International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie)

How to use evidence gap maps

Evidence gap maps (EGM) aim to enable policymakers and practitioners to explore the findings and quality of the existing evidence on a topic, and to facilitate evidence-informed decision-making. Click here to explore 3ie evidence gap maps.

Each EGM adopts a **framework**, presented in a matrix format, to capture the various interventions and outcomes associated with a thematic area.

The rows of the matrix represent **interventions**, and the columns represent **outcomes**. Clicking on an intervention or outcome will open up a brief description.

By clicking on the magnifier, you can **zoom in** to examine an area of the map more closely. Click 'zoom out' to return to the full map.
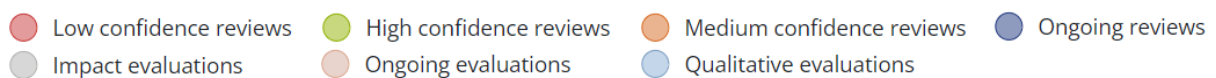
The **bubbles** appearing at intersections between interventions and outcomes denote the existence of a study or studies examining the relevant outcome and intervention. Clicking on a bubble displays a list of these studies. Bubbles of different colours indicate different types of evidence. Grey bubbles represent impact evaluations.

Total unique studies: 1035	Outcomes	
	Knowledge, attitudes and norms	
Interventions	Knowledge and awareness	Attitudes and normative change
SRHR education, including Comprehensive Sexuality Education		

Systematic reviews are represented in a "traffic light" system based on our confidence in the review's conclusions (we appraise each review's methods using a standardised checklist): Green bubbles for high confidence reviews, amber for medium confidence, and red for low confidence. Protocols for forthcoming studies are represented by pink bubbles (ongoing impact evaluations) and dark blue bubbles (ongoing systematic reviews). Light blue bubbles are reserved for other studies (typically qualitative methods).
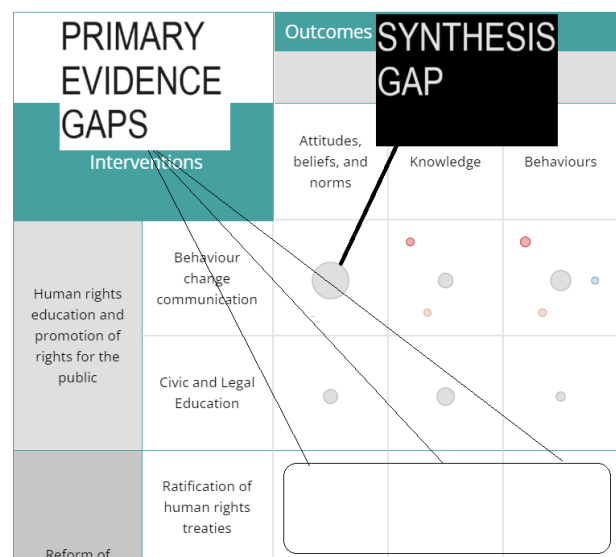
The larger the bubble, the greater the volume of evidence in that cell. If you click on a bubble, a window will open with a list of studies for that cell. You can click on differently coloured bubbles to list studies of different types; clicking on an empty space within a cell will display a list of all studies (of all types) in that cell. Clicking on a study's title will take you to additional information about the study on 3ie's Development Evidence Portal (which also includes a link to where you can find the paper online, and a link to look for an open access version if the full text is behind a paywall).

You can click on categories of studies shown in the legend at the bottom of the screen to hide or show those types of studies. There are also options at the top of the screen to **filter** the evidence by region, country and research design (this last option is for impact evaluations only).

🔴 Low confidence reviews   🟢 High confidence reviews   🟠 Medium confidence reviews   🔵 Ongoing reviews
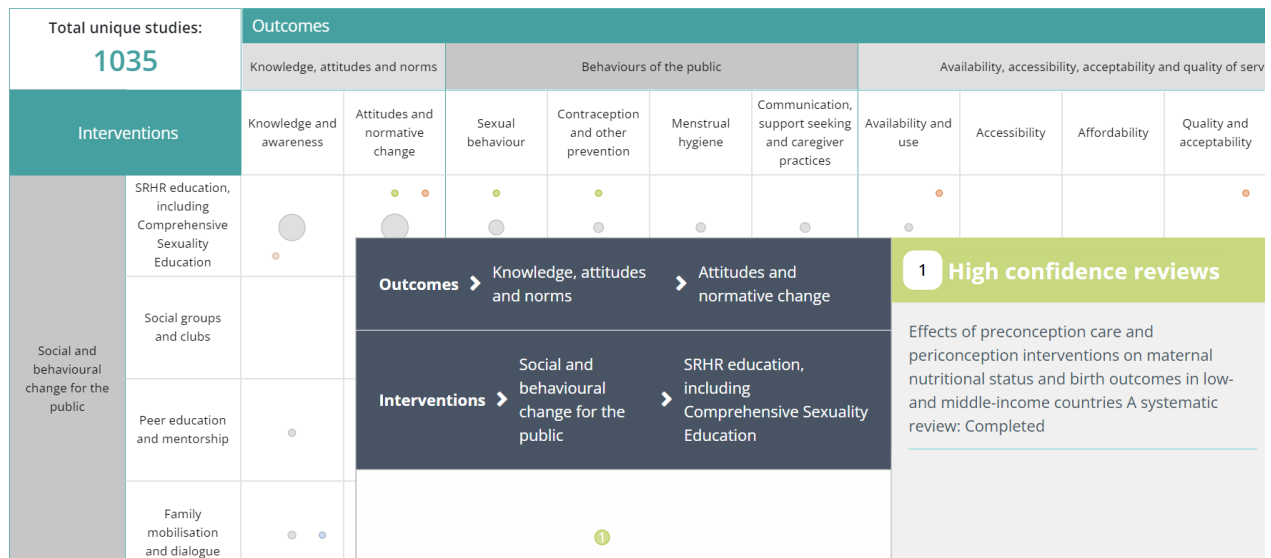⚪ Impact evaluations   🔴 Ongoing evaluations   🔵 Qualitative evaluations

The EGM identifies key **gaps** where little or no evidence from impact evaluations or systematic reviews is available. Gaps indicate an absence of evidence on a given intervention and outcome intersection. Cells with few or no impact evaluations indicate areas where **future research** in the form of impact evaluations should be focused.
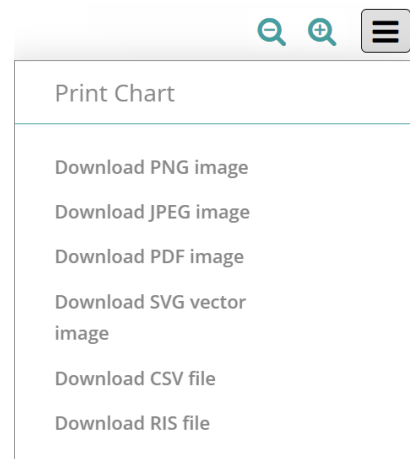
Areas where there is a substantial volume of impact evaluation evidence, but few or no medium- or high-confidence systematic reviews, indicate key synthesis gaps where a systematic review is needed to synthesise the evidence from primary studies.
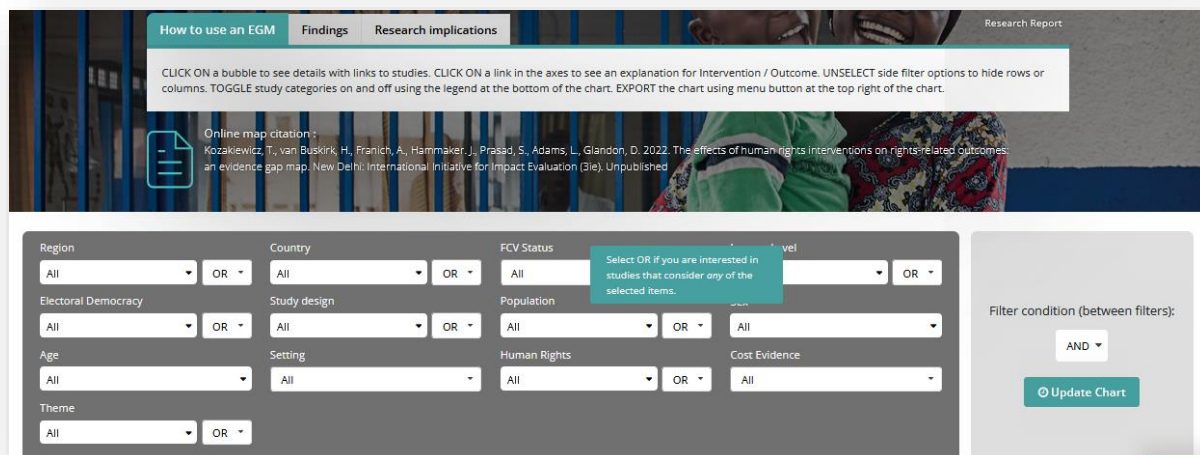

For **policy-related decision-making**, users should place the greatest emphasis on evidence from medium- and high-confidence systematic reviews. The confidence rating for systematic reviews is intended to assist users in making an informed judgment about the extent to which they can rely on the systematic review evidence for decision making. Clicking on the hyperlink for each systematic review will take you to a summary of the critical appraisal and, for medium- and high-confidence reviews, a summary of the review's findings.

Total unique studies: 1035	Outcomes										
	Knowledge, attitudes and norms		Behaviours of the public				Availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality of serv				
Interventions	Knowledge and awareness	Attitudes and normative change	Sexual behaviour	Contraception and other prevention	Menstrual hygiene	Communication, support seeking and caregiver practices	Availability and use	Accessibility	Affordability	Quality and acceptability
Social and behavioural change for the public	SRHR education, including Comprehensive Sexuality Education										
	Social groups and clubs										
	Peer education and mentorship										
	Family mobilisation and dialogue										

| Outcomes ❯ | Knowledge, attitudes and norms | ➔ | Attitudes and normative change |
| Interventions ❯ | Social and behavioural change for the public | ➔ | SRHR education, including Comprehensive Sexuality Education |

1 High confidence reviews

Effects of preconception care and periconception interventions on maternal nutritional status and birth outcomes in low- and middle-income countries A systematic review: Completed

Users can **export** a copy of the EGM using the menu button at the top right of the chart.

Print Chart

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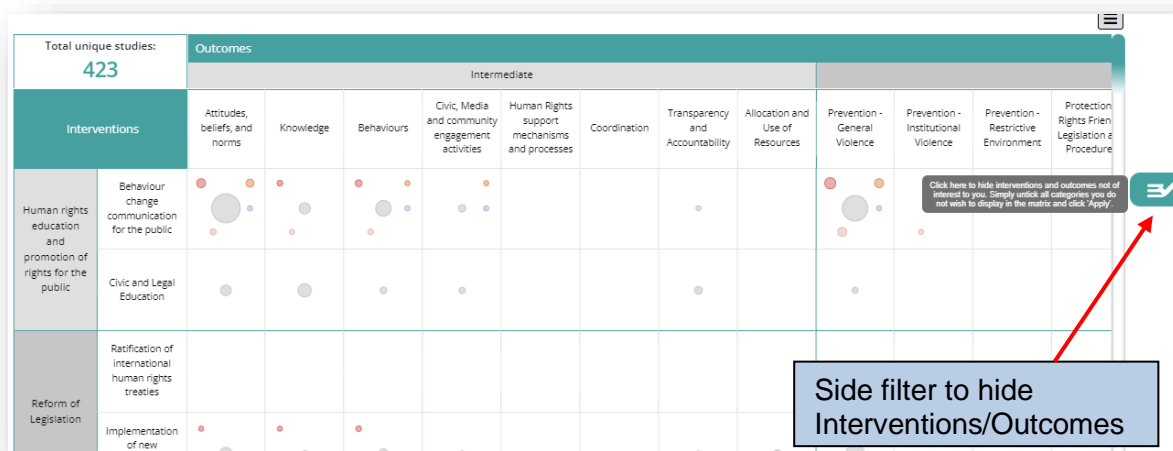
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To find the most relevant evidence, users can select one or more filters along with operators for multi-select filters. Hover over the AND/OR operators to see a tooltip with an explanation of how it can be applied.
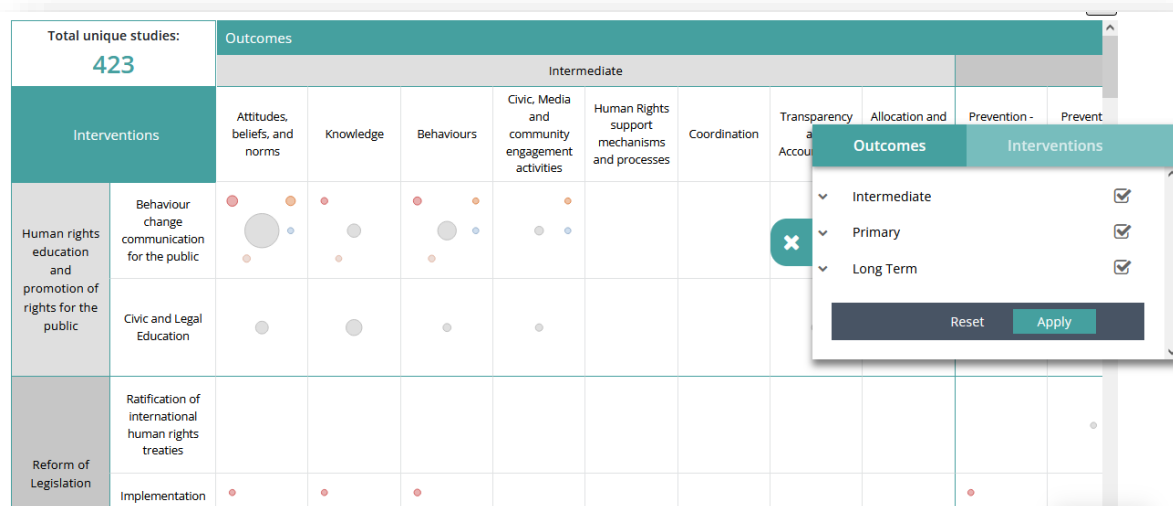
For example, for the Human Rights EGM a user is able to specify that they want to see studies from Latin America and the Caribbean that target LGBTQI+ persons **AND** Racial/ethnic groups (i.e., as opposed to all studies that either take place in Latin America **OR** target LGBTQI+ persons).

For maps with many categories that take a lot of space on the screen, users might want to only look at a particular subset of the map. For example, it might be useful to hide intermediate and long-term outcomes to make sure only primary outcomes of interest appear on the screen. You can also export a list of just this subset of studies. The instructions below describe four quick steps to filter and export.

Step 1: Click on the side filter

Step 2: A pop-up will appear to select the interventions/outcomes of interest

Step 3: Uncheck the boxes for the interventions/outcomes you want to hide and leave the checked boxes to show the interventions/outcomes you want to appear in your EGM framework. After that, click the Apply button at the bottom of the pop-up.

Step 4: As soon as you click the Apply button, the EGM framework, including the total number of studies at the top left corner, will reload to reflect your choice. The selection will also take into account all the filters you have applied. This could be a combination of top filters, side filters, and the legend (toggling categories in the legend allows users to filter the matrix by study type).