

How Can We Make IPS Last?

Why does IPS thrive in some contexts while implementation proves challenging in others?

Jaakko Harkko, PhD

University of Helsinki, Finland
Tampere University, Finland



IPS is something
we care deeply about.

**I started with a simple question:
what does it take to implement it?**

**What followed was a journey
toward a much bigger one.**



“What we do see depends mainly on what we look for.”

John Lubbock, 1896



Good evidence does not automatically become normal practice.



What has to happen in the middle?

THE OBVIOUS ANSWER

Where does evidence get stuck after a promising start?

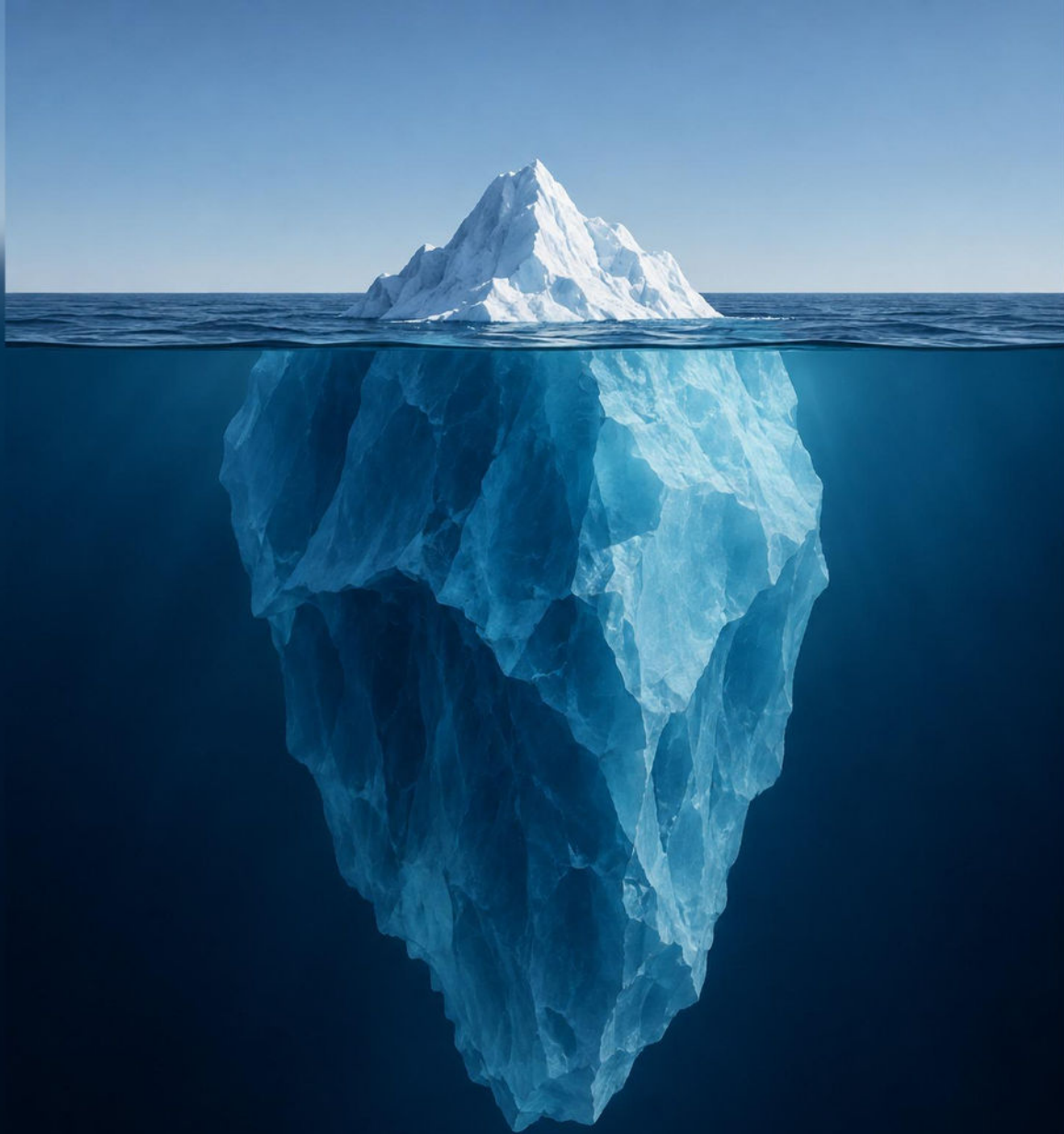


**All of these can matter.
But a long list of barriers is not the same as an explanation.**

HOW THE QUESTION CHANGED

I thought I was looking
for barriers.

**But it wasn't one barrier.
It was the system.**



“The formulation of a problem is often more essential than its solution.”

Albert Einstein & Leopold Infeld, 1938



WHAT THE BARRIERS POINTED TO

The list kept growing. The pattern was underneath.

“No mandate” —————> **decision problem**

“Unclear referrals” —————> **embedding problem**

“Reviews change nothing” —————> **learning problem**

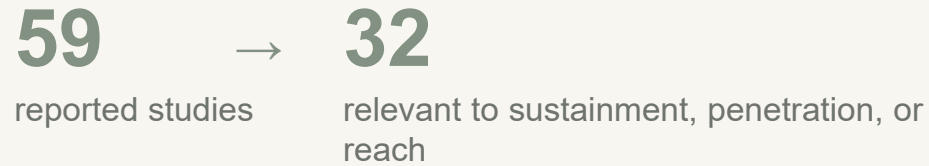
**The better question was not only what the barrier was.
It was what the system succeeds or fails to do.**

How the framework was develop

Theory-building integrative review with inductive synthesis and abductive interpretation

EVIDENCE BASE

Existing scoping review



Updated search through November 2025



41 empirical IPS implementation studies

Across legislative contexts, welfare sectors, and local-to-national governance levels

SYNTHESIS LOGIC

1 Inductive extraction

External-context conditions linked to sustainment, penetration, and reach were coded and grouped into recurring patterns.

2 Abductive interpretation

Patterns were interpreted using implementation science, policy implementation research, and welfare-policy scholarship.

OUTPUT → Three policy-level domains: L • E • L

The Legitimacy–Embedding–Learning framework

External context becomes three observable, mutually reinforcing policy-level domains

POLICY LEGITIMACY

Policy paradigms, entitlements, and “deservingness” logics

Decision chains, political commitment, and explicit mandates

Alignment with recovery-oriented, choice-based employment

→ **POLICY EMBEDDING**

Mandates, funding, and implementation support

Vertical alignment across governance levels

Horizontal coordination across health, employment, and welfare sectors

→ **POLICY LEARNING**

Structured implementation-support capacity and learning communities

Fidelity review, evaluation, and governance-level feedback loops

Adaptation and model refinement during scale-up and scale-out

Legitimacy authorizes embedding • Embedding enables learning • Learning supports legitimacy and guides further embedding

We know context
is not a backdrop.

**Yet sometimes we act
as if it did not exist.**



“It takes two to tango.”

Al Hoffman & Dick Manning, 1952



What can we do in a pilot?

01 **Define the outcome**

02 **Connect services to evidence**

Researcher–practitioner collaboration can take us this far.

What must the service system be able to do?

03 **Link authority, responsibility and resources**

04 **Manage interdependencies**

05 **Learn from delivery and outcomes**

The harder problem begins when no single actor controls the whole pathway.

Scaling up means building IPS into the system.

Scale-up expands IPS within existing service systems by strengthening the policy and institutional conditions that allow it to spread.

Sustained scale-up is a policy process.

Evidence does not enter an empty space.

It competes with other priorities, interests, ideas, and ways of working.

Scaling out means entering a new system.

Scale-out extends IPS to new populations and/or delivery systems. That brings different policy logics, missions, cultures and service arrangements.

Adaptation must protect what makes IPS work.

Distinguish core principles, predictive elements and contextual supports.

Documented adaptations—and use fidelity and outcome data to learn what transfers.

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