase. Finally, *conceptual evaluations* mainly seek to contribute to the existing body of knowledge and to "influence thinking about issues in a [more] general way" (Patton 1997: 70). Bamberger et al. (2012: 21) view this third type of evaluation as developmental in the way that it supports innovative thinking towards addressing development problems. In fact, conceptual evaluations may not always start out with that purpose. According to Sandison (2006: 93), an evaluation may aim to provide recommendations that require policy action, but if these recommendations are not adopted, the debate and dialogue that take place around the evaluation's findings may still increase the body of knowledge and stakeholders' understanding of a development problem. New perspectives and information from such discussions may accumulate over time, contributing to increase in organisational knowledge about how to improve public sector interventions or performance, even if

the evaluations from which this knowledge came from were not instrumentally used (Sandison 2006: 93-94).

Another way of looking at these types of evaluation is through what is expected of them in terms of use in decision-making. Jones et al. (2009: 11-12) use a slightly different categorisation, namely: direct or instrumental use, indirect use, and legitimation. Using these categories, summative and formative evaluations may be said to have a more 'direct' or instrumental use because they should, ideally, serve as input to decisions on whether programs should be continued, terminated, scaled up, or downsized, among other options. In Sandison's words, "utilising the evaluation means taking its advice" (2006: 93). On the other hand, conceptual evaluations have a more 'indirect' use, such that there are not necessarily any decisions waiting to be made based on their findings.

I put forward, however, that the two earlier typologies are based on what may be called 'official' uses. The third category from Jones et al., however, is an interesting take on what may be more of an underlying reason behind the conduct of evaluations. *Legitimation*, or the use of evaluations to justify the implementation of certain policies or programs, seems to be a more politically-influenced motivation to commission an evaluation study. While it can convincingly be argued that evaluations are always political (Bamberger at al. 2012), the point being stressed is that legitimation is not an objective usually disclosed by commissioning agencies or actors. This may be because evaluations for legitimation may not have direct instrumental use (i.e., they were not undertaken to feed directly into decisions about program implementation), and they may be perceived as tainted by certain parties' political interests. An analysis of evaluation purpose would therefore be more robust when underlying motivations such as these are considered.

In terms of the timing of evaluations, ex-ante evaluations are conducted before the implementation of a program or project and are sometimes called appraisals. In the Philippines, ex-ante evaluations mainly refer to economic and financial cost-benefit analyses. Mid-term evaluations are carried out midway through an intervention, while ex-post evaluations are undertaken towards the end or after completion of a program (Norad 2016). As previously pointed out, this paper will focus on the use of ex-post evaluations.

In discussions of evidence-based decision-making, one specific type of evaluation is often talked about – the impact evaluation (IE) (Jones et al. 2009; CDG 2006). This is a type of ex-post evaluation usually defined as a study which assesses whether observed outcomes (e.g., improved health conditions for children, improved learning outcomes, etc.) result from certain programs which had aimed to bring about those outcomes. Its value is not only in measuring results, but in establishing attribution of such results to implemented programs (CDG 2006: 29). This is valuable information, especially for policymakers, because it can show what types of interventions work to address certain problems, but it can also serve to justify decisions made in the past.

2.2. The Politics of Evaluation

There are many advantages to undertaking impact evaluations, especially when these are done strategically (i.e., conducted for programs that will yield more timely and

robust information on what kinds of interventions work). Different contexts might mean that programs will work in different ways, but good IEs can still help policymakers avoid costly mistakes, differentiate real successes from apparent ones, and complement other studies (CDG 2006: 20-25).

A 2006 report by the Centre for Global Development, however, claims that in terms of evidence-based decision-making, an "evaluation gap" exists either because there are not enough IEs conducted, or the quality of IEs conducted is poor. Good IEs have to be thought of and integrated within a program's design at ex-ante phase. Unfortunately in policymaking, the timing of supply and demand is usually mismatched, meaning the need for evaluations is rarely anticipated and only tends to enter policymakers' minds when findings are already needed (CDG 2006: 3). That IEs need to be conducted and conducted well is, however, only easy to say. There are real world challenges and constraints that limit IE undertaking and probably contribute to the evaluation gap in evidence-based policymaking.

First, we look at technical constraints such as level of capacity to conduct evaluations and available resources (Jones et al. 2009: 7-8). Undertaking evaluations, especially impact evaluations, requires a high level of expertise and a significant budget which is usually present in international organisations, but lacking in developing country governments and NGOs. This then leads to a dependence on donor agencies to lead and finance evaluations, subsequently resulting in a pool of available evaluations that only cater to the needs and interests of the donors themselves. These interests are not always aligned with the interests of governments. Further, these studies are usually undertaken by foreign consultants hired by the donor organisations, and most of them "do not bite the hand that feeds them; that is, they do not question [...] the philosophical and/or political premises on which [programs] are based" (Bamberger 1991: 329). Donor-driven evaluations are mainly concerned with legitimising a program by framing issues in a certain way and providing evidence on the performance and results of the aid program implemented. In this sense, we can look at the research gap as a lack of evaluation research that helps governments pursue better programs by calling out design flaws that lead to implementation issues, determining how a program is perceived by its beneficiaries, or even questioning whether the right interventions are being pursued.

Second, evaluations also face process constraints that include data availability and generation methods, and the previously discussed mismatch in timing of supply and demand of IEs, among others (Jones et al. 2009: 7-8). Because of the methodological intricacies for conducting IEs, there has to be systematic planning of how these will be undertaken, including data generation and monitoring plans that should be implemented from the commencement of a policy or a program. This is where evaluation policies and permanent evaluation units become necessary. But given resource and capacity constraints, and the various pressing issues faced by developing countries in particular, an effective system for evaluation may only be established if there arises sufficient political support for long-term evaluations or if donors provide adequate technical support for government institutional capacity for public sector-led evaluations, instead of focusing only on completing evaluations for their own aid programs (Bamberger 1991: 333).

Finally, the so-called evaluation gap may not necessarily refer to the lack of evaluations undertaken, but to the deliberate non-utilisation of existing evaluations. There is a consensus among academics in the field (many of whom are evaluators themselves) that evaluation research is inherently political (Taylor and Balloch 2005; Bamberger 1991), meaning it is value-driven. Thus, for a better understanding of which evaluations are used and why, we must also look at "who funds, uses, controls, and conducts evaluations" (Bamberger 1991: 325), as these provide a clue as to the underlying reasons evaluations are undertaken and why they are or are not used. In developing countries for instance, international donor agencies play a major role in the selection, design, and use of evaluations (Bamberger 1991: 325), and as evident in the Philippine experience in the 1990s, these donor-led evaluations were not always well-received by program management staff and policymakers as they did not agree with findings or the evaluations did not cater to their managerial purposes. Bamberger (1991) argues that different stakeholders often have different and conflicting interests when it comes to whether evaluations should be carried out, what should be evaluated, and how results will be used and communicated – with some of them even opting to conceal certain findings to protect their political positions. Acknowledging the different values that underlie evaluation work, Taylor and Balloch (2005) argue for evaluation work based on partnership and participation that can take into account the perspectives and needs of different actors and can, to an extent[8], balance interests and power relations among stakeholders.

2.3. Evidence-based Policymaking

The previous discussions on research, particularly evaluation research, has been in the context of an approach called Evidence-based Policymaking (EBP). This approach "helps people make well-informed decisions about policies, programmes and projects by putting the best available evidence from research at the heart of policy development and implementation" (Davies, as cited in Sutcliffe and Court 2005: 1). The main goal of an EBP approach is to replace opinion- or ideology-based decision-making with policymaking that is rational or backed by research (Sutcliffe and Court 2005: 1). And while it is only one kind of research, this paper will focus on evaluations as a source of evidence for EBP practice in the Philippines. In fact, the memorandum circular on the National Evaluation Policy Framework of the Philippines singles out the conduct of evaluations in the public sector as a tool towards evidence-based decision-making (NEDA and DBM 2015: 2).

Sutcliffe and Court further argue that EBP can have a greater impact on developing countries where the approach is less established and where policies are "often not based on evidence" (2005: 2). But context is important and the fact that the EBP approach was developed and promoted in the West where economies are advanced and processes are more easily coordinated may actually hinder potential impacts of the

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[8] Participatory evaluations can only go so far in balancing interests because stakeholder diversity will also inevitably introduce a myriad of interests. This can lead to a stalemate that treats each actor's view on a program as "equally plausible" (Taylor and Balloch 2005: 6).

approach in the developing world. There are important factors to consider that may limit the actual practice of EBP, such as the politics and constraints involved in conducting impact evaluations that were mentioned in the previous section of this chapter, and that will also be discussed later in this paper (see Chapter 5). These constraints are generally more of a concern in countries in the Global South such as the Philippines. Moreover, many other factors compete with evidence in the policymaking sphere. Analysing at the organisational level, policymaking in government is highly influenced by the knowledge prevailing within the organisation, by biases or ideologies which determine the values of decision-makers and their default response to certain issues, by self-interest, and by who is empowered to make decisions (Weiss 1977).

Thus, in analysing decision-making processes in the context of the Philippine government, organisational contexts of government agencies, particularly involving power relations and political interests, must also be taken into account to yield a more robust analysis of the role that evaluations or scientific evidence actually play in public sector management, particularly in program planning and design processes.

2.4. Institutional Analysis and Organisational Perspectives – a Framework for Analysing the Role of Evaluations in Policymaking

An institutional analysis will be undertaken to examine the various conditions, actors, and rules-in-use, within the organisational environment of government agencies of interest and how these affect the perception and use of evaluations within them. In this paper, an institution is defined as "a widely understood rule, norm, or strategy that creates incentives for behaviour in repetitive situations" (Crawford and Ostrom 1995, as cited in Polski and Ostrom 1999: 3). The Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) Framework was used as a means to "synthesize the work of multiple participants, including those who are directly involved in the policy situation and have an interest in policy outcomes" (Polski and Ostrom 1999: 6). The objective of the institutional analysis is to determine which factors influence the behaviour of actors within an action arena. An action arena is defined as a "conceptual space in which actors inform themselves, consider alternative courses of action, make decisions, take action, and experience the consequences of these actions" (Polski and Ostrom 1999: 20).

The actors, in this case, are bureaucrats and staff of NEDA, PIDS, DepEd, donor agencies, and NGOs, while the two arenas to be analysed are: (i) the planning and design arena for basic education programs; and (ii) the planning, design, and implementation arena for evaluations of basic education and other development programs. These arenas were chosen because the focus of this research is on the role that evaluations play specifically in the program design phase of public sector management. Determining the factors affecting behaviour and decision-making of actors in these arenas will make it clearer how different organisational perspectives explain the use of evaluations within the government agencies of interest.

To better inform the analysis of the action arena, three variables will be analysed based on the IAD Framework, namely: the physical and material conditions (i.e., physical and human resources such as budget, staffing, etc.), the community attributes (i.e., demographic features of the organisation and actors' beliefs and values about policymaking strategies and outcomes), and the rules-in-use (i.e., operating rules, both formal and informal, which actors commonly abide by). These three variables significantly affect the action arena and have to be taken into consideration to understand the resulting patterns of behaviour and interactions among actors in the arena (Polski and Ostrom 1999). These will then be analysed against evaluative criteria which characterise the ideal situation for a particular policy process. For this study, the evaluative criteria to be used are the stated objectives of the National Evaluation Policy Framework (NEDA and DBM 2015: 2).

For a more robust analysis of evaluation use, two perspectives from Organisation Theory will be combined with the IAD Framework, and this combination (illustrated in Figure 2.1) will serve as an overall framework for analysing information obtained in this research. Using an organisational perspective to analyse exogenous variables and resulting patterns of interaction is one way of assessing how evaluations are perceived and used in organisations, but using only a single perspective will not be enough for a good understanding of the way an organisation views, processes, and uses evaluations (Schaumberg-Müller 2005). Thus, two perspectives within Organisation Theory will be applied in this study: first, the *learning organisation* perspective; and second, the *political organisation* perspective.
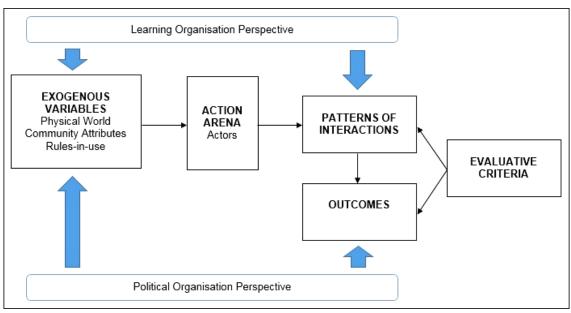
Figure 2.1
Institutional Analysis and Development Framework and Organisational Perspectives

Source: Adapted from Ostrom et al. 1994, as cited in Polski and Ostrom 1999

2.4.1. Learning Organisation Perspective

It could be argued that the perspective of the learning organisation applies to the policy declarations of the Philippine government that it is determined to institutionalise "program planning and implementation characterized by evidence-based decisions, accountability, and learning which [...] are supported by systematic, rigorous, and impartial evaluation" (NEDA and DBM 2015: 2). Using this perspective to analyse learning in the organisation means management response to evaluation findings will have to be assessed, along with changes in design of and budgetary allocations for programs based on evaluation recommendations, if applicable. The shortcoming of the learning organisation perspective is that it assumes the quality of evaluations conducted (Schaumberg-Müller 2005: 210). But the quality of evaluations, as stated in the CDG report (2006), contributes to an evaluation gap and should be considered when analysing the role that evaluations play within an organisation.

According to Daft (2004: 372), the following characteristics are evident in a learning organisation: (i) questioning the status quo is valued as this allows for change and improvement; (ii) boundaries are minimised such that collaboration and sharing of ideas/information is incorporated into various work stages; and (iii) equality and trust among people (including managers) is highly valued, allowing people to take risks and experiment to an extent. While these were formulated in the context of private sector organisations and whether they encourage a culture of learning among their employees, they may also be used as a framework to analyse whether government allows for learning and questioning of 'how things are done', which may subsequently allow windows to open for evaluation findings to be used as a relevant input to policymaking. This paper will investigate whether these variables are present within the Department of Education, as a case study, in the context of their production and use of evaluation research (see Section 4.1.2).

2.4.2. Political Organisation Perspective

As discussed in the previous chapter, it is possible that evaluations only play a limited role in learning and knowledge-building. Thus, another interesting view to take is the political organisation perspective, where interests and power relations within an organisation are important considerations in understanding how evaluations are used (Schaumberg-Müller 2005: 212). Under this perspective, evaluation may be viewed more as a political instrument for legitimation rather than as evidence for rational decision-making. After all, it is hard to argue against political influence in evaluation. They are, as discussed in the previous chapter (see Section 2.2 on the politics of evaluation) and as Bamberger et al. (2012: 107) suggest, "inescapable" in the conduct of evaluations. In every step of carrying out an evaluation, power is a driving force, especially as some actors yield more influence and can affect what the study will focus on, what criteria will be used, and which data can be accessed (Bamberger et al. 2012: 111).

Characteristics of a political organisation, i.e., the variables that will be investigated under this perspective (see Section 4.1.3), include: (i) the presence of pluralistic interests (i.e., separate goals and objectives among individuals and groups that may not always be aligned) within the organisation and among evaluation actors; (ii) in-

formation used and withheld in a strategic manner; and (iii) a high value for hierarchy and bureaucracy (Daft 2004: 492-493; Schaumberg-Müller 2005: 212).

This study combined the two organisational perspectives with the IAD Framework to better understand the behaviour and interests of actors in the basic education sector towards answering the research's main question on the role that evaluations play in the planning and design of basic education programs in the Philippines.

Chapter 3
Research Methodology

3.1. Qualitative Approach

This study was undertaken using qualitative methods as it sought to explore interactions, processes, and attributes of a group of individuals and the institutions that govern them (O'Leary 2014: 13). Specifically, the information required to conduct the institutional and organisational analysis were gathered through desk review, key informant interviews, and through textual analyses.

3.1.1. Desk Review of Policy and Program Documents

Aside from academic literature such as those discussed in the previous chapter, reference texts for this study included policy documents (e.g., memoranda and office circulars, executive orders, etc.) issued by the Philippine government pertaining to RBM, development planning, operating procedures for planning and designing policies and programs, and institutional approval processes for development programs, among others. Program documents prepared by donor agencies and NGOs including program information sheets, progress reports, completion reports, and evaluation reports were also reviewed. These documents served as sources towards answering the second and fourth sub-questions of this study, namely on the types and purpose of evaluations undertaken, and the technical and political constraints faced by government in evaluation work. While some of these documents were available publicly through government agencies', NGOs', and donors' official websites, I also requested NEDA, PIDS, DepEd, JICA, and the World Bank for some unpublished documents (listed in Annex 3).

3.1.2. Key Informant Interviews

In-depth interviews, a one-on-one method of data collection, is appropriate when seeking information on how people make decisions, the motivation for certain behaviour, and understanding the context in which an interviewee lives (or works, in this case) (Hennink et al. 2011: 110). Thus, I conducted semi-structured interviews with key personnel in NEDA, PIDS, and DepEd to gain information on how program design processes are implemented, what types of evaluations are commissioned, by whom and for what purpose (sub-questions 1 and 2), how these are actually used (sub-question 3), whether they are familiar with the evaluations conducted, and what constraints they face in implementing national policies on results-based management (sub-question 4). I also interviewed key people from two NGOs that have worked and/or coordinated with DepEd, to gain their insights and experience in M&E and decision-making processes for basic education programs. Both senior and junior staff from the offices mentioned were interviewed – senior staff because they are likely more familiar with policies and are more involved in decision-making, and junior

staff because they do most of the legwork and may be more forthcoming on how evaluation work goes about and the constraints faced by their organisations.

I went on field in the Philippines from July 12 to September 11, 2018 to conduct the interviews face-to-face, but I had already contacted the key informants through e-mail to secure their agreement to participate and to set a schedule for the interviews prior to going on field. All interviews were completed by August 22, 2018, most of them conducted in the key informants' offices (see Annex 4 for details). The key informants from government were selected based on the coverage of their work within their respective organisations, i.e., their involvement in program design and/or evaluations, while the NGO contacts were referred by DepEd as two of their active NGO partners.

All interviews were conducted predominantly in English – the official language used in the Philippine government – but some Filipino phrases were used every now and then when it seemed necessary for elaboration. Most of the interviews lasted for at least one hour, with the exception of the interviews with the Undersecretaries of NEDA and DepEd which only lasted 30 minutes each, as it was difficult to take a longer amount of time from the busy schedules of the said government officials. Table 3.1 provides the position level of and coding used for the key informants.

Table 3.1
Coding of Key Informant Interviews

No.	Office/Agency/Organisation	Position Level	Code
Department of Education (DepEd)			
1	Planning Service	Official (Undersecretary)	PS1
2		Junior Staff (Policy Research Division)	PS2
3	Program Management Service	Senior Staff (Project Development Division)	PMS1
4		Junior Staff (Project Development Division)	PMS2
National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA)			
Office of Investment Programming (OIP)			
5	Office of the Undersecretary for Investment Programming	Official (Undersecretary)	OIP1
6	Monitoring and Evaluation Staff	Official (Director)	MES1
7		Official (Assistant Director)	MES2
8		Senior Staff	MES3
9		Junior Staff (with experience in handling the M&E Fund)	MES4
Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS)			
10	Office of the President	Senior Research Fellow	PIDS1
11		Senior Research Fellow	PIDS2
12	Project Services Department	Senior Staff	PIDS3
Knowledge Channel Foundation Inc. (KCFI)			
13	Management	Official (Director)	KC1
Affiliated Network for Social Accountability in East Asia and the Pacific (ANSA-EAP)			
14	Management	Official (Executive Director)	AE1

3.1.3. Textual Analysis

A textual analysis was undertaken towards answering the third research question on how evaluations informed DepEd's decisions on program design. Specifically, the content of the 2016 impact evaluation report of the School-based Feeding Program (SBFP) was analysed and compared to the published operational guidelines for the implementation of the program for the period 2017-2022, to see which findings and recommendations of the evaluation were incorporated in the guidelines. A 2011 impact evaluation report of the Third Elementary Education Project (TEEP) was also analysed and compared to the operational guidelines of DepEd programs which have components similar to those implemented under the TEEP, namely the Secondary Education Development and Improvement Project (SEDIP) and the Basic Educational Facilities Fund (BEFF).

3.2. Ethics and Positionality

As an ethical obligation to the participants, they were informed in detail of the research by e-mail prior to the actual field work, and I responded to any follow-up questions they had regarding the study before their interviews were conducted. All key informants agreed to have their names cited in the paper (see Annex 4), but none of the interviews were audio nor video-recorded to encourage ease of sharing among the key informants. Instead, I took notes during the interviews, including verbatim quotations about details that I deemed important for this study.

To minimise my bias as an employee of the Philippine government, particularly of NEDA's Monitoring and Evaluation Staff, I attempted to triangulate sources by obtaining data from different agencies, both government and non-government, from people in different levels of position in the organisation, and also through the different methods described above.

3.3. Challenges in the Field

Given my positionality as a government employee on study leave, accessing information and participants for the study was not very difficult as I could still consult with my bosses and colleagues; key informants external to NEDA seemed more open to participating in the study upon knowing that I had support from my office. There were still challenges, however, when it came to securing some of the interviews – there were officials from DepEd who did not get back to me, others took a while to respond, and there were also requests for rescheduling. The initial duration I had set for the interviews had to be extended to accommodate these setbacks and this delayed the research writing by at least two weeks. Some documents I requested from DepEd for desk review were also not provided.

Chapter 4
Use of Evaluations in the Philippines' Basic Education Sector

This chapter aims to address the first three sub-questions of this research, namely: (i) which actors are involved in the conduct of evaluations for basic education programs; (ii) for what purpose are evaluations of basic education programs undertaken; and (iii) how are findings of evaluation reports used in informing the design for basic education programs. An organisational perspective was taken as an approach to answering these questions, with the aim of providing a better understanding of the intended and actual use of evaluations within the sector.

4.1. Actors and Institutions Governing Evaluation Use and Practice in the Philippines

This section aims to look at the actors involved in the production of evaluations and the culture within these actors' organisations in the context of two action arenas previously mentioned as an institutional approach to analysing how these actors perceive and use evaluations. Figure 4.1 on the next page provides a summary of the institutional analysis conducted for this purpose.

4.1.1. Exogenous Variables Affecting Evaluation Use in Program Design

Action situations are affected by factors outside the arena such as physical and material conditions, and the inherent attributes of and rules-in-use within a community of actors. Material conditions refer to resources (e.g., human, financial, physical, etc.) and capabilities of an organisation that are necessary in the provision of goods and services (Polski and Ostrom 1999: 9). In the case of producing evaluations to aid decision-making in the Philippines' education sector and in public sector management as a whole, financial resources do not seem to be a problem, particularly due to the country's growing economy and an increased awareness of the significance of evaluating for results. With the introduction of the M&E Fund into the national budget in 2015, the government has been allocating no less than PHP300[9] million (roughly USD5.7 million) annually for the conduct of research and evaluation studies. Spending the money, however, is another story which will be discussed in Chapter 6.

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[9] This estimate only includes the annual PHP100-200 million appropriation under the M&E Fund, the DepEd annual budget for evaluations of around PHP1-4 million, and the annual national government budget support for PIDS of about PHP120 million (average for 2016-2018).

Figure 4.1 Institutional Analysis

Exogenous Variables

Material Conditions
- Around PHP300M (roughly USD5.7M) is allocated in the national budget for the conduct of evaluations (by NEDA, DepEd, and PIDS alone).
- Government implementing agencies have a planning and program design unit, but most do not have a dedicated M&E unit.
- Every government agency has a bids and awards committee that handles procurement, including contracting out evaluations
- There is a significant number of personnel vacancies in government. Within DepEd and NEDA, vacancies also include managerial positions.

Community Attributes
- There is high appreciation for the value of research and evaluations within the education sector.
- There is clamour from policymakers and the public for government to disclose program results/outcomes.
- Prior to 2016, government attention to evaluation research was increasing, with a policy issued in 2015 to govern evaluation practice in the public sector.
- Policy priorities within government tend to shift alongside a change in administration (the last Presidential election was held in May 2016).
- There tends to be higher regard for foreign or private sector expertise than for in-house government expertise on technical matters.

Rules-in-use
- Agencies have to submit budget proposals to DBM for review and consolidation almost 1 year prior to the fiscal year. Thus, agencies have to plan their programs and activities (including evaluations) more than a year in advance to be included in the proposal.
- Government agencies' proposed development programs costing at least PHP2.5 billion (roughly USD45 million) have to first be appraised by the NEDA Secretariat and approved by the NEDA-ICC for implementation and financing.
- DepEd has a mandate to conduct M&E for their programs, but NEDA has a mandate to conduct central M&E and to steer evaluation practice for whole-of-government.
- The national evaluation policy issued in 2015 should cover all government offices/agencies (but has not been implemented).
- Major evaluations of basic education programs are usually conducted by PIDS or commissioned by donors.
- Donor-led evaluations are contracted out to external consultants/evaluators.
- Donor-commissioned evaluations abide by the respective donor's procurement rules.
- Government-led evaluations (aside from those undertaken by PIDS), are contracted out to consultants/consulting firms through the government's procurement process.
- The government procurement process awards contracts to consultants/firms with the lowest bidding price and a proposal responsive to the terms defined by the government agency.
- The cost of most development programs are either borne purely by government (in this case they are accountable to the public who should benefit from the programs) or jointly by government and donors (in this case there is also accountability to citizens of donor countries).
- For NGO-led and –funded programs, accountability is also mainly to their funders.
- The cost of evaluations undertaken by consultants are borne either by donors or by governments. In the case of the former, evaluations primarily serve the purpose of donor agencies and their funders. In the case of the latter, evaluations should ideally inform decision-making on plans, policies, and programs of the government.

Action Situation

Action Arenas
- Planning and design of basic education programs in the public sector
- Planning, design, conduct and/or commissioning of evaluations of basic education and other development programs in the public sector.

Actors
- NEDA-ICC
  - Inter-agency body tasked to approve the implementation and funding of major development programs based primarily on their fiscal and economic implications
- NEDA (Secretariat)
  - Oversight agency tasked with overall development planning
  - Also has a mandate to conduct M&E for ongoing and completed development programs
  - Serves as Secretariat of the ICC
- DepEd
  - Government agency tasked to formulate, implement, and coordinate policies, plans and programs in the basic education sector.
  - Also has a mandate to conduct M&E of the sector and its programs.
- DBM
  - Oversight agency mandated to formulate the medium-term expenditure plan and annual national budget in support of the government's development plan and priorities
- PIDS
  - Government-owned and controlled corporation which serves as its socioeconomic policy think tank
  - Undertakes policy-oriented studies and research.
- Donor agencies (esp., JICA and WB as the biggest donors in the Philippines)
  - Implement their country assistance strategy for the Philippines
  - Provide loans and grants for the implementation of programs in developing countries, including the education sector in the Philippines
  - Commission evaluations for programs that they have funded
  - Assist developing country governments in building technical capacity for program design, implementation, and M&E
- NGOs in the education sector
  - Implement education programs
  - Conduct M&E of their programs, and, at times, also commission evaluations
- Consultants/Consulting Firms
  - Bid for and conduct studies, including ex-post/impact evaluations of development programs, either procured by governments or by donor agencies

Patterns of Interactions

On design and M&E of basic education programs
- DepEd and other agencies do not submit evaluation plans for their programs to the NEDA-ICC, nor are they required to present results evidence from previous evaluations to justify their proposals. Thus, the NEDA Secretariat primarily conducts economic and financial analyses of DepEd-proposed programs as required by NEDA-ICC guidelines, without regard for whether or how these programs will be monitored and/or evaluated upon implementation and completion.
- DepEd and other agencies prioritize planning and program design as a core function, while implementation and evaluations are outsourced to private firms or consultants, following government procurement laws (which have been consistently blamed for program implementation delays).
- Program management offices (PMOs) conduct monitoring work until the completion of programs, and follow-up evaluation work is usually neglected upon the dissolution of PMOs.
- Planning and design of education programs is undertaken by DepEd based primarily on stakeholder consultations, completion reports of previous programs, and the fiscal and economic implications of the proposed program, while the lack of relevant evaluation research or studies on basic education programs in the Philippines precludes evaluation research as a main driver of program design.
- Evaluations for ODA-funded education programs are usually undertaken by donor-contracted consultants, with varying levels of participation from DepEd.
- Program design is at times revised mid-implementation or prior to upscaling based on findings of evaluations conducted by DepEd, PIDS, NGOs, or by donors, whenever available.

On evaluations in the public sector
- Evaluations conducted by government so far have not followed an evaluation agenda. Government agencies are doing uncoordinated evaluation work as the national evaluation policy has not been implemented due to de-prioritization brought about by the recent change in administration.
- Roughly estimated evaluation budgets are proposed more than 1 year prior to implementation. Usually, once the fiscal year has arrived, agencies like NEDA and DepEd coordinate with DBM to revise/realign their plans, programs, and budgets. Early and rushed planning results in late finalization and design of evaluations to be conducted/commissioned by government agencies.
- ODA-funded programs get most of the attention when it comes to evaluations due to donor requirements, but findings are not always well-received by government implementing agencies especially when they are not involved in the conduct of the study.
- Even within government, PIDS' evaluation agenda (as an independent think tank) does not always coincide with other government agencies' evaluation priorities.
- Consultants/consulting firms repeatedly bid for evaluation contracts of donor agencies and are usually hired multiple times if donor experience with them has been positive. The same is also evident for Philippine government evaluation contracts, but in the context of local consultants/firms.

Evaluative Criteria

- Decision-making on current and future programs takes into account evidence on outcomes/results of previously-implemented programs.
- Continuous improvement of program implementation is achieved through the provision of feedback and lessons learned from current and past programs.
- Government capacity to plan and conduct/commission their own evaluations is improved.
- Government accountability is ensured through the provision of evidence-based findings on public policies and programs, both positive and negative, to citizens and other stakeholders.

Outcomes

- Evaluations conducted/commissioned by government are not always well-done nor timely, but those that are have been used to improve the design of ongoing or proposed programs.
- Decisions on program design and approval is still primarily based on economic and financial cost-benefit analyses, without much consideration for results evidence.
- There is still no government-wide evaluation agenda and central public database for evaluation studies.
- A majority of the evaluations conducted for public sector programs are still donor-led and are therefore donor-oriented, but government involvement is improving.

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Financial resource, however, is not the only practical consideration for a robust conduct of evaluations. Sufficient funds may be available, but manpower and their technical capacities may be lacking. According to Jones et al. (2009: 7), the level of scientific and professional expertise required for undertaking IEs are usually present only in international organisations and independent consultants. This is also evident in the Philippines where most government agencies do not even have dedicated departments for M&E with evaluation experts. As a result, government agency-led evaluation is usually contracted out following the government's procurement procedures for hiring consulting services, with government itself viewing their expertise on the matter as inferior to that of foreign and/or private firms.

The lack of qualified people within the Philippine civil service (generally but also for evaluations) does not, however, necessarily indicate the lack of appreciation for evaluations in the public sector. Policymakers and civil society have been pressing government to produce more evaluation research, and even within government itself, champions of evaluation practice have also been pushing for more production and use of evaluations. Momentum on institutionalising[10] evaluation practice in government was at a peak in 2015, when the NEPF was issued jointly by NEDA and DBM. Unfortunately, policy priorities often change when new political parties take office. With a change in administration in the Philippines following the May 2016 Presidential Elections, champions of the NEPF were replaced by new appointees in key government positions, and implementation of the policy has since stalled (Interview OIP1; Interview MES1; Interview MES2). This case demonstrates how the presence of pluralistic interests among relevant actors affects the role that evaluations are allowed to take in public sector management in the Philippines.

Rules-in-use also have a significant effect on production and use of evaluations for basic education and other development programs. When we speak of rules-in-use, these are not necessarily just formal or official rules, but even informal rules that are widely observed and that govern behaviour in certain organisations (Polski and Ostrom 1999: 15). The Philippines' public sector management (PSM) cycle, in a nutshell, is illustrated in Figure 4.2. There are countless rules that govern each phase of the cycle, and rules that govern the linking of one phase to the next, but for the purpose of this paper, only rules that have a significant impact on the behaviour and interaction of evaluation actors in the public sector will be discussed.

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[10] 'Institutionalisation' in this paper refers to the formal establishment of rules and procedures within a government agency or the bureaucracy as a whole.

Figure 4.2
Depicting the Public Sector Management Cycle in the Philippines and Action Arenas

*Linkage strength assessment made by ADB.

Source: Adapted from ADB (2015: 2)

Following the national government's preparation of the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) and its results matrix for a six-year period, individual agencies then have to annually prepare their work and financial plans towards achieving targets set out in the PDP. But the budgeting process requires that these agency plans (translated into budget proposals) are prepared and submitted to the DBM for consolidation almost one year prior to the fiscal year when it will be implemented. This means that an evaluation that will be conducted in 2018 should already undergo a design and budgeting process in the final quarter of 2016, in order to have a submission ready for the DBM by the first quarter of 2017. As illustrated in Figure 4.2, the budgeting to implementation link is strong as agencies are generally compliant with the budget deadlines to ensure that their programs are funded, but this is not an indication of the quality of plans. Because agencies tend to focus on the implementation of programs for the current year, planning and budgeting for programs and activities two years ahead of time takes secondary priority. It is common practice for agencies to revise their plans once the year for implementation arrives, and evaluations to be commissioned by government which were proposed more than a year in advance tend to change, delaying implementation of the studies and affecting the quality of their design (Interview MES3; Interview MES4). When an evaluation study is available but the design and methodology by which it was undertaken is questionable, how can its use be promoted?

For basic education programs, DepEd has the mandate to conduct M&E, while NEDA, as an oversight agency, should mainly steer the overall direction and quality of evaluation practice. Officially, if the NEPF were to be followed, all programs should be evaluated at least once at the end of their implementation. But again, the

NEPF remains a policy on paper; in practice, only a few programs undergo ex-post evaluation, with most of them led by donor agencies or by the PIDS (Interview PIDS1). NGOs in the education sector also do some work in evaluations, but usually for programs that they themselves have implemented. It matters which actors commission and which actors actually carry out the evaluation because evaluations are also used as a governance tool to frame certain issues, and subsequently, to advocate certain agendas. When independent government bodies undertake their own evaluation (as in the case of PIDS), accountability is mainly to the public whose taxes are funding the studies. But when studies are outsourced to third party consultants, the main client becomes the organisation that commissioned the study. As illustrated in the PSM cycle, M&E findings should feed into the planning and design of policies and programs; thus when evaluations are used to legitimise certain approaches instead of questioning their fundamental premise or their appropriateness in a certain context, there is a risk that better planning, ergo better development results, will not be achieved.

4.1.2. Interactions between Actors in the Arena through the lens of Organisational Perspectives

The exogenous variables discussed previously and the resulting patterns of behaviour and interaction within DepEd, particularly when it comes to using evaluations for planning and designing programs, can be analysed using different lenses towards answering the third research sub-question on how evaluations are actually perceived and used in the organisation. Findings using the first lens – the learning organisation perspective – are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1
Learning Organisation Variables within the Department of Education

Learning Organisation Variables (Source: Daft 2004: 372)	Findings
1. Questioning the status quo ('how things are done') is valued as this allows for change and improvement.	According to the head of DepEd's Planning Service (PS), the culture within the agency is one that is highly committed to using results evidence to guide policymaking. *"We are the first agency to be serious about making informed decisions. We came up with a policy process on how to consider inputs from evaluation studies"* (Interview PS1). The policy development process mentioned by the Undersecretary came in the form of a Department Order issued in April 2015. It provides for "systematic, evidence-based and participatory mechanisms and procedures for the formulation, adoption and review of policies issued by the DepEd Central Office" (DepEd 2015). This issuance, however, only covers mid-term and end-term policy evaluation; program evaluation is not within the scope of the Department Order, nor is a formal process for how program evaluations can feed into program design. Within the Project Management Service (PMS), particularly in the Project Development Division (PDD), formulation of program design still mostly relies on other policy inputs or drivers such as feedback from stakeholders on the ground, lessons learned in implementation of existing programs (focusing more on process than results), physical validation of field conditions, and financial and economic analyses (Interview PMS2).
2. Boundaries are minimised such that collaboration and sharing of ideas/information is incorporated into various work stages.	Within DepEd, there seems to be a fragmentation of evaluation production and use between PS and the PMS. For instance, program evaluation is not within the scope of the Department Order issued by PS. The issuance, therefore, does not display a collaboration between the two offices who are both mandated to produce and use evaluations. It may be said that they are operating in silos when it comes to evaluations. Having two separate offices with a mandate for evaluations speaks to the value that DepEd gives to results evidence, though it may be detrimental to coordination of evaluation work. When speaking with both divisions, it is clear that they each know that a major

Learning Organisation Variables (Source: Daft 2004: 372)	Findings
	part of their tasks include conducting and commissioning evaluation studies. But they do not seem fully abreast about what the other division is doing. *"[DepEd doesn't] have an evaluation agenda yet. At this point, it is unclear who will lead the formulation, and there needs to be more discussion and agreement between PDD and the [Policy Research Division (PRD)] of the Planning Service. Even delineation of monitoring tasks is not yet clear"* (Interview PMS1). To PRD, however, it is clear that they are in the lead when it comes to evaluations (Interview PS2). They are now focusing on preparing a policy called the 'Basic Education Monitoring and Evaluation Framework' (or BEMEF), which intends to set out the framework for DepEd-wide M&E practice. The Undersecretary under which PRD reports sees the mandate of PDD more as program monitoring – something the PDD may not agree with as they are currently making efforts to beef up their capacity and to develop their evaluation function by participating in donor-led evaluations of ODA-funded programs (Interview PMS1). But it seems that once the BEMEF is finalised and issued, the actors within DepEd may be better guided and coordinated towards a clearer delineation of tasks in implementing the agency's central evaluation agenda, and linking this with both policy and program design processes.
3. Equality and trust among people (including managers) is highly valued, allowing people to take risks and experiment to an extent.	Human resource is a constraint for DepEd as vacancies have not been filled to capacity since their Rationalization Plan* took effect. Even some managerial positions in the organisation are unfilled. According to PDD, there are challenges in the hiring process that have led them to take on contractual staff in the meantime, but this does not prevent them from ensuring that the necessary skills are acquired by all of their staff, and that they are allowed to take part in the core functions of the organisation. *"The approved plantilla positions for PDD is 13 technical staff plus one administrative staff. But in reality, only about half of the 13 [people] in PDD now are permanent. The rest are only contractual because the permanent hiring process takes so long and we need the people immediately, so we gave them contracts of service first. What is unfortunate about this situation is contractual personnel are not allowed to attend trainings. So in order to pass on the knowledge to them, those of us who were able to attend trainings on evaluation just conduct informal coaching sessions with the contractuals"* (Interview PMS2). From this quote, it seems formal rules of the organisation preclude the equal treatment of contractual staff, but informal rules prevail in the case of PDD, where they take measures to ensure that their people are on the same page and are doing the same level of meaningful M&E work.

* Government agencies had to prepare and implement Rationalization Plans in accordance with Executive Order No. 366, s. 2004 which directed a review of the operations and organisational structures of executive branch departments towards better service delivery.

Overall, DepEd displays certain attributes and behaviour that, from a learning perspective, provides a window for evaluation to be used in improving policy and program design. On the first variable, DepEd marked positively but there is considerable room for improvement; on the second variable, the organisation marked negatively due to the different and separate approaches by actors within the department, particularly on the production and use of evaluations; but on the third, they scored positively. These results preclude an assumption that the organisation as a whole perceives the use of evaluations primarily as a means to generate lessons towards learning, innovation, and development of the organisation and the sector.

A better understanding of the role that evaluations play may be achieved by also taking a political perspective, where interests and power play a key role in understanding how the organisation works and why it undertakes certain activities. Findings using this perspective are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2
Political Organisation Variables within the Department of Education

Political Organisation Variables (Source: Daft 2004: 492; Shaumberg- Müller 2005: 212)	Findings
1. Pluralistic interests are present within the organisation, and between the organisation and the actors they interact with.	Within DepEd itself, it did not seem that there are misaligned interests among its staff and offices despite the uncoordinated work when it comes to evaluations. Between DepEd and other stakeholders, however, there are various interests that come into play that affect the way evaluations are used and produced. For instance, DepEd is able to participate in evaluations only of ODA-funded programs because they are donor-led, and donors are interested in evaluating their own programs (Interview PMS1). Subsequently, available research on local education programs is limited to ODA programs, which only account for a small portion of programs in the sector (ibid.). The lack of more evaluation research on the various locally-funded programs of government seems to preclude the use of such research as a main driver of program design. Other interests from other actors are discussed in more depth in Section 4.2.
2. Information is used and withheld in a strategic manner.	It is often said the knowledge is power, and in the education sector especially, that is probably a statement that actors agree with. DepEd acknowledges that generating knowledge and sharing it is both a way of nurturing relationships with various stakeholders, but as indicated by the quote below, using and sharing information is also a way to advocate certain approaches that the government may want other actors to implement. *"Our evaluations, researches, and studies are communicated through forums with stakeholders who we deem will find the results useful. We have an initiative called 'Research O'Clock' which started in July 2018, where we hold regular meetings here in the central office to share the results of our researches with stakeholders. We invite everyone from implementing agencies, to donors, to the academe, and civil society. We hold the meetings every other month with a different theme each time. [...] Then there's advocacy during inter-agency meetings that are attended by Usec. Jess for example, where they make sure, when relevant, to share the results of our studies"* (Interview PS2). In terms of withholding information, there has also reportedly been resistance from some school divisions to share information or accommodate other stakeholders conducting M&E in the sector (Interview AE1). If they prefer generating evidence on their own, it may be a strategy for these DepEd divisions to control the M&E information that is generated and shared to stakeholders and the public.
3. Hierarchy and bureaucracy are highly valued.	DepEd' Executive Committee had to sign off on evaluations that were conducted by PIDS on education programs (e.g., SBFP), though they technically did not have to because PIDS is an independent government think tank. But according to PIDS, it was important to get DepEd's approval to ensure cooperation in their study, otherwise they would have had a difficult time manoeuvring through the bureaucracy to obtain the information they needed for the study. *"One experience that we had with the education sector is on the K-12 program or the Senior High School Program which was a flagship project of the previous administration. While the budget was big and it was aligned with PIDS' research agenda, there was no buy-in from DepEd a few years ago because they felt that it was too early to conduct a study on the program and they did not want it to seem like results were not being achieved. The [DepEd] ExeCom didn't sign off so [we] had to choose another program"* (Interview PIDS2).

Findings presented in Table 4.2 show how a political perspective can explain the role that evaluations play in program design, with the three political variables positively characterising DepEd's treatment of evaluations. While there are other perspectives[11] within Organisation Theory that may describe differently how evaluations are

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[11] The rational perspective, which sees organisations as actors fulfilling objectives in a logical manner, has been argued to be both "empirically unrealistic and outdated in organization theory" (Schaumberg-Müller 2005: 211). There is also an institutional perspective which takes into account norms, values and procedures towards understanding how an organisation behaves (Schaumberg-Müller 2005: 212) but this was already covered by using the IAD Framework in combination with organisation theory.

perceived and used within DepEd, what is clear is that there is not one perspective that can explain fully the role that evaluations play within an organisation. Nonetheless, DepEd's initiatives show that evaluations are valued within the department but that learning and improvement in policymaking and program design may not be as much a priority as advancing a certain agenda through evaluation work.

4.2. Use of Evaluations in Policy and Program Design for Basic Education Programs

To answer the third research sub-question in the context of government-designed and implemented programs, a textual analysis was undertaken to gather empirical evidence on which evaluation recommendations were used by DepEd in their program design documents, particularly using program operational guidelines which they issue as Department Orders. Two DepEd programs and their impact evaluations were used in this paper – one with a government-led evaluation, and the other with a donor-commissioned evaluation. But because DepEd does not have the monopoly on implementing education programs, two NGO cases were also discussed in this section to see how evaluation practice affects their design of programs as well.

4.2.1. School-based Feeding Program

The first case is the SBFP – a targeted school feeding program for severely wasted[12] (SW) and wasted[13] (W) Kindergarten to Grade 6 students that aims to improve their nutrition, and, in effect, their school attendance and performance in the classroom (DepEd 2017). It is a government-funded multi-phase program that has been implemented in its current form by the DepEd since 2013, with a bigger budget appropriated annually since then as it continues to be implemented to date. An impact evaluation[14] for the 2013-2014 phase of the program was carried out in 2016 by the PIDS, with the following objectives: (i) assess the outcomes and impact of the program in terms of its education and nutrition goals; (ii) assess the outcomes of the program's complementary activities; and (iii) identify changes needed to improve the design and implementation of subsequent phases of the program (Tabunda et al. 2016: 2-3). These objectives classify the SBFP IE as both a summative evaluation and a formative one – summative because reporting on a program's outcomes and impact is a way of assessing a program's worth in terms of how well it was able to achieve what it set out to do (Bamberger et al. 2012: 21), and formative because it also aimed to improve the way a program was designed given that a new phase will be implemented (Bam-

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[12] 'Severely wasted' is used to describe "a very thin child whose Body Mass Index (BMI)-for-age is below -3 z-score line based on [the WHO's] Child Growth Standards (CGS)" (DepEd 2017).

[13] 'Wasted' is used to describe "a thin child whose BMI-for-age falls between -2 [and] -3 z-score line based on [the WHO's] CGS" (DepEd 2017).

[14] PIDS usually conducts impact evaluations in two phases – first with a process evaluation focusing on program implementation, and second with a focus on the actual impacts or results of a program (Interview PIDS1).

berger et al. 2012: 21). PIDS also meant for the evaluation to have a direct or instrumental use, specifically as input to decision-making on the next phases of the program.

To determine whether the SBFP IE completed in 2016 was indeed, as stated by its third objective, used to improve the design and implementation of the subsequent phase of the program, a textual analysis comparing the 2016 IE report and the 2017-2022 operational guidelines (OG) of the program was conducted (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.3
Comparison of the SBFP IE Findings and the 2017-2022 SBFP Operational Guidelines

Results/Findings/Recommendations of the SBFP Evaluation	Action/s Taken by DepEd	Details of Action/s Taken Sources: SBFP Operational Guidelines for 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2017-2022
Phase 1: Process Evaluation		
1. The budget for the program was insufficient to implement it as designed (based on interviews of participants and schools).	Program budget allocation revised.	The SY 2013-2014 guidelines did not specify the budget allocation for the program, while the SY 2014-2015 guidelines indicated a budget allocation for feeding of PHP15.00 per beneficiary multiplied by the number of feeding days, and operational expenses of PHP1.00 per beneficiary multiplied by the number of feeding days. Revision: The SY 2017-2022 guidelines increased this budget allocation by one peso each for feeding and operational expenses (i.e., PHP16.00 x no. of beneficiaries x no. of days, and PHP2.00 x no. of beneficiaries x no. of feeding days).
2. Participants suggested extending the programs' coverage to wasted pupils.	Program targeting revised.	Prior to the IE, coverage of the program was already expanded to prioritise 100% of severely wasted pupils from Kindergarten to Grade 6 for SY 2014-2015, with a provision stating that wasted pupils may be covered if funds are still available. Revision: The current (2017-2022) program implementation already covers all SW *and* W pupils from Kindergarten to Grade 6.
3. Most schools only implemented the feeding program for 100 days, as the SY 2013-2014 guidelines indicate a duration of 100-120 days.	Program design revised.	Revision: The 2017-2022 OG specifically indicate a feeding duration of *at least* 120 days.
4. There is a lack of standard measuring protocols and/or measuring equipment in the schools, leading to inaccurate weight and height measurements and misclassification of children's nutrition status. School heads are tasked by DepEd to provide these measuring tools, but not all schools have been able to procure the desired equipment. The study team recommended that all schools (even non-beneficiary schools who will serve as comparison group in subsequent evaluations) be provided with the equipment rather than leaving procurement of the same to school heads. DepEd should also provide schools heads, nurses,	Recommendation not adopted.	The 2017-2022 OG only provides guidelines for procurement of food and related goods, but not for procurement of the measuring equipment. In fact, while the guidelines indicate which measuring equipment must be used to measure weight and height (i.e., beam balance and steel tape), they do not mention where these will be sourced (except for the BMI Software which will be provided in a CD to schools by DepEd). Subsequently, the guidelines also do not have provisions on training of school personnel on the use of measuring equipment.

Results/Findings/Recommendations of the SBFP Evaluation	Action/s Taken by DepEd	Details of Action/s Taken Sources: SBFP Operational Guidelines for 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2017-2022
and class advisers with training on proper use of these equipment.		
5. Only 16 out of 44 schools could provide post-feeding measurements.	No enhancement of guidelines on post-feeding measurements.	The 2017-2022 OG indicate that endline data on height and weight of pupils shall be taken upon program termination. However, this provision has also been present in the guidelines for past phases (2013 onwards). Measures to ensure compliance were not included.
Phase 2: Impact Evaluation		
On the nutrition goal		
6. About 62% of beneficiaries attained at least normal nutrition status at the end of the feeding program, falling short of the 70% target. The study found that attainment of the nutrition goal also depends on the circumstances and characteristics of the children and their families.	Complementary programs continued.	Retained: The 2017-2022 OG provide instructions on a 'Productivity, Life, and Values Development Training' wherein schools are expected to partner with relevant stakeholders to train beneficiaries' parents on sustaining family food security, increasing school retention, and improving nutritional status of children in the long term.
7. While about 62% of the beneficiaries attained normal nutrition status, only half or less than half remain normal a year or more after the feeding program. The gains in nutrition status from the program can be lost 12 months after the feeding if no subsequent interventions are made, suggesting the need to continue the feeding of majority of SW pupils beyond one 100-120 days feeding cycle.	Recommendation not adopted.	The 2017-2022 OG does not allow for the inclusion of pupils who have graduated to normal status in the next phases of the feeding program, neither does it specify measures to sustain pupils' nutrition status after 120 days given the evaluation findings.
8. SW children residing in rural towns in Northern and Central Luzon, with at least one parent or guardian having college units, and whose family has access to safe water supply, are more likely to improve to normal status. SW children residing in rural towns who bring home some food from the feeding program, and whose parents have complained that the food provided in their child's school is inadequate, are less likely to improve to normal nutrition status. The study suggests the introduction of simultaneous government interventions to address the capacity of disadvantaged families to provide for the nutritional needs of its members.	Complementary programs continued.	Retained: The 2017-2022 OG has a section on the implementation of complementary activities, including deworming of beneficiaries, guidance on good grooming and personal hygiene, integration of health care promotion and Wash in Schools (WinS) Policy, and the GPP, among others.
9. A SW child whose family's usual meal consists of only rice or corn and vegetables (typical meal of about half of the sampled beneficiaries) is only about a fifth as likely to improve to normal nutrition status as those who are able to consume meat regularly, implying that complementary nutrition programs need to be implemented.	Complementary programs continued.	Retained: The 2017-2022 OG provide instructions on a 'Productivity, Life, and Values Development Training' wherein schools are expected to partner with relevant stakeholders to train beneficiaries' parents on sustaining family food security, increasing school retention, and improving nutritional status of children in the long term.
10. Slightly more SBFP-fed SW pupils attained and maintained normal nutrition status or better compared to their non-beneficiary counterparts, and were also found to be more likely to maintain normal nutrition status.	Program continued.	Given its results in terms of nutritional goals, the SBFP is being continued. Revision: The program has been allotted a bigger budget.

Results/Findings/Recommendations of the SBFP Evaluation	Action/s Taken by DepEd	Details of Action/s Taken Sources: SBFP Operational Guidelines for 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2017-2022
On the school attendance goal		
11. Improvement in class attendance was reported by teachers for 94% of the beneficiary pupils.	Program continued.	Given its results in terms of classroom attendance goals, the SBFP is being continued. Revision: The program has been allotted a bigger budget.
On the assessment of complementary programs		
12. Nearly all beneficiary schools implemented the GPP and EHCP.	Complementary health programs and GPP continued.	Retained: The 2017-2022 OG has a section on the implementation of complementary activities, including deworming of beneficiaries, guidance on good grooming and personal hygiene, integration of health care promotion and Wash in Schools (WinS) Policy, and the GPP, among others.
On classroom attentiveness and sociability of beneficiary pupils		
13. Most of the beneficiary pupils improved in attentiveness during and after the feeding program.	Program continued.	Given its results in terms of classroom attentiveness goals, the SBFP is being continued. Revision: The program has been allotted a bigger budget.

The textual analysis shows that DepEd made changes to the operational guidelines that are aligned with most of the IE study's findings/recommendations; there were specifically three major changes made in the design of the program, namely on budget allocation, targeting, and feeding cycle duration. This was confirmed by DepEd's Project Development Division (PDD) who found the SBFP IE useful in improving the implementation of subsequent phases of the program (Interview PMS2). They further confirmed that while the evaluation was conducted by PIDS, DepEd's Executive Committee itself approved the study before it commenced, and DepEd-PDD worked closely with PIDS during the course of the evaluation. According to a Senior Education Program Specialist of the PDD:

> "This change in targeting [for the SBFP] was driven by two things – the results of the impact evaluation, which is the demand side, and the bigger budget [appropriated] by Congress, which is on the supply side" (Interview PMS2).

The resulting actions by DepEd on the 2017-2022 operational guidelines of the SBFP and by Congress on appropriating a bigger budget for the program validate the formative and instrumental nature of the evaluation, whereas the methodology and findings of the evaluation, especially with regard to its outcomes, speak to its summative nature. The changes made to the operational guidelines also signal that there is room for learning and adaptation in program design with DepEd's Program Management Service, even without a policy instrument that institutionalises the role of evaluation such as the policy design process that was formulated by the Planning Service, as discussed in Section 4.1.2.

Considering, as well, the history of evaluation use in the Philippines, the SBFP IE serves as a good example of how policymakers and implementers can get on board an evaluation's findings even if the study was conducted by an external party. Taylor and Balloch (2005) argued for greater participation and partnership in evaluation work to achieve a balance of interests among actors involved. DepEd was receptive to

the evaluation's findings because they had participated in almost the entirety of the process, and, according to one of the PIDS research fellows who conducted the study, the department supported the conduct of the evaluation due to their own interest to improve the program.

> "I went to DepEd and spoke with the technical staff I knew there [...] about which programs or projects they wanted to have evaluated. SBFP was actually one of their suggestions and I ultimately chose to do an impact evaluation on that. The reason I spoke with them first before deciding what to study is because I wanted to ensure there was buy in from them. This helps [...] in data collection and also to make sure they use the evaluation once it's completed" (Interview PIDS1).

It does seem, however, that the evaluation was used selectively. There were three major recommendations that have significant implications on the appropriateness of the program and the sustainability of its results. As stated by Oakley et al. (1998: 36-37), impact evaluations are not just concerned with long-term changes, but also *sustainable* changes. The study reported, however, that the program's results were not likely to be sustained if pupils did not continue to be fed beyond the 120-day cycle, even if they had initially already graduated from SW/W status. This should have prompted further review by the department on whether the SBFP itself is the right approach towards achieving nutrition and school performance goals, or if it more resembles a 'Band-Aid' solution that may actually be more expensive in the long run. Further, a positive appreciation of M&E within the department would have been more evident if, beyond expanding the program's targeting, measures were also taken to ensure that: (i) schools took students' measurements as scheduled and as required by the guidelines; and (ii) the measurements were taken with the right equipment. By not addressing these issues in the implementation design of the 2017-2022 phase, the risk of faulty beneficiary targeting remains, and this may affect the program's results.

4.2.2. Third Elementary Education Project

The second case is the TEEP – a project implemented by DepEd from 2000-2006. It aimed to improve students' learning achievements, completion rates, and access to education through combining school investments and teacher training with a school-based management (SBM) approach[15] in all public elementary schools in 23 of the 'most depressed' provinces in the Philippines as identified in the government's Social Reform Agenda (JICA 2011: vi; WB 1996: 2-3). The project was jointly funded through an ODA loan from JICA (then JBIC) and the World Bank, who provided USD91.07 million and USD82.84 million, respectively.

The project itself was implemented some time ago and the impact evaluation commissioned by JICA was done in 2011 – before the resurge in interest in public sector evaluation practice in the Philippines. The contract was awarded to the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), and the evaluation itself was led by

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[15] SBM is a global model that decentralises management and encourages local community participation led by school-level stakeholders, and broadly participated in by local partners and civil society organisations (JICA 2011).

two of IFPRI's senior research fellows – Futoshi Yamauchi and Yanyan Liu – both of whom previously worked at the World Bank. The evaluation aimed to assess the short- and long-term impacts of the TEEP. As the project was not going to be scaled up, the impact evaluation mainly had a summative purpose, aiming to report on its achievements and ensuring accountability to taxpayers and donors. In the evaluation report's preface, however, then-JICA Vice President Masato Watanabe also expressed their intention to share the results of the evaluation with stakeholders for the purpose of improving the quality of ODA projects (JICA 2011: ii), and this speaks of a formative and instrumental purpose to the evaluation as well. Thus, a textual analysis was conducted (see Table 4.4) to determine whether the major results and recommendations of the evaluation also had an instrumental use for the Philippine government, particularly for the DepEd.

Table 4.4
Analysis of DepEd Policy Decisions vis-à-vis TEEP IE Findings

Results/Findings/Recommendations of the TEEP Impact Evaluation	Action/s Taken by DepEd	Details of Action/s Taken
Part 1: Short-term Impacts		
1. Average National Assessment Test (NAT) score increased by 3 points over 6 years of elementary school (compared to non-beneficiaries), with a larger impact observed for mathematics.	Similar interventions and approach adopted for other programs.	The design of the Secondary Education Development and Improvement Project (SEDIP) which was implemented until 2008, incorporated similar interventions with the TEEP, i.e., investing in school buildings and materials through a school-based management approach
2. New school building constructions have a large positive effect, with one new building equal to a 5 to 6 NAT score increase in 2 years.	Intervention mainstreamed into annual budget.	In 2015, DepEd further institutionalised the provision of school buildings and classrooms by streamlining the budget for its School Building Program (SBP) through the Basic Educational Facilities Fund (BEFF) – an annually-appropriated budget for "the provision of classroom and workshop buildings, replacement of old dilapidated buildings, provision of furniture, repair and rehabilitation of classrooms, […] as well as water and sanitation facilities and electrification" (DepEd 2017).
3. Teaching methodology/theory training has a positive effect, while subject-wise training showed a negative effect.	Training approach adopted for similar programs.	Like TEEP, SEDIP implemented in-service (INSET) training for school staff and teachers to promote school-based improvement in teaching methodologies and learning outcomes.
Part 2: Long-term Impacts		
4. Improved school quality through TEEP enhanced female advantage on subsequent indicators (i.e., school years completed, high school repetitions, college entry).	Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy issued.	While TEEP did not intend for differing results between female and male students, the IE found that more positive results were reported for female students. While this finding is not negative in itself, the study recommended for DepEd to study male students' behaviour in and out of schools to better understand why positive effects were only confirmed for female students. While such a study has not been commissioned, DepEd issued the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy in 2017 to guide the provision and governance of basic education such that it integrated the principles of gender equality, gender equity, gender sensitivity, non-discrimination and human rights.
5. Improved school quality through TEEP increased females' migration and labour market earnings.		
6. TEEP socially empowered women.		
Other findings/recommendations		
7. The IE results justify the need for supply side interventions such as TEEP.	Similar and complementary programs were implemented.	Given not just the results of the evaluation, but also available research on the field, DepEd is focusing on providing better quality education and training to improve the skills of the labour force, and subsequently improve labour productivity. Following projects like

Results/Findings/Recommendations of the TEEP Impact Evaluation	Action/s Taken by DepEd	Details of Action/s Taken
		TEEP and SEDIP, the DepEd started to implement a major shift in the Philippines education program in 2011 by increasing pre-university education levels from 10 to 12 years to match the international quality of education, to cater to youth's different interests and priorities, and to better match skills with demand in the labour market.
8. The IE results indicate the effectiveness of a school-based management approach in improving school quality and learning outcomes.	SBM approach institutionalised.	DepEd institutionalised the SBM approach through the Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (BESRA) implemented from 2006 to present. The BESRA is composed of policy reforms that seek to improve conditions contributing to or affecting the quality of and access to basic education. The agenda pushes for school-based management that is led by school-level stakeholders, and broadly participated in by local partners and civil society organisations.

It is apparent that the TEEP was most notable for being one of the first big programs of the DepEd that used the SBM approach. The findings of the IE commissioned by JICA were positive and commended the intervention and the strategy by which it was implemented. One of the PIDS' senior research fellows with considerable experience in the field of education said that the TEEP evaluation was 'successful' because it encouraged SBM, and at that time, the approach was not yet popular at the DepEd central office (Interview PIDS1). Personally, however, he had misgivings about how effective the approach would be in the Philippines.

> "Some people think decentralisation will make things better, [but] I think that will exacerbate inequalities given uneven capacities just like in health [which was] such a disaster" (Interview PIDS 1).

But even prior to the JICA IE, the TEEP itself (as a WB project implemented in the Philippines) was already cited in a 2007 WB publication on School-based Management (see WB 2007: 2). The volume concluded that SBM, if implemented in a way that takes context into consideration, can increase participation and improve school outcomes in developing countries (WB 2007: 15-16), and that the cost of SBM reforms "are likely to be smaller than the benefits, thus increasing the appeal of the reform" (WB 2007: 17). This could explain why another WB-funded project – the Secondary Education Development and Improvement Project, which was implemented by the DepEd around the same time as TEEP but with a longer duration – had used the same approach. According to DepEd-PDD:

> "While the [evaluation] for TEEP did not immediately institutionalise SBM, its findings fed into the implementation of SEDIP, which was funded jointly by World Bank and ADB. SBM was only institutionalised through BESRA" (Interview PMS2).

It also seems that the DepEd had already taken action aligned with most, if not all, of the evaluation's recommendations even prior to the completion of the study. Thus, increasing the popularity of and knowledge about SBM within the DepEd as the primary implementing agency for basic education in the Philippines may have been one of the actual primary purposes of the evaluation conducted for TEEP. More than a summative or judgment-oriented evaluation, the project donors seemed to have used the TEEP IE to legitimise their adoption of the SBM approach in their aid packages, and also to contribute to existing knowledge about SBM's effectiveness.

While the evaluation was conducted by IFPRI as a third party evaluator, it was still funded by JICA and led by research fellows who had worked at the WB, and it would not have been aligned with their interest for future contracts to be too critical of the intervention. By the nature of the study's commission and of the program it was evaluating, the TEEP evaluation seems to have a more political nature than that of the SBFP IE which had fewer stakeholder groups and had a more technical formative purpose.

The 2007 WB publication on SBM encouraged the conduct of impact evaluations on programs using SBM (WB 2007: 17-18) to gain knowledge on the different ways the approach works in different contexts. This, according to WB (2007: 18) is a way of ensuring that SBM will achieve its intended results despite the varying contexts in which it is implemented. I claim, then, that while officially the TEEP evaluation had a summative and formative purpose, looking at it from a political perspective demonstrates that it also served to legitimise the way a certain intervention was implemented, and to increase support for (and, yes, also practical knowledge on) SBM as a global model of public school governance.

4.2.3. CheckMySchool Program

As discussed in the institutional analysis, NGOs in the education sector are also doing their fair share in M&E work. The Affiliated Network for Social Accountability in East Asia and the Pacific (ANSA-EAP) implements the 'CheckMySchool' (or CMS) program in the Philippines – a participatory monitoring initiative that started in 2010 (ANSA-EAP 2017). Each CMS cycle is slightly different from the other, with each cycle's operational design improved based on implementation gaps found through monitoring and assessment of previous cycles. For example, according to an interview with the Executive Director of ANSA-EAP and concurrent Program Manager of CMS, a previous study found that students have very limited involvement in participatory monitoring (i.e., in monitoring public school programs with the help of beneficiaries) (Interview AE1). Thus, for the current CMS cycle being implemented in Bulacan province, more students are being engaged by assigning a number of them as 'scouts' who are tasked to contribute to CMS reports on the quality of the learning environment in their schools and communities.

The CMS program, however, is not an M&E initiative primarily for internal use of ANSA, but is rather aimed at improving the implementation of government programs. Specifically, ANSA monitors governance of public schools in the Philippines with the cooperation of the community of beneficiaries in order to address implementation issues encountered on the ground (Interview AE1). Their approach also has an instrumental evaluative aspect, particularly through the use of the 'Most Significant Change'[16] approach in M&E, wherein the beneficiaries themselves tell ANSA what the greatest impacts are for them (ibid.). They also make sure to inform the

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[16] Most Significant Change (MSC) is a participatory M&E technique that involves stakeholders in deciding which kinds of change will be measured and analysed. The MSC process involves collecting significant change stories from the field, and systematically selecting which of these stories best represent program impacts (Davies and Dart 2005: 8).

concerned government units about the results of their M&E activities to improve implementation on the ground. There is, however, no internal capacity within ANSA-EAP to conduct more in-depth impact evaluation work of public school governance in the Philippines, especially the kinds of summative evaluations that require the use of experimental or quasi-experimental methods.

While ANSA reports that they sometimes "encounter challenges with some schools and school divisions who claim that [ANSA duplicates their monitoring activities]" (Interview AE1), they also shared that DepEd has been generally receptive of their reports and inputs. In fact, DepEd is an active partner of the organisation in the formulation of their 'mandate analysis' tools and training modules for field volunteers. Mandate analysis is an important aspect of issue resolution as it "tells our volunteers which people or agencies they should approach about the issues they encounter or learn about on the field, [based on these agencies' mandates]" (Interview AE1). CMS reports are uploaded to the ANSA's official website, but are also presented directly to DepEd, particularly to the Policy Research Division. And what is perhaps a promising sign that DepEd gives weight to CMS findings in the implementation of their programs is that the PRD Director, DepEd Regional Directors, and even officials of higher rank such as Undersecretaries of DepEd have been regular participants in CMS activities and trainings, and provide input for the improvement of the program as much as they are receptive to learnings from the initiative (Interview AE1). Thus, because the CMS program is more a monitoring exercise of ongoing programs than an evaluation activity, formative and instrumental use of their field monitoring reports can be observed as a way for DepEd to improve their program implementation instead of design, and also to complement the M&E work that the government and donors undertake.

4.2.4. MathDali Project

The Knowledge Channel Foundation Inc. (KCFI) is also an active NGO in the education sector with considerable experience in working with DepEd. One of their primary mandates is to provide public schools with teacher training on Learning Effectively through Enhanced Pedagogies (LEEP). The formulation of these training modules was led by Dr. Fe Hidalgo, a former head of DepEd (2005-2006), by using her knowledge and experience on the field and existing research on learning pedagogies (Interview KC1). The training modules are also adjusted based on the characteristics and needs of each school. But given its limited budget and capacity, KC only does pocket monitoring[17] through telecommunication with schools and by asking them to send photos and reports online on the best practices in teaching and learning that apply the LEEP module. When possible, KC also conducts field monitoring to see whether teachers are implementing their LEEP training in the classroom. Information gathered from these monitoring activities are consolidated and submitted to KC's funders for accountability.

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[17] KC's pocket monitoring refers to the organisation choosing only a few, select beneficiary schools to monitor, given that their limited capacity prevents them from monitoring progress in all of their beneficiary schools.

Aside from an accountability function, M&E by KC also serves an instrumental purpose. For their MathDali project, for example, KC commissioned the University of the Philippines, a state-owned university, to conduct an evaluation to determine whether the project was producing desired immediate results. KC's MathDali project aimed to improve Grade 4 students' skills in mathematics. The project was piloted in the city of San Jose Del Monte in the province of Bulacan wherein one school was provided with KC educational/instructional videos based on the DepEd curriculum, another school was provided with teacher training on math, another was provided with tablets for students (for technology-based learning), and another school served as control group (Interview KC1). The study found that none of the schools produced the desired results because the Grade 4 students were not ready for the math lessons at their level; they had graduated from previous grade levels without truly learning the math skills that were taught then (ibid.). Because of these unlearned competencies, the study recommended that the project be implemented in Grade 1 instead of Grade 4 to ensure that the basic math skills that students needed will be learned from the beginning of elementary education. Once implementation of the MathDali project in Grade 1 is commenced and completed, it will be studied as well, because the intention is to scale it up to other school divisions if the results are positive.

While the evaluation study catered to KC's MathDali project, they still produced a policy paper based on the study and gave this to DepEd and to policymakers, hoping that the findings could inform the latter's decision-making with regard to curriculum-setting and assessment of student readiness. Thus, formative use of the NGO-commissioned evaluation served not just the purpose of its funders, but was also intended to provide instrumental knowledge to government towards the improvement of public school governance. KC is not aware, however, whether DepEd and policymakers actually made instrumental use of the MathDali study findings; this unfortunately was not within the scope of this paper either.

The two NGO cases used in this study demonstrate that the role of civil society is not just to demand accountability from government and to demand the conduct of evaluations on public sector programs, but also to do M&E work themselves as a way to fill the gaps left open by donors and government (e.g., participatory monitoring on the field) and to contribute to the knowledge base on development work by conducting or commissioning their own evaluations. In both cases, there was a conscious effort to involve government[18] – and this partnership approach as opposed to a purely watchdog[19] approach can strike a balance between interests, and influence whether or not NGO M&E products will be used by government as well.

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[18] DepEd participates in CMS strategy formulation and trainings, while KC uses DepEd curriculum and contracted out an evaluation to a state-owned university.
[19] Apart from implementing programs, some NGOs also view their role as 'watchdogs' or monitors of government and corporate activities, towards ensuring that these are aligned with the public interest (Young and Dhanda 2013: 221).

Chapter 5
Constraints Experienced by the Public Sector in the Production and Use of Evaluations

The previous chapter focused on the government's, donors', and NGOs' initiatives in evaluation and contributing to a results-based approach to managing the basic education sector. But when speaking of other aspects of the sector such as tertiary and informal education, or of the public sector as a whole, evaluation work is still largely *ad hoc*.

This chapter focuses on the reasons behind the non-institutionalised practice of evaluations for public sector programs, many of which were mentioned in the institutional analysis (see Figure 4.1), and specifically aims to address the fourth sub-question of this research – what technical and political constraints does the Philippine government experience in the production and use of evaluations?

5.1. Technical Constraints

Upon speaking with M&E practitioners within NEDA, PIDS, and DepEd, there seems to be a consensus that evaluations are valuable, but those commissioned for and by the public sector are not always timely or of the quality that would lend itself truly useful for the improvement of development programs. Moreover, a formal evaluation planning and feedback process has not been established within the existing planning and programming cycle. The NEDA-ICC, for example, still makes decisions to approve proposed programs based on the results of economic and financial cost-benefit analyses (NEDA 2005: 3). And based on its currently-implemented guidelines, the ICC does not require government agencies to submit evaluation plans nor results evidence from similar implemented programs with their proposals.

> "At the ICC, we used to require an RME Form[20] that is no longer being implemented as one of the requirements for appraisal because of lack of capacity of agencies to prepare the form. But these issues should be addressed when the NEPF comes together [...] as it will also link with the ICC and address other M&E needs" (Interview OIP1).

Two issues are raised by the NEDA Undersecretary in his statement above – the lack of capacity to plan for evaluations, and the non-implementation of the NEPF. While these two issues are inextricably linked, we focus first on issues of human resource capacity within oversight agencies like NEDA, and implementing agencies such as DepEd. These issues are both quantitative and qualitative in nature.

NEDA's role, according to the agency and to PIDS senior research fellows, is to spearhead, advocate, and guide the use of evaluations in government (Interview OIP1; Interview MES2; Interview PIDS1; Interview PIDS 2). To this end, an M&E Fund

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[20] The Results Monitoring and Evaluation Form details how M&E will be conducted for the proposed program.

has been allocated in NEDA's budget since 2015 to allow them to spearhead the conduct and commissioning of evaluations; and in the same year, the NEPF was issued as a policy instrument assigning NEDA and DBM as lead agencies in setting the direction of evaluation practice in the public sector. During the first year of implementation of the M&E Fund, only 15 percent of the allocation was utilised and the rest was reverted back to Treasury (Interview MES3). Utilisation of the Fund has not improved significantly to date, yet it continues to be appropriated annually. So far, only one impact evaluation under the Fund has been completed, most are still in various stages of design or procurement, and only a handful are ongoing but are delayed in terms of their original work plan (NEDA-MES 2018).

When financial resources are sufficient to carry out a mandate, yet targets still aren't met, it may be a question of weak planning, or a question of weak implementation due to lack of protocols and/or human resources (i.e., low absorptive capacity[21]). In the case of the M&E Fund and generally in evaluation practice in government, it may be a question of both. This should, ideally have been addressed by the issuance of the NEPF in 2015 as it sets out the steps that government should take to ensure the flourishing of an evaluation culture in the public sector, including the establishment of dedicated M&E units in all national government agencies. To date, however, the policy has not been implemented and most government agencies still do not have a separate M&E unit. According to senior and junior staff of NEDA's M&E unit, the causes of poor implementation of the Fund are: (i) imbalance between the number of staff and the amount and nature of work; (ii) limited evaluation knowledge and experience of current staff; (iii) the young impact evaluation industry in the Philippines; and (iv) non-inclusion of evaluations in planning and programming processes (Interview MES1; Interview MES2; Interview MES3; Interview MES4).

On the first cause, the central M&E unit within NEDA currently has 26 technical personnel out of 35 available positions. Filled to only about 74 percent of their capacity, the staff are understandably swamped with monitoring work for hundreds of development programs[22]. That is not to mention *ad hoc* tasks assigned to the unit, and their reduced specialisation in M&E due to administrative work.

> "[NEDA-MES is] swamped with administrative work. For example, because of the "Build Build Build"[23], a new body called the Project Facilitation, Monitoring and Innovation (PFMI) Task Force was formed, and [NEDA-MES] was given the *ad hoc* task to serve as its Secretariat. This designation falls under our monitoring function, but it has also diminished our capacity for managing evaluations" (Interview MES1).

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[21] Absorptive capacity is the ability of government to utilise funds effectively and efficiently towards the delivery of program objectives (NEDA 2017: 70).

[22] The Public Investment Program contains the rolling list of the government's priority programs and projects and can be accessed through < http://www.neda.gov.ph/public-investment-programs/ >.

[23] 'Build Build Build' is the title of the Duterte administration's infrastructure program that aims to boost public spending on infrastructure projects to PHP9 trillion (roughly USD170 billion) from 2017-2022.

DepEd shares the same challenges, with only half of the 13 technical positions in PDD permanently filled. The rest are contractual staff who have limited functions and due to the nature of their contracts, are not allowed to attend trainings on evaluations (Interview PMS2). PRD is not operating at full capacity, either (Interview PS1).

But quantity is not the only issue slowing down evaluation work. Prior to the Rationalization Plans that both organisations underwent in 2013, most of the technical staff within NEDA and DepEd had not designed nor conducted an impact evaluation themselves. The personnel and the organisations are naturally experiencing a learning curve. Both organisations report, however, that their staff undergo trainings to augment their technical capacity on evaluations.

> "A series of impact evaluation trainings for NEDA central office and regional staff were commissioned under the M&E Fund. The goal of the training series is to capacitate NEDA in preparing evaluation designs and assessing and reviewing evaluation proposals by firms, for example in terms of methodology, evaluation questions, etcetera" (Interview MES2).

> "[In terms of the capacity of DepEd staff to conduct evaluations,] there is still room for improvement, especially as we just came from the implementation of a new structure. We are now implementing the 2013 Rationalization Plan and it takes time before a new structure takes root. We still have positions to fill but we are serious when it comes to recruitment. We either hire people with the right background, or people with related backgrounds, then train them to carry out their tasks" (Interview PS1).

But even with improved capacity, both NEDA's and DepEd's staff complement will mostly allow only the commissioning and supervision of evaluations. The conduct of the studies themselves still need to be outsourced, and another problem that they face is that the industry for evaluations in the country, especially for ex-post and impact evaluations, is still young. Most firms do not meet the experience and expertise requirements of the government[24].

> "There are some firms who have the qualifications, but they are few ("*sila sila lang rin*") and we cannot procure them all at the same time because they also will not have the capacity to take on all of the evaluations that have to be commissioned under the M&E Fund. Resorting to foreign firms is difficult under the [Philippine Government's] procurement law because tax requirements usually cannot be met by qualified foreign firms or consultants" (Interview MES1).

Moreover, the government's budget cycle as discussed earlier (see Section 4.1.1) affects the quality of evaluation planning and design. For instance, in the case of NEDA, the proposed budget for evaluations that will be conducted in 2018 is only roughly estimated by the end of 2016, depending on non-detailed proposals that they receive from regional offices, sector staffs, and their own staff (Interview MES3). And when fiscal year 2018 approaches, only then do detailed designs of the proposed eval-

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[24] According to a status update on the M&E Fund, impact evaluation studies procured through the Fund experienced various failed biddings "due to consultants' failure to pass qualification requirements" (NEDA-MES 2018: 10).

uations get prepared, and some of those proposed evaluations do not even get final approval by the M&E Fund's Steering Committee (Interview MES3; Interview MES4). This leads either to lower costs than approved (subsequently resulting in underutilisation of government budget), or to higher costs than approved, necessitating a realignment of the budget and a longer process for procurement.

Given the challenges and current capacity of the government and the local evaluation industry, it may be said that the government's drive to manage for development results is noble but perhaps too ambitious. The evaluation budget initially provided to NEDA, which the NEDA-MES staff claim was not consulted with them (Interview MES3; Interview MES4), should have been a more realistic amount that took into account available human resource, technical capacity, and the amount of time[25] that they had to utilise the Fund. This way, the budget could have been allotted to other social programs. And with a slow start to institutionalising evaluation work within the public sector, it is no surprise that most evaluations are still undertaken by donors, even with a decreasing trend of ODA going to the Philippines in recent years (OECD 2017).

5.2. Political Constraints

Most, if not all, of the technical capacity issues discussed above should be addressed, in the long term, by the implementation of the NEPF. Prior to the issuance of the policy, NEDA and DBM were already aware that most government agencies did not have separate or well-functioning M&E units (aside from special monitoring units dedicated to ODA programs), and that those that did have units lacked the capacity for the level of M&E required if results-based public sector management were to be strengthened. Thus, the policy provided steps towards setting up and/or strengthening M&E units, creating an Evaluation Board that would lead the formulation of an evaluation agenda for government, and institutionalising evaluation feedback mechanisms within policy and programming activities such as the ICC approval process.

Unfortunately, the NEPF has not been operationalised since its issuance in 2015. And this has mostly been attributed to a lack of political will and a change of priorities since the assumption into office of the country's current administration in May 2016.

> "In terms of ensuring the use of evaluation reports, management response will be required from agencies, as stipulated in the NEPF – which is not yet really operational. All evaluations should be governed by the NEPF, but now there seems to be no more interest in the policy after the last administration" (Interview MES2).

When the current government took office in 2016, it issued a socioeconomic agenda detailing the administration's priorities for the next six years. A year later, the

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[25] Previously, until 2016, budgets had a two-year validity, meaning unspent allocations could carry over to the next fiscal year. From 2017 onwards, through a veto message from President Duterte, budgets will only have a one-year validity. Any amount unspent within the fiscal year is to be immediately reverted back to Treasury.

PDP 2017-2022 was also published. Neither of these documents mention the implementation of a national evaluation policy and agenda, which is unfortunate given that one of the priorities of the current administration is to accelerate government spending on infrastructure. But without implementing measures to ensure that results are monitored and evaluated, transparency and accountability in such massive public spending would also be difficult to ensure. Weiss (1977) argued that policymaking in government is highly influenced by the beliefs and ideologies held by decision-makers which in turn determine their values and their default response to certain issues. With the current Philippine President's repeated pronouncements that eliminating drugs and criminality and massively increasing infrastructure will solve the country's development problems, the focus has gone from implementing the right development programs to rounding up alleged criminals[26] and spending massively on infrastructure without regard for long-term costs or for research evidence to support decisions.

Further, since the change in administration, there has also been somewhat of an impasse between NEDA and DBM, the two oversight agencies that issued the NEPF and that are tasked to lead its implementation. The current heads of the two agencies have not sat together long enough to discuss the NEPF and to reach an agreement on the way forward for its implementation, perhaps because it is not among the administration's priorities, prompting NEDA to open the window to donor support, as it did in the early 90s when the World Bank attempted to help the agency establish an evaluation system. This time around, the technical assistance will be coming from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)[27].

> "Admittedly, the NEPF had a hard start because shortly after it was issued, we had a change in government. But now we are getting a better handle on how to proceed through a partnership agreement with the UNDP. We had to get UNDP on board for two reasons: first, NEDA's firefighting function[28] frequently draws us away from the facilitation of medium- to long-term plans such as evaluation; and second, it is my experience that when two parties [referring to NEDA and DBM] are not able to move forward, it is best to involve a third party to facilitate things. UNDP's role now is to get DBM back on board to move the policy forward, reach out to Congress and other stakeholders, and to pave the way for institutionalising evaluation in government" (Interview OIP1).

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[26] President Duterte has been at the center of controversy since his election into office in 2016 due to his 'war on drugs', which has been blamed for the significant number of drug suspect killings that are occurring to date (Human Rights Watch 2018).

[27] NEDA's partnership with UNDP entails the latter's assistance in: (i) procuring evaluation consultants to oversee the management of the M&E Fund and to link its implementation with the operationalisation of the NEPF; (ii) setting up an online portal where evaluations will be uploaded; (iii) preparing online modules on evaluation for reference of NEDA personnel; and (iv) formulating a National Evaluation Agenda through coordination and consultation with other government actors like DBM, but also Congress.

[28] 'Firefighting' refers to NEDA's function of facilitating program implementation by closely monitoring their progress, identifying bottlenecks, and proposing corrective measures in coordination with other government agencies and stakeholders.

Both reasons provided by the NEDA Undersecretary for the partnership with UNDP speak to the various interests that affect evaluation work. First, monitoring work is prioritised because policymakers and other stakeholders more frequently and more urgently demand up-to-date information on program implementation than they do evaluation findings. Congress, especially, approves the budget for government, and their immediate demands on monitoring data thus have to be met by the departments. Second, the presence of different interests among evaluation actors, i.e., between NEDA and DBM, and even between oversight agencies and implementing agencies such as DepEd, at times hinders certain agenda from moving forward unless a common ground is found.

In this situation where political will is lacking to move evaluation work forward, taking on the assistance of the UNDP may actually be the best option. As Bamberger (1991: 33) put forward, taking into account the constraints that developing countries in particular experience, establishing an effective system for evaluation will best be achieved either through sufficient political will or through donors' well-planned and executed technical support to governments for public sector-led evaluations.

Chapter 6
Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

Four decades after Carol Weiss raised a concern on the minimal use of social science research, and throughout the evolution of evaluation practice in the Philippines, we are now seeing evaluation research take a more substantial role in public sector governance.

The first sub-question of this research asks which actors are involved in the conduct of evaluations in the Philippines, because this affects how and why evaluations are produced and used. Using the basic education sector as a case, it is likely that a majority of the evaluations for public sector programs are still largely led and funded by the country's donor partners, usually by commissioning third party evaluators, whereas those led by the public sector are either carried out by PIDS – the government's policy think tank – or by private sector firms or consultants commissioned by government agencies like NEDA and DepEd. Some NGOs undertake M&E of public education programs as well, but these are few and small in scale, usually filling the gap in areas that do not receive as much attention from donors or government.

In terms of the second research sub-question on the types and purpose of evaluations, according to the Philippine government's policy issuances, evaluations are to be conducted to ensure accountability to its stakeholders and to support evidence-based decision-making in the public sector. For this reason, government-commissioned evaluations such as the PIDS-conducted evaluation of DepEd's locally-funded School-based Feeding Program usually state a summative purpose (i.e., reporting to policymakers and citizens on a program's results and accomplishments), and a formative purpose (i.e., providing recommendations to implementing agencies to improve the design of subsequent phases or of future programs). But because most of the evaluations are led by donor agencies, it is usually ODA-funded programs that are evaluated, and there are more stakeholders and accountabilities to consider in such cases – such as consultants' accountability to donor management who approves contracts, and donors' accountability to the countries who are the source of their funding. In the case of the JICA-commissioned evaluation of the Third Elementary Education Project, for instance, legitimation and increasing support for and knowledge about school-based management seems to have been a primary underlying purpose for the evaluation.

In both cases, we see DepEd use the evaluations to inform their policy and program decisions, albeit in different ways. First taking the learning perspective towards addressing the third sub-question on how evaluation findings are used to inform program design, DepEd displays the organisational characteristics that would allow evaluations to serve as a tool to generate lessons towards learning, innovation, and the development of policies and programs in the education sector; the value they assign to generating results evidence is demonstrated by the agency coming up with a policy process that discusses how evaluation findings should be used to inform policy design. DepEd also has two divisions tasked to commission and/or conduct evaluations, but there is clearly room to improve coordination between them. Decisions have also

been made to change the way some things have been done based on results of evaluation studies, an example of which are the adjustments made to the operational guidelines of the SBFP for its 2017-2022 phase. There are, however, also some significant findings and recommendations of the SBFP evaluation that were not adopted by DepEd, and some attributes of the organisation preclude the conclusion that evaluations are used purely for learning. In taking another perspective, we can better understand how else DepEd uses findings of evaluation reports. Thus, this research also looked at the organisation from a political lens, which showed that in the same way donors use evaluations to increase support for their approaches and to account for their spending (as was the case with the TEEP evaluation), DepEd also uses evaluation findings to increase different stakeholders' knowledge on approaches that they advocate, and also as a way to legitimise the programs that they implement and how those programs are designed.

The role of evaluation research for DepEd, which is the main query of this study, still align with the overall government policy on evidence-based decision-making. Whether evidence is used to report, improve, or legitimise, the point is that they are used, not as primary policy drivers (due mostly to lack of available evaluations on local education programs) but as policy drivers nonetheless. And there is a long-term vision within the organisation for institutionalised evaluation use, as evidenced by their initiative to draft a Basic Education M&E Framework, despite the stalled implementation of the NEPF. For an agency and a sector that gets the biggest budget for implementing programs but has ironically not been given as much attention for evaluations as social welfare and infrastructure have, the initiatives within DepEd to institutionalise evaluation use are commendable, and hopefully similar initiatives are being done by other agencies towards pulling evaluations out of white elephant realm to something that is actually useful and worth the cost.

There is, however, a long way to go before we see the embeddedness of evaluation practice throughout the Philippine government, particularly given findings on the fourth sub-question on the technical and political constraints that they face. The NEPF, which takes a long-term view on how to institutionalise evaluation towards results-based management in the public sector, has not been operationalised due to lack of political interest following the change in administration in 2016. The policy, if its provisions were being implemented, should already be addressing the technical constraints experienced by government such as the lack of manpower for evaluation work within the current organisational structures of government agencies, the limited evaluation knowledge and expertise among current civil servants, and the inclusion of evaluation feedback in planning and programming processes. Given a change in policy priorities and missing political will to push the evaluation policy forward, NEDA has resorted to entering into a partnership with the UNDP towards operationalising the policy.

In terms of policy recommendations, taking into account the lack of action to realise the full potential of evaluations, alongside the situation where there is sufficient funding, a growing interest and space for evaluations in public sector management, and a willing development partner, perhaps the UNDP partnership is the right way to go to finally move the national evaluation policy forward after more than three years. The NEPF already takes into account what is needed to promote an evaluation

culture in government and has provided steps towards its realisation, and so implementing the policy is important if evaluation work is to take root in Philippine governance. But while the implementation of the policy is stalled, agencies like DepEd are already taking their own steps towards giving evaluations a greater role in policymaking. Thus, while NEDA is working closely with UNDP on moving the policy forward, it is important to coordinate with the rest of the bureaucracy and to not work in silos so as not to waste the initiatives already undertaken by other government agencies. Donor support has been ever present in the country, but with aspirations to graduate to upper middle-income status within the decade, there must also be a mindset towards independence. The government cannot keep relying on partners like the UNDP to do the work that they are interested in but don't have the capacity to carry out. At the end of the day, the systems that are set up through the UNDP partnership will have to be operated and maintained by government, and the work of producing and using evaluations under the policy have to rest squarely on government's shoulders. If the Philippine government were truly earnest in improving policymaking by using evaluation research as a tool to support evidence-based decisions, then concrete actions based on the evaluation policy (such as setting up evaluation units within agencies and the formation of an Evaluation Board) should already be taken while the UNDP is on board and providing technical assistance. After decades of attempts, focusing on the sustainability of reforms for evaluation use is necessary if it is to be ensured that public spending on research won't go to waste this time around.

Finally, this study contributes to theorizing around evaluation use by combining the Institutional Analysis and Development Framework with the learning and political organisation perspectives under Organisation Theory. This combination was used as the study's overall analytical framework towards determining the role that evaluations play in the planning and design of basic education programs in the Philippines.

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Annex 1
Profile: School-based Feeding Program

Program Title:	School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP)
Implementing Agency:	Department of Education
Implementation Duration:	2012 to present (current phase being implemented: 2017-2018)
Funding Source:	Locally-funded (Philippines' General Appropriations) Program budget under the 2018 General Appropriations Act: PHP5.3 billion (roughly USD100 million)
Coverage/Beneficiaries:	The current SBFP covers all Severely Wasted (SW) and Wasted (W) Kindergarten to Grade 6 pupils for SY 2017-2018 in select public elementary schools based on incidence of SW and W pupils according to the Nutritional Assessments for the current year.
Program Description:	The program is primarily a targeted feeding program that will be implemented for at least 120 days in a school year. The feeding will commence on June/July of every year and will continue until the completion of the target feeding days. The program also includes complementary activities such as deworming, good grooming and personal hygiene, health care promotion and Wash in Schools (WinS) policy, waste segregation and composting, productivity, life and values development training, and the *Gulayan sa Paaralan* Program (GPP) which enjoins schools to have a fully functional vegetable garden for the whole school year to supplement the school feeding.
Program Objectives:	The program primarily aims to improve the nutritional status of the beneficiaries by at least 70% at the end of 120 feeding days, and to increase classroom attendance by 85% to 100% and improve the children's health and nutrition values and behavior. It also aims to do the following: • Provide feeding to learners, prioritizing the SW and W; • Improve the nutritional status of the SW and W learners at the end of 120 feeding days; • Ensure 100% deworming of target beneficiaries prior to the feeding activity; • Conduct group daily hand washing and tooth brushing activities as stipulated in DepEd Order No. 10, s. 2016, to impart development of positive health-promoting values and behaviors; • Promote health and nutrition information and awareness among target beneficiaries through the K to 12 Curriculum and its alternative modalities of education; and • Encourage *Gulayan sa Paaralan* Program and backyard vegetable gardening to augment the feeding program and to complement the nutrition and poverty reduction initiatives of the Government.

Source: DepEd (2017) 'Department Order No. 39, s. 2017 – Operational Guidelines on the Implementation of School-Based Feeding Program for School Years 2017-2022,' Department of Education.

Annex 2
Profile: Third Elementary Education Project

Project Title:	Third Elementary Education Project (TEEP)
Implementing Agency:	Department of Education (then the Department of Education, Culture, and Sports or DECS)
Implementation Duration:	2000-2006
Funding Source:	ODA-funded Total project cost: USD221.16 million (USD91.07 million from JICA, USD82.84 million from the World Bank, and USD47.25 million as Philippine government counterpart)
Coverage/Beneficiaries:	The project was implemented in public primary and elementary schools in the 23 provinces identified as the most socially depressed provinces in the Philippines' Social Reform Agenda.
Program Description:	The project was a combination of investments in school facility and education materials and school governance reform. Not only school facilities and textbook supply were improved, but the decision-making process was also decentralized to the school and community levels. TEEP introduced a package of investments to schools in the selected 23 provinces, including: (i) school building construction and renovation; (ii) textbooks; (iii) teacher training; (iv) school-based management; and (v) other facilities and equipment support. Overall responsibility for project management and implementation lied with DECS, in close partnership with LGUs. The project implemented a process of decentralization under which DECS Divisional Offices would become the basic operational units, with the central and regional levels playing only a support role.
Program Objectives:	The project aimed to: • Build the institutional capacity of DECS and other stakeholders to manage the change process associated with the underlying strategy; and • Improve learning achievements, completion rates and access to quality elementary education in 23 poor provinces, especially their most disadvantaged schools and communities.

Sources: WB (1996) 'Philippines – Third Elementary Education Project,' Project Information Report. World Bank;

JICA (2011) 'Impact Evaluation of Third Elementary Education Project in the Republic of the Philippines,' Washington, D.C.: Japan International Cooperation Agency and International Food Policy Research Institute.

Annex 3
List of Unpublished Sources

Office/Organisation/Department	List of documents provided that the researcher could not find/access online
Department of Education (DepEd)	• Draft Policy Framework on Basic Education Monitoring and Evaluation • Memorandum of Agreement between DepEd and the Department of Public Works and Highways on the implementation of the Basic Educational Facilities Fund
National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA)	• Concept Note on the Monitoring and Evaluation Fund • Template for Terms of Reference for the Procurement of Impact Evaluations under the M&E Fund • CY 2015 Work and Financial Plan for the M&E Fund • Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Fund Status Update as of June 2018
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)	• Impact Evaluation of Third Elementary Education Project in the Republic of the Philippines
World Bank (WB)	• Project Completion Report for the Third Elementary Education Project

Annex 4
Coding and Details of Key Informant Interviews

Office/Agency/ Organisation	Name of Key Informant Interviewee	Designation	Interview Schedule	Interview Location	Code
Department of Education (DepEd)					
Planning Service	Jesus Lorenzo Mateo	Undersecretary	08-22-2018; 09:00 A.M.	Bulwagan Building, DepEd Complex, Pasig City	PS1
	Ruby Ann Manalo	Education Program Specialist II, Policy Research Division	08-22-2018; 09:00 A.M.	Bulwagan Building, DepEd Complex, Pasig City	PS2
Program Management Service	Miriam Coprado	OIC-Division Chief, Project Development Division	07-24-2018; 10:30 A.M.	Bonifacio Building, DepEd Complex, Pasig City	PMS1
	Erwin Yumping	Senior Education Program Specialist, Project Development Division	07-24-2018; 10:30 A.M.	Bonifacio Building, DepEd Complex, Pasig City	PMS2
National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA)					
Office of Investment Programming					
Office of the Undersecretary for Investment Programming	Rolando Tungpalan	Undersecretary	07-27-2018; 10:00 A.M.	NEDA Building, 12 Escriva Drive, Pasig City	OIP1
Monitoring and Evaluation Staff	Violeta Corpus	OIC-Director	07-18-2018; 10:00 A.M.	NEDA Building, 12 Escriva Drive, Pasig City	MES1
	Jesse David	OIC-Assistant Director	07-20-2018; 03:00 P.M.	NEDA Building, 12 Escriva Drive, Pasig City	MES2
	Gemma Agagas	OIC-Division Chief, Economic Sector Division	07-25-2018; 09:00 A.M.	NEDA Building, 12 Escriva Drive, Pasig City	MES3
	Cherie Anne Quirante	Senior Economic Development Specialist, Systems and Data Analysis Division	07-23-2018; 12:00 P.M.	NEDA Building, 12 Escriva Drive, Pasig City	MES4
Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS)					
Office of the President	Jose Ramon Albert	Senior Research Fellow	07-17-2018; 03:00 P.M.	Dean & Deluca, Rockwell, Makati City	PIDS1
	Aniceto Orbeta	Senior Research Fellow	07-26-2018; 02:00 P.M.	PIDS Office, 18F Three Cyberpod Centris, Quezon City	PIDS2
Project Services Department	Renee Ajayi	Department Manager III	07-26-2018; 02:00 P.M.	PIDS Office, 18F Three Cyberpod Centris, Quezon City	PIDS3
Knowledge Channel Foundation Inc. (KCFI)					
Management	Edric Calma	Director for Operations	07-26-2018; 10:30 A.M.	KCFI Office, 5F Benpres Building, Pasig City	KC1
Affiliated Network for Social Accountability in East Asia and the Pacific (ANSA-EAP)					
Management	Redempto Parafina	Executive Director	08-06-2018; 10:00 A.M.	ANSA-EAP Office, 3F Mansi Building, Katipunan Avenue, Quezon City	AE1