

Reflections and Questions - Designing the Step Together efficacy evaluation

Reflections on the pilot, and questions to be considered by evaluators and delivery organisations.

We anticipate that the following questions will be answered through the study design process, some of which is led by evaluators and some from delivery organisations, with many aspects needed some form of collaboration to reach an appropriate answer. We welcome discussion of some of these points, in applications as appropriate.

Questions for delivery organisations and evaluators

1. School and route selection:
 - a. The IPE report highlights that schools in the pilot study had low absence rates and so the study was unlikely to make/detect a difference – how would you select schools so that the intervention was delivered in routes which would affect schools with higher absence rates? (More specifically this might focus on high unauthorised absence rates and exclude authorised absence or unauthorised absence related to holiday)
 - b. The evaluators highlighted that schools in the pilot study were selected by the WM VRRP, and the IPE report highlights that routes, which were developed starting with the location of crime (from police data), and modified by engagement with schools, were not always in the areas of highest crime identified in the police data (shown in the map in the IPE report). What is your approach to selection of schools and routes to ensure they are most appropriate for the project ie that they have high levels of crime (including ASB)?
 - c. The IPE report also highlights that one route in the pilot study was considered by pupils to be safe (implying it was not appropriate to be included in the study). How would your approaches to route selection address this point?
2. Chaperone hours: The IPE highlights a change to the implementation model in the period after the pilot, which focussed only on the hours after school. What is your opinion of this change? Should it be incorporated into the intervention delivery model, why/why not? Considering your understanding of when crime takes place on the routes, what is your view on the number of hours that chaperones are on the routes each day?
3. The pilot report highlighted the difficulties in surveying CYP on feelings of safety, what is your approach to measuring this outcome?

4. The pilot study was unsuccessful in using a GPS app with chaperones to measure their fidelity to the planned routes (within the agreed level of flexibility). What would be your approach to measuring fidelity to the delivery model?
5. Time and costs:
 - a. The pilot study and IPE highlighted the need for early engagement with schools and local organisations. Is the proposed setup period feasible, or what resources do you need to set up in the proposed time
 - b. Given the scale of delivery discussed in (1) above, and cost data from the pilot study provided in the IPE report, what are likely cost ranges for delivery, for evaluation?

Questions predominately for evaluators:

6. RCT – Is an RCT a better option than a QED efficacy study, as suggested in the pilot report, and is it feasible? What scale (number of routes, schools) would be needed? If RCT what would be the unit of randomisation and what would be required of schools/stakeholders in the control arm.
7. The pilot study followed a similar method to the Chicago studies in that routes parallel to the chaperone routes were the control group, and in this way the analysis was about to investigate spillover effects where crime could be displaced from the chaperoned routes. Given the overall study design, how will you analyse spillover effects?
8. What do you consider is the primary outcome (specifically), e.g. should it be crime per defined area per month, or crime per defined area per month for the hours in which the chaperones are on routes, or crimes..by school age CYP?
9. Do you consider the use of grid squares to define the routes, and as units of analysis is correct, if so do you agree with the 500mx500m grid squares used in the pilot study (or the smaller grid size used in the Chicago project) or do you recommend a different size, and why?
10. Time and costs:
 - a. The pilot study highlighted the time needed to obtain data sharing agreements with police forces. Given the scale and possible location of the study, what is your approach to police data (ie to access centralised police data, or from local police forces for the locations in the study) and what are the implications for the project timeline.