Unpacking How Education Learning Networks Can Best Support Evidence Use in Global Education

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SALEX
School Action Learning Exchange

JACOBS
FOUNDATION
Our Promise to Youth

R4D
RESULTS FOR
DEVELOPMENT

Presentation outline

Introduction to SALEX
as an education
learning network

Learning activity:
3 key takeaways to
enhance evidence
use

What is an education learning network?

Collaborative Learning brings together a deliberately organized set of participants, or change agents, that have common goals and are convened in a way that allows them to systematically learn from each other and co-create solutions to challenges of common interest.

We define **education learning networks (ELNs)** as networks connecting education system actors to produce and exchange knowledge using adult learning theory and social learning principles.
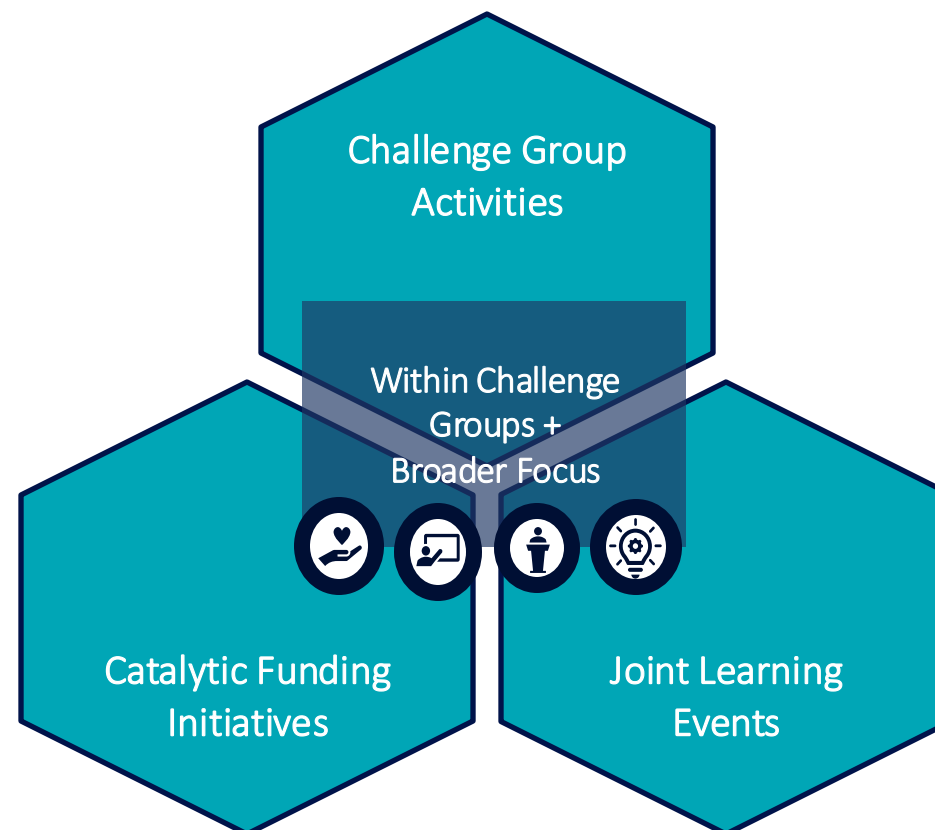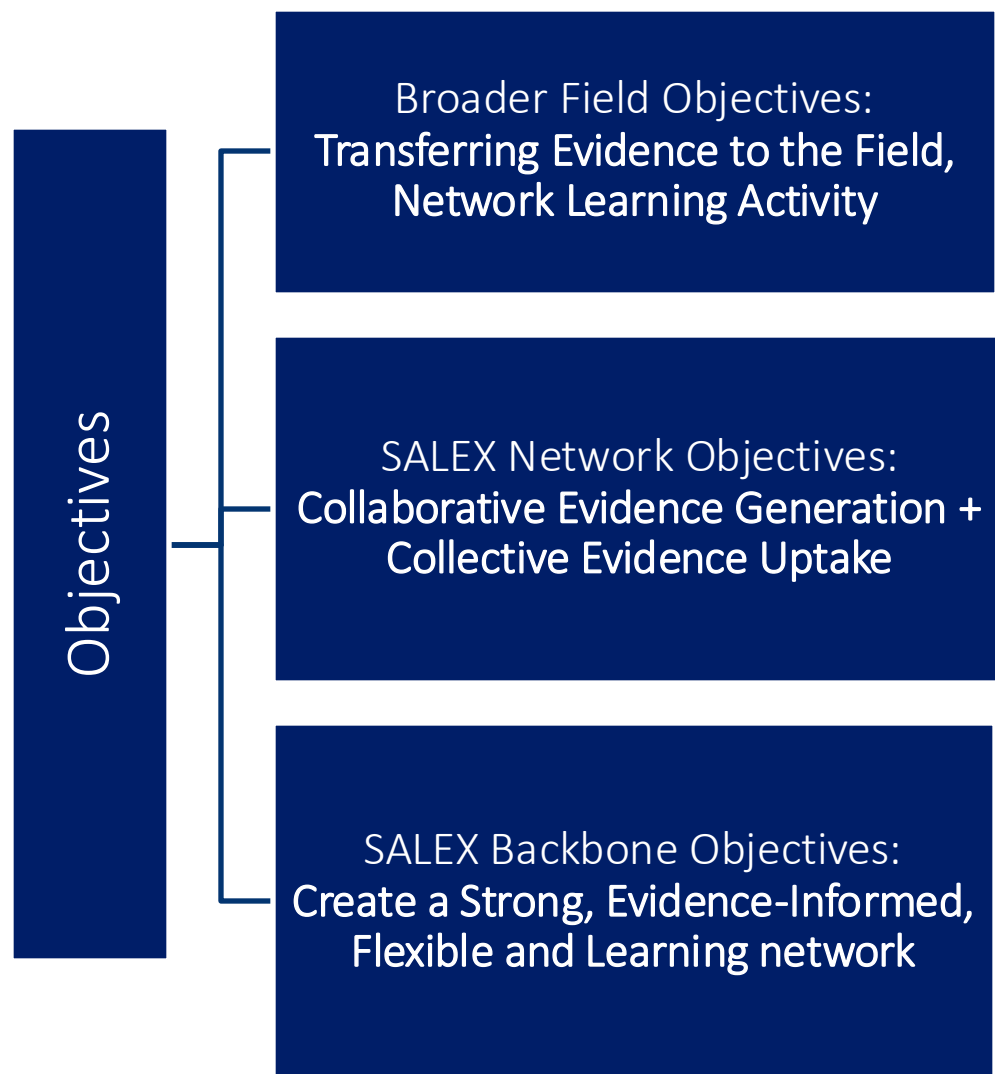
Shared vision of SALEX

To support a community of school networks, organizations, and their members by creating a mechanism for collaborative learning that incentivizes and promotes joint learning and collaboration at the network and school level, ultimately resulting in a strengthened global school ecosystem.

Members of the School Action Learning Exchange

- Council of International Schools (CIS)
- Education International
- NetEdu
- Schools2030
- HundrED
- UNICEF Data Must Speak
- Teach For All
- International Baccalaureate (IB)
- Youth Impact
- STiR Education
- Educate!

- Room to Read
- Research Schools International (RSI)
- Global Schools Forum (GSF)
- Educapaz
- Luker Foundation
- Instituto Gesto
- TaRL Africa
- Global School Leaders (GSL)
- Kizazi
- Lewa Digital Literacy Initiative
- PAL Network

Overarching structure of SALEX

Objectives

Broader Field Objectives:
Transferring Evidence to the Field, Network Learning Activity

SALEX Network Objectives:
Collaborative Evidence Generation + Collective Evidence Uptake

SALEX Backbone Objectives:
Create a Strong, Evidence-Informed, Flexible and Learning network

Challenge Group Activities

Within Challenge Groups + Broader Focus

Catalytic Funding Initiatives

Joint Learning Events

SALEX Learning Activity: What we did

Learning objective & questions

Objective: Gather and synthesize learning on how ELNs can support evidence translation and use to help inform SALEX members' work and others in the global education field.

1. What are successful strategies that education networks can use to identify and collect evidence across the education system to best promote evidence use by its members?

2. How can education networks at different levels effectively support evidence use by its members?

Learning approach
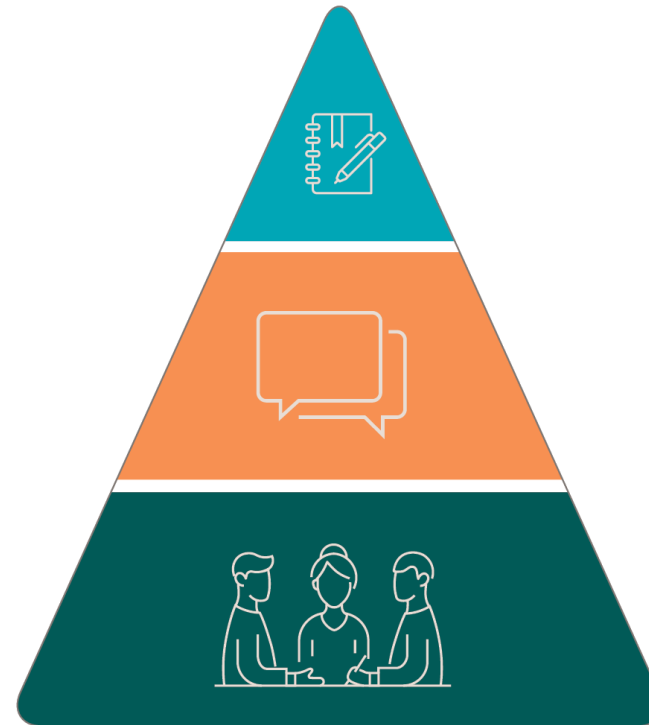
Figure 2. **Data Sources**

Desk review
Peer reviewed and grey literature

External experts
Individual and group interviews with 7 experts

SALEX contributions
3 focus groups with 6 SALEX organizations; collected stories and outputs from the annual SALEX-wide event
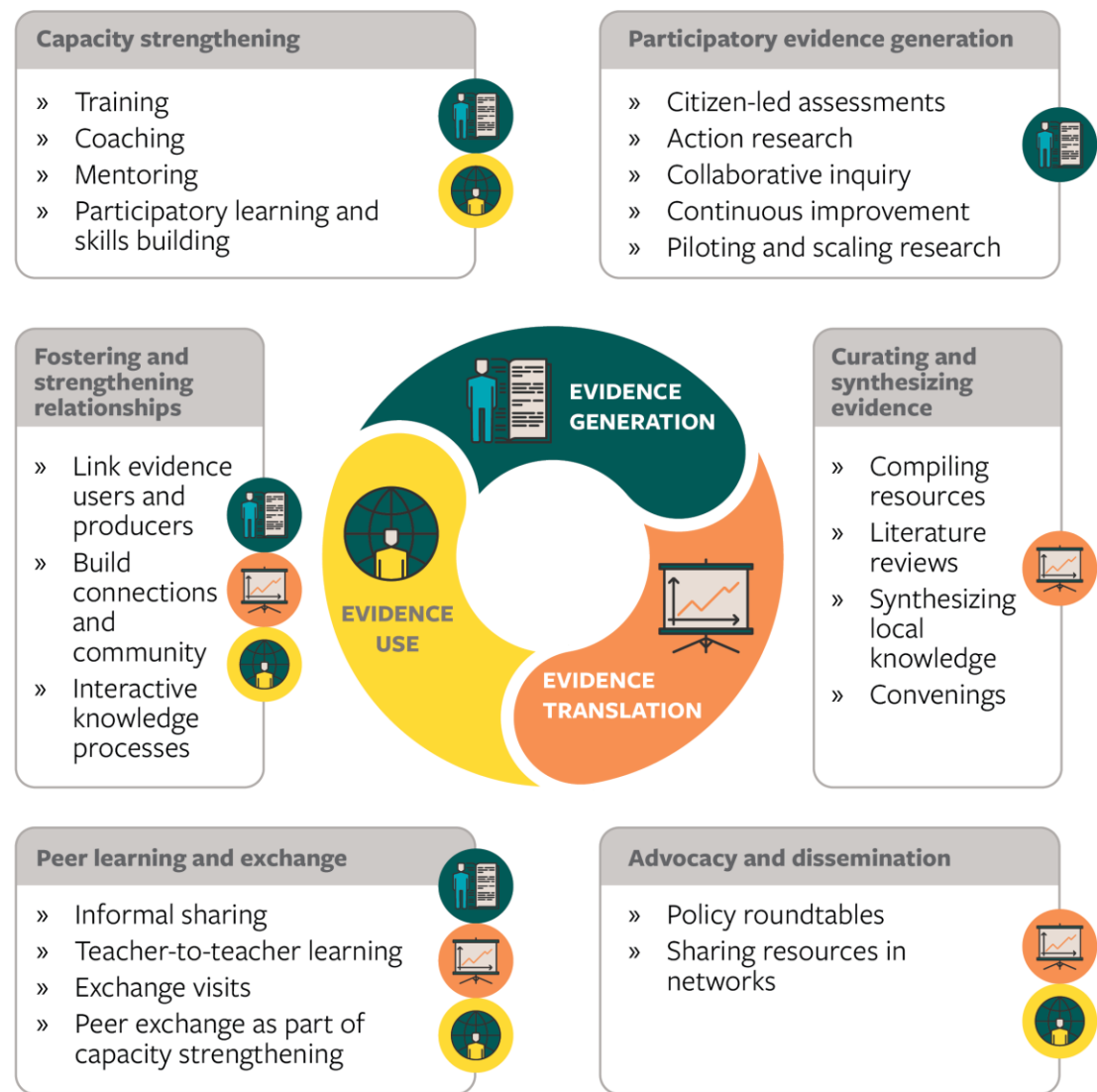
SALEX Learning Activity: What we learned

3 key takeaways for better evidence use

1. ELNs can support effective evidence use by members and beyond members (including governments) by engaging throughout the entire evidence lifecycle and by using a combination of complementary activities.

Figure 4. **Activities Education Learning Networks Use Across the Evidence Lifecycle**

Capacity strengthening
- » Training
- » Coaching
- » Mentoring
- » Participatory learning and skills building

Participatory evidence generation
- » Citizen-led assessments
- » Action research
- » Collaborative inquiry
- » Continuous improvement
- » Piloting and scaling research

Fostering and strengthening relationships
- » Link evidence users and producers
- » Build connections and community
- » Interactive knowledge processes

Curating and synthesizing evidence
- » Compiling resources
- » Literature reviews
- » Synthesizing local knowledge
- » Convenings

EVIDENCE GENERATION

EVIDENCE USE

EVIDENCE TRANSLATION

Peer learning and exchange
- » Informal sharing
- » Teacher-to-teacher learning
- » Exchange visits
- » Peer exchange as part of capacity strengthening

Advocacy and dissemination
- » Policy roundtables
- » Sharing resources in networks

2. Limited time and resources, as well as politics and power inequities, often constrain evidence use within ELNs.

Annex 2. Drivers and Constraints Analysis Checklist

ELNs can use the following checklist to prioritize drivers and constraints to evidence use and identify supporting actions and actors to either leverage the drivers or mitigate the constraints.

ELNs can facilitate use of the checklist during a participatory workshop or meeting:

1. Determine or reiterate the evidence use goal that you will focus on.
2. Brainstorm drivers that are or are likely to be supportive of your goal in the relevant context and indicate the relative importance of the driver. Use empty rows to add drivers that are not listed.
3. Brainstorm constraints that are or are likely to be supportive of your goal in the relevant context and indicate the relative importance of the constraint. Use empty rows to add constraints that are not listed.
4. For the medium and/or high importance drivers, brainstorm actions the ELN can undertake that can leverage or support the driver. For each action, also brainstorm actors that can support these actions.
5. For the medium and/or high importance constraints, brainstorm actions the ELN can undertake that can mitigate or address the constraint. For each action, also brainstorm actors that can support these actions.

Evidence use goal	[List evidence use goal]			
Drivers	**Importance** (low/medium/high) (consider presence, ease of leveraging)	**Supporting Actions** (for medium/high importance)	**Supporting Actors** (for medium/high importance)	**Notes**
[type/category]				
[specific]				
Constraint	**Importance** (low/medium/high) (consider presence, ease of leveraging)	**Supporting Actions** (for medium/high importance)	**Supporting Actors** (for medium/high importance)	**Notes**
[type/category]				
[specific]				

Source: Adapted from https://hr.mit.edu/learning-topics/change/articles/force-field

3. ELNs should strive to be demand-driven, inclusive, and collaborative to mitigate these constraints and enhance evidence uptake.

Annex 1. Menu of Activities for Education Learning Networks

The table below shows different activities that ELNs can use to support evidence generation, translation, and use. We also provide links to useful resources for each activity.[6]
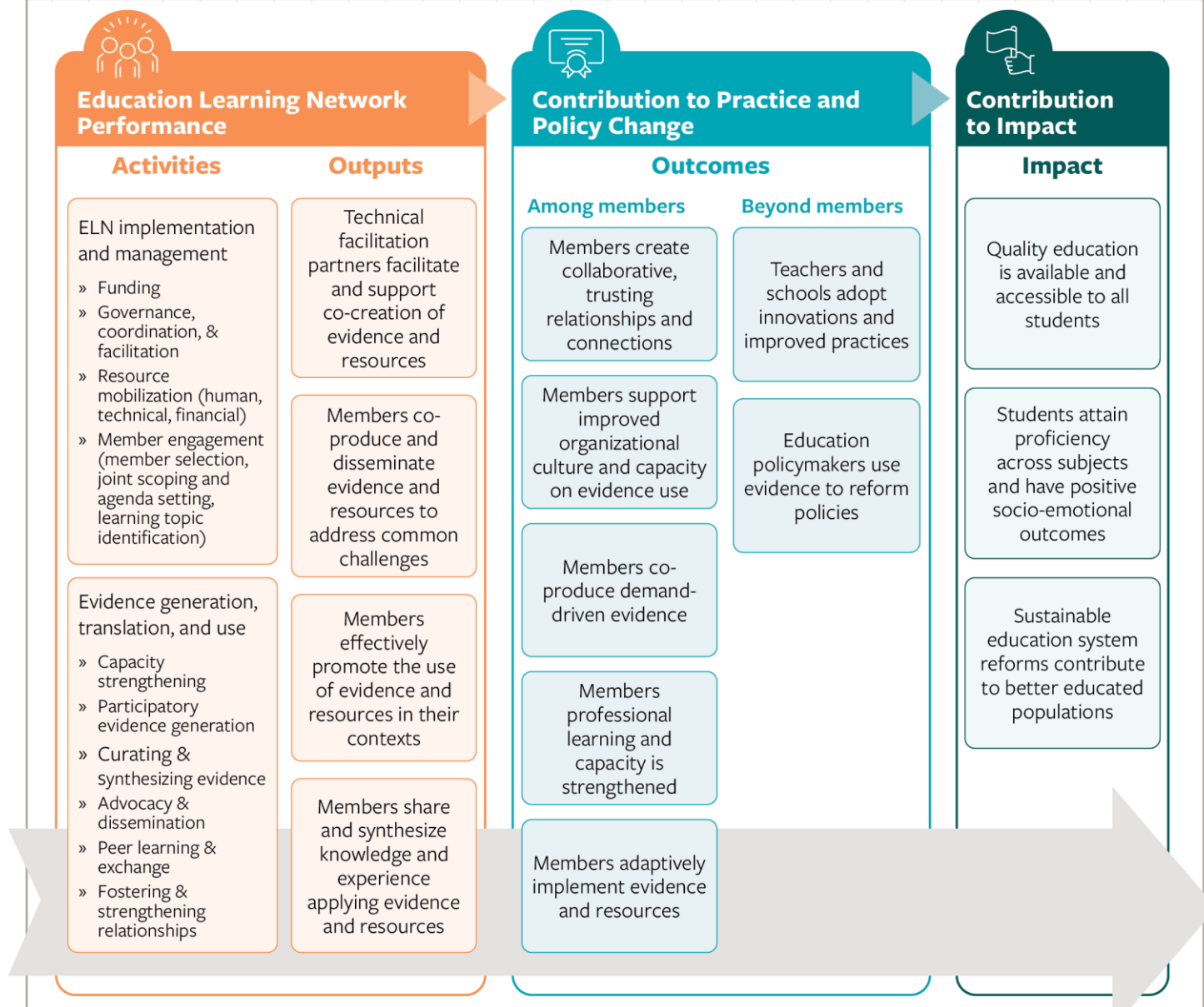
When considering which activities to use, ELNs can consider in consultation with their membership:

» What is our evidence related goal?

» What types of support do our members need to achieve this goal?

» What activities do we have the time, resources, and capacity to implement?

Activity	Specific Activities	Evidence Lifecycle Stage			Resources
		Evidence generation	Evidence translation	Evidence use	
Capacity strengthening	» Training » Coaching » Mentoring » Professional learning and skills building	●		●	» Results for Development's Facilitating Collaborative Learning: An open-access, e-learning orientation series (2023) » InHive's Social Change Networks Playbook for Practitioners and Funders (2022) » Champions for 'Life': How to identify, support, and evaluate advocates for social change (Coe et al., 2021) » Working for solutions: a problem-based and relationship-centred approach to building capacity to use research evidence in Africa (Stewart et al., 2017) » Global School Leader's How to Scale with Government Toolkit (2024)
Participatory evidence generation	» Citizen-led assessments » Action research » Collaborative inquiry » Continuous improvement » Piloting and scaling research	●			» Fito Network's Collaborative Impact Methods Kit (n.d.) » Evidence for Improvement: An Integrated Analytic Approach for Supporting Networks (Sherer et al., 2020)

Figure 3. Theory of Change for ELN Contribution to Evidence Use

Education Learning Network Performance

Activities

ELN implementation and management
- » Funding
- » Governance, coordination, & facilitation
- » Resource mobilization (human, technical, financial)
- » Member engagement (member selection, joint scoping and agenda setting, learning topic identification)

Evidence generation, translation, and use
- » Capacity strengthening
- » Participatory evidence generation
- » Curating & synthesizing evidence
- » Advocacy & dissemination
- » Peer learning & exchange
- » Fostering & strengthening relationships

Outputs

Technical facilitation partners facilitate and support co-creation of evidence and resources

Members co-produce and disseminate evidence and resources to address common challenges

Members effectively promote the use of evidence and resources in their contexts

Members share and synthesize knowledge and experience applying evidence and resources

Contribution to Practice and Policy Change

Outcomes

Among members

Members create collaborative, trusting relationships and connections

Members support improved organizational culture and capacity on evidence use

Members co-produce demand-driven evidence

Members professional learning and capacity is strengthened

Members adaptively implement evidence and resources

Beyond members

Teachers and schools adopt innovations and improved practices

Education policymakers use evidence to reform policies

Contribution to Impact

Impact

Quality education is available and accessible to all students

Students attain proficiency across subjects and have positive socio-emotional outcomes

Sustainable education system reforms contribute to better educated populations
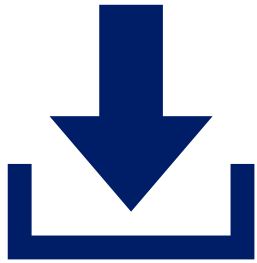

Influencing Factors within ELNs
- » Demand driven
- » Strong, inclusive, collaborative relationships
- » Mutual trust
- » Resource provision
- » Right member mix

Influencing Factors within Education Systems
- » Networks and relationships
- » Evidence availability & accessibility
- » Policy and practices
- » Politics and power
- » Time and resources
- » Capacity

Thank you!

Download and read the full report here:
https://tinyurl.com/salexreport

For questions or additional information, please contact: rflam@r4d.org