

Senior Consultant

Professional profile

Melanie Punton is a Senior Consultant in Itad's Knowledge Hub, specialising in qualitative and participatory research methods and theory-based evaluation. Melanie designs, manages and conducts theory-based evaluations across a number of themes in Itad, including Governance, Organisational Effectiveness, and Health. She has applied contribution analysis, realist evaluation, process tracing and outcome harvesting in several multi-year projects, including the DFID-funded [Tilitonse](#) and [BCURE](#) evaluations, and has co-authored two CDI practice papers on [process tracing](#) and [realist evaluation](#). She is currently applying a range of participatory methods within the theory-based process evaluation for [Adolescents 360](#), an innovative sexual and reproductive health programme developed using Human-Centred Design.

Melanie plays a key role in promoting technical excellence across Itad, including through delivering internal training and developing resources on evaluation design, theory-based evaluation, qualitative methods, and theory of change. As a core member of Itad's Knowledge Hub, she works to strengthen Itad's internal and external knowledge sharing through improving systems, facilitating cross-company learning events, and supporting strategic communications to share innovation with the wider evaluation and international development communities. She is currently leading a [Realist Evaluation Learning Group](#) to capture and share lessons from Itad's portfolio of realist evaluations.

Nationality British

Languages English (mother tongue)

Country experience Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nepal, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, UK, Zimbabwe

Education

2011 - 2012 **MA Poverty and Development (Distinction)**
Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, UK

2006 - 2009 **BA Philosophy (First Class)**
Durham University, UK

Employment

2017 - Present **Senior Consultant**
Itad Ltd, UK

2013-2017 **Consultant**
Itad Ltd, UK

2012 - 2013 **Research Officer**
Research and Evidence Division, Department for International Development, UK

2011 **Research Assistant**
Institute of Development Studies, UK

2010 - 2011 **Community Fundraising Projects Coordinator**
Save the Children, UK

2009 - 2010 **Durham University Charities Committee Manager**
Durham Student's Union, UK

Project experience

2018 - Present **Evaluation of Adolescents 360 (A360)**
Role: Technical lead, Process Evaluation | **Client:** Gates, CIFF | **Location:** Ethiopia, Nigeria, Tanzania
Designs, conducts and manages fieldwork and analysis in a utilisation-focussed process evaluation, to evaluate the progress of the innovative \$30 million A360 programme, and feed in ongoing lessons to improve implementation within the adaptive A360 programme. Designs and manages Participatory Ethnographic Research to explore the perspectives of adolescent girls, and Action Research in collaboration with implementers to answer 'burning questions.' Co-authored the Mid-Term Review and led the design process for the final phase of the process evaluation.

2019 - Present **CDC Longitudinal Study**
Role: Technical advisor | **Client:** DFID, CDC | **Location:** Global
Provides technical advice on the design and implementation of process tracing longitudinal case studies, for a ten-year study on mobilisation of private investment by CDC in the fragile and frontier markets.

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- 2019** **Evaluation of Building Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Extremes and Disasters extension programme (BRACED-X)**
Role: Senior consultant | Client: DFID | Location: Multi-country, across East Africa, the Sahel and Asia
Conducted realist qualitative analysis and synthesis to identify and refine context-mechanism-outcome configurations, as part of the core analysis and writing team for the final BRACED-X report.
- 2018 - 2019** **Action for Empowerment and Accountability (A4EA) Research Project**
Role: Researcher | Client: DFID | Location: Nigeria
Co-authored a [case study](#) of the £100 million DFID-funded Partnership to Engage, Reform and Learn (PERL) adaptive programme, using a combination of field research and desk review to explore if and how adaptive approaches are particularly relevant and useful for promoting empowerment and accountability in fragile, conflict and violence-affected settings (FCVAS).
- 2018** **Evaluation of the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) – Foundation Stage**
Role: Theory of Change and Evaluation Strategy Consultant | Client: BEIS | Location: UK
Co-developed the theory of change for the £1.5 billion Global Challenges Research Fund and supported the development of the GCRF evaluation strategy.
- 2015 - 2018** **Evaluation of the Addressing Violence Against Women & Girls Through Sport programme**
Role: Co-team lead | Client: British Council | Location: Kenya
Co-led monitoring and evaluation of the £1.7 million DFID-funded programme, designing and managing a [mixed-methods theory based evaluation](#) using contribution analysis, outcome harvesting and insights from social norms theory to capture evidence against the theory of change. Co-designed the project [monitoring framework and tools](#), incorporating a range of observational and participatory monitoring methods to capture evidence of changing youth attitudes and behaviours.
- 2014 - 2018** **Evaluation of the Building Capacity to Use Research Evidence (BCURE) programme**
Role: Methods lead | Client: DFID | Location: Kenya, Bangladesh, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Pakistan, Sierra Leone
Co-designed and managed a realist evaluation of the £15.7 million BCURE programme, designing data collection to test context-mechanism-outcome (CMO) configurations across six countries, and co-writing the [final report](#). Led the BCURE programme evaluation in Zimbabwe, managing national consultants through the design, sampling, data collection and analysis over two years. Authored a realist [Literature Review](#) to synthesise evidence from diverse fields on evidence-informed policy making (EIPM).
- 2012 - 2016** **Independent Impact Evaluation Agent (IIEA) for the Tilitonse Fund**
Role: Consultant | Client: DFID | Location: Malawi
Managed a team of UK and Malawi-based researchers to produce 12 in-depth longitudinal case studies of civil society grantees within the £12 million Tilitonse Fund, using contribution analysis. She employed meta-ethnographic synthesis to synthesise qualitative and quantitative data sources (case studies and survey data) for the [final evaluation report](#).
- 2014 - 2016** **Evaluation of the Use of Mobile Phone Technology for Nutrition Service Delivery in Indonesia programme**
Role: Consultant | Client: IDS | Location: Indonesia
Provided support and expertise to develop the framework for the realist evaluation and process tracing aspects of the evaluation, and conducted data analysis for the process tracing component.
- 2014** **Development of a Culture & Development Evaluation Toolkit**
Role: Project Manager | Client: British Council | Location: UK
Conducted an evaluability assessment of the British Council's Culture & Development strategy, and led the development of a Culture & Development M&E toolkit for British Council staff
- 2013 - 2014** **Evaluation of the Child Development Grant Programme**
Role: Consultant | Client: DFID | Location: Nigeria
Supported the analyse and write-up of the Situation Analysis, facilitating debriefing workshops and training and managing research assistants to conduct qualitative content analysis.