



About us

The Government Outcomes Lab represents a ground-breaking example of research-to-practice innovation. Our work demonstrates the power of an academic institution walking shoulder to shoulder with governments and related organisations to enhance policy and practice towards better outcomes for people.

What is the challenge?

Most societies want to support those among them who are in difficult circumstances. We aspire for children in tough situations to be protected, those suffering long term health conditions to have a better quality of life, homeless people to have a place to live, and those out of work to be gainfully employed. However, social issues like these tend to have complex causes which can mean they are multifaceted and entrenched. Solutions are far from simple, and often very costly.

At present, challenges within government structures can make it difficult to pioneer approaches that better tackle these social concerns. Government departments work independently of one another but often with the same individuals or families. Political and budgetary pressures mean that preventative services with long term outlooks are hard to develop. The absence of oversight can allow poor provision to continue without challenge, yet where it is present it can act as a constraint against adapting services to meet needs.

The GO Lab response

At the GO Lab, we believe that giving public services an outcomes focus might help tackle these challenges. Generally, governments are used to providing services and citizens are used to receiving them: schools, doctors and social workers for example. But, we could switch the focus to the end outcomes we want: improved grades at school, reduced risk of diabetes, or time settled in accommodation.

We want to understand when and how this focus on outcomes can be effective for delivering public services, and whether it can be more effective than other options. We are looking in particular at approaches that encourage collaboration across sectors, like outcome based commissioning, social impact bonds, and place based approaches, and are exploring how well they work in practice.

We are using the knowledge we create to become the global hub for policy-makers and practitioners seeking more and better tools to tackle complex social issues. We seek to answer the practical

questions that leaders are asking in their efforts to rally resources and design and deliver programmes to achieve the best outcomes possible. We seek to help governments nationally and locally strengthen their capacity, so they can nurture and utilise the resources available to respond to the needs of their citizens.

In order to understand the emerging practice better, we advocate for more openness in the field. This will enable us to compare different approaches using high quality data, to understand what best practice looks like and where lessons need to be learned, and to help develop more sustainable models for tackling complex social needs.

Where are we now?

Our team comprises leading academics and professionals from a range of backgrounds across the public, private and social sectors. We were established in July 2016 as a partnership between the UK Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Blavatnik School of Government at the University of Oxford. Since then, we have worked with a range of partners including the UK Home Office and Behavioural Insights Team. In 2019 we became the hosts of the Global Knowledge Platform for Impact Bonds and Outcome Based Approaches, which was developed in collaboration with UBS Optimus Foundation, DfID, Ecorys, Social Finance, Maze and the Bertha Centre for Social Entrepreneurship.

We have published academic **research papers** on social impact bonds and collaborative approaches to contracting services. We have developed **introductory** and **technical guidance** on outcomes-based contracting, developed a comprehensive global database of social impact bonds, and created a range of in depth case studies. We run the annual global **Outcomes Conference** and speak at a range of conferences and seminars worldwide, as well as our own programme of **events and webinars**. Our work supports the UK's £80m Life Chances Fund.

Our work has been presented to the UK Prime Minister and the Head of the UK civil service, and we have worked with senior civil servants in governments worldwide. Our network of **Fellows of Practice** are experts across a range of sectors, and ensure our work aligns with relevant conversations and that our knowledge is well disseminated.

You can read more about **our work**, and find the latest in our **news and events** section.



Governments everywhere will benefit from research, data and training which helps the focus on outcomes and to work better with the private and not-for-profit sectors.

Ngairé Woods, Dean, Blavatnik School of Government

tions as well as the type of practical support and



Our people

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Our team is made up of academic research and voluntary sector experience. [Click here](#) to find out how you can make up the GO Lab.

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For more information about our work and how to get involved, you can get in touch with us at golab@bsg.ox.ac.uk



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