

# Behavioral insights at the World Bank

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“A behavioral lens on poverty reduction” Poverty Symposium

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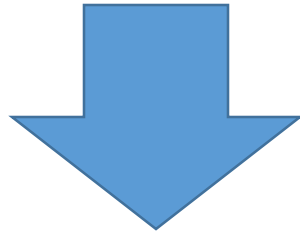
# World Development Report 2015



- We think automatically
- We think socially
- We think with mental models

**Taking a richer notion of how people think can improve development interventions in ways that standard models would not predict**

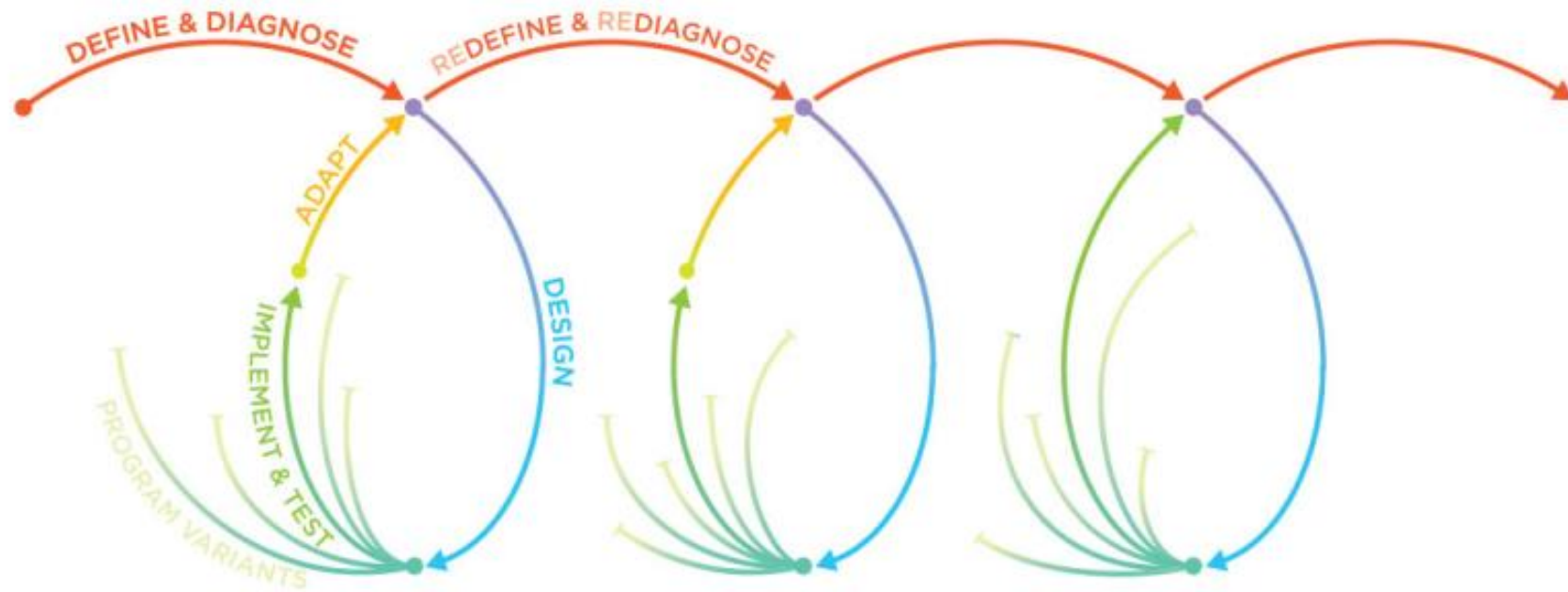
Wider array of determinants  
of observed behavior



Importance of Diagnosis,  
Evaluation and Adaptation

Big constraint:  
**Confirmation and  
confidence bias in policy  
designers** (i.e. we think we  
know though often we do  
not)

# A different representation of the intervention cycle



# Where we work

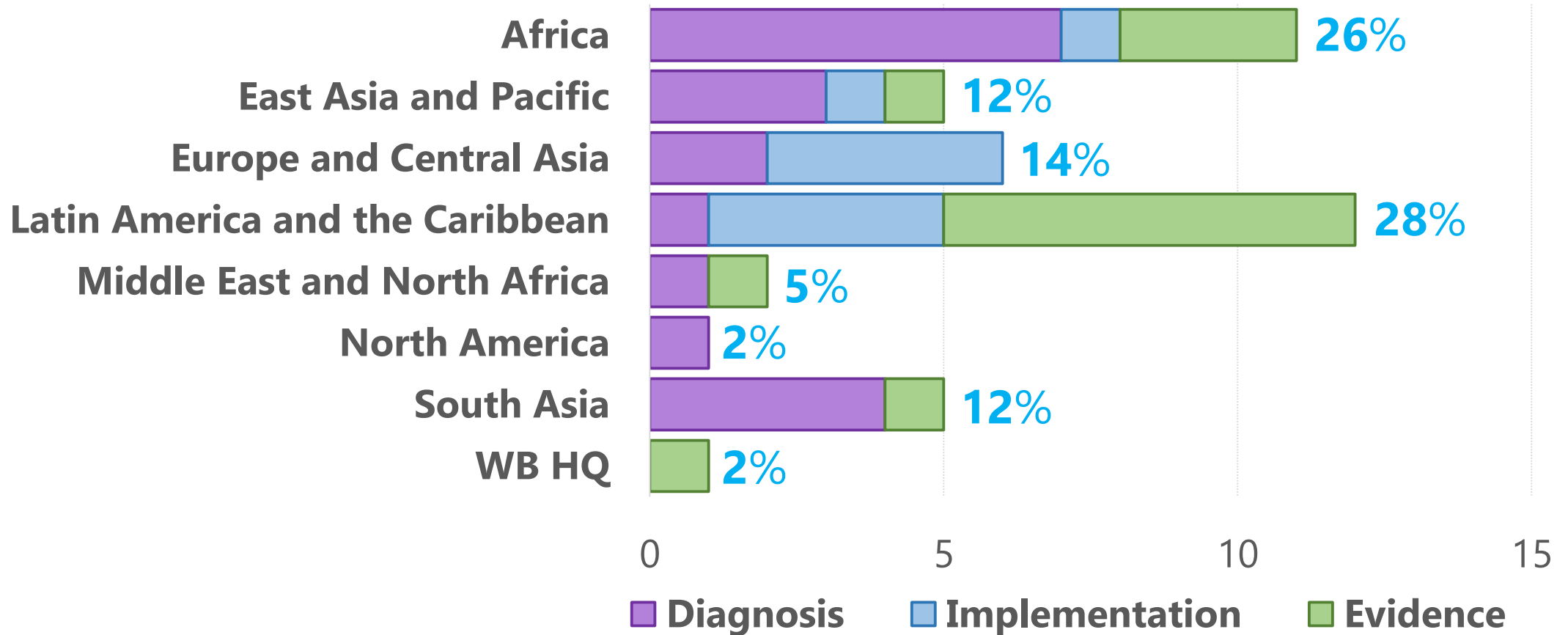


**Source** Behavioral Initiatives

**Notes** 37 projects in 40 countries.

**Disclaimer** Country borders or names do not necessarily reflect the World Bank Group's official position. This map is for illustrative purposes and does not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the World Bank, concerning the legal status of any country or territory or concerning the delimitation of frontiers or boundaries.

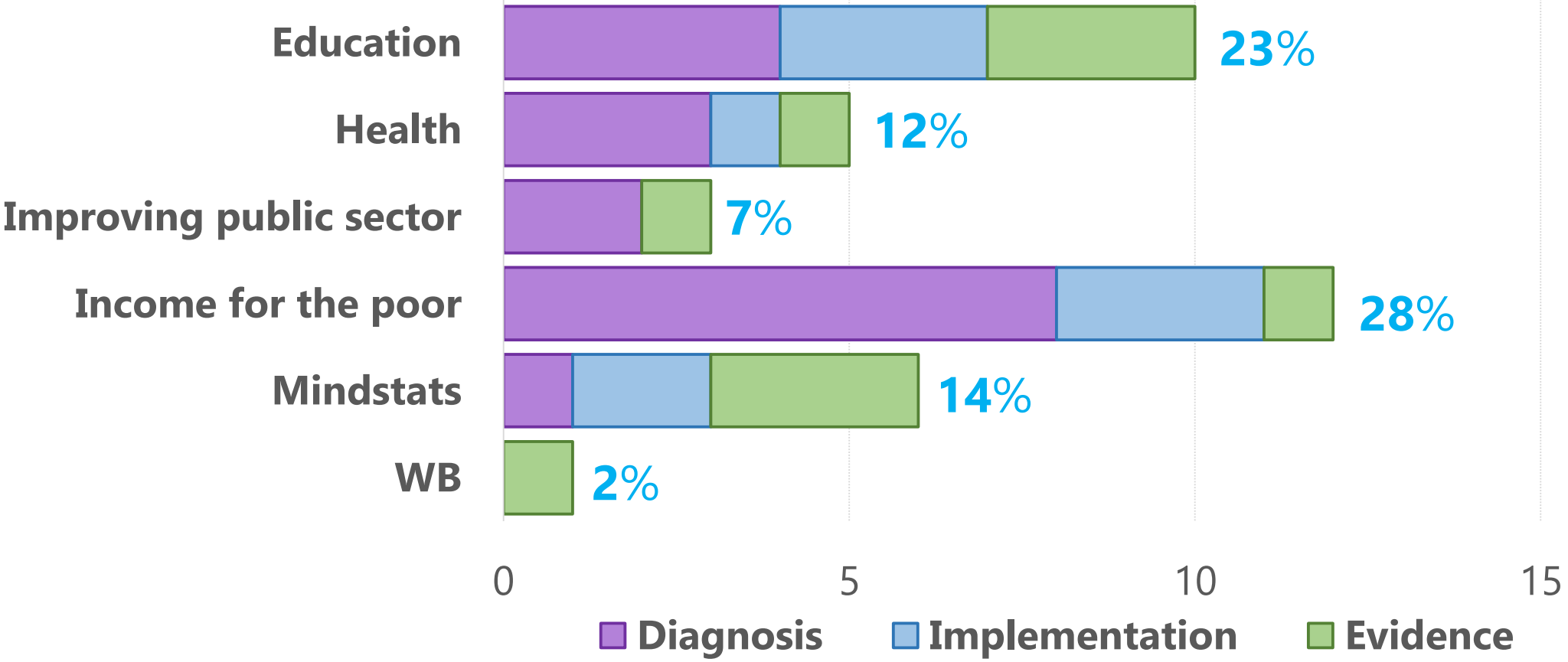
# Work and Progress by Region



*Source* Behavioral Initiatives

*Notes* 37 projects, 4 in overlapping regions. WB HQ refers to project implemented in Washington, DC with WBG staff.

# Work and Progress by Theme



Source Behavioral Initiatives

Notes 37 projects. WB HQ refers to project implemented in Washington, DC with WBG staff.

# Example of work with a Cash Transfer Program





# Policy challenge

## Human capital of poor children

Policy challenge	Desired outcome	Behavioral issues
Improve <b>human capital accumulation of children</b> in poor and vulnerable households	Increase primary school <b>enrolment</b> and <b>attendance</b> , and reduce <b>drop-out</b> rates of poor children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Eligible households <b>do not register</b> in the CCT program</li><li>- Beneficiary households <b>do not enroll</b> and <b>do not send</b> children to school</li><li>- Children <b>drop out</b> of school</li></ul>

# Operationalizing Bridging teams

- **Cross-sectoral challenge:** education, social protection, macro-fiscal
- **Complex government setting:** federal system in a diverse country, with CCT as federal program but Education devolved to provinces
- **Need to bring together all relevant stakeholders**
  - Federal, Provincial and District Authorities
  - Implementing firm, Partners and NGOs
  - Schools, local councils, and **beneficiaries**
- **But also enhance collaboration across WBG GPs: SP, EDU**

# Some lessons

## Debunking authorities' mindset

### 1. Context recon

Knowing the setting

#### Desk review and survey analysis

- High number of out of school children and low take-up of CCT
- However, from surveys, families seem to value education

### 2. Initial diagnosis

Establishing a hypothesis

#### Meetings with authorities

- Poor families do not value education
- Opportunity costs, social norms or low perceived long-term benefits

### 3. Fieldwork

Testing hypothesis & defining a new one

#### Focus groups with mothers & school visits

- Families do value (good quality) education
- Alternative explanation: lack of adequate supply (poor infrastructure, lack of gender specific restrooms, teacher absenteeism), and financial constraints (out-of-pocket costs)

# Working across countries - opportunities

- This worked here (impact evaluation shows)
- This did not work here (impact evaluation shows)

But what were the reasons why things were not working in the first place? And how does the intervention is related to that.

- Importance on building knowledge about **main constraints** to achieving certain objective