Systematic review gapmaps: What?

Present an overview of existing systematic reviews on a particular topic, schematically representing the types of interventions evaluated and outcomes reported.

The gap map includes key intermediate and final outcome categories along the causal chain. The length of the columns for each outcome corresponds to the number of systematic reviews covering that outcome.

Can be expanded to also include primary studies

Why?

Useful resource for both policy and practice

The gapmap identifies key “gaps” where little or no evidence from systematic reviews is available and where future research should be focused.

The gapmap highlights areas where sufficient systematic review evidence exists and provides a quick overview of the quality of this evidence and a link to user-friendly summaries in the 3ie database.

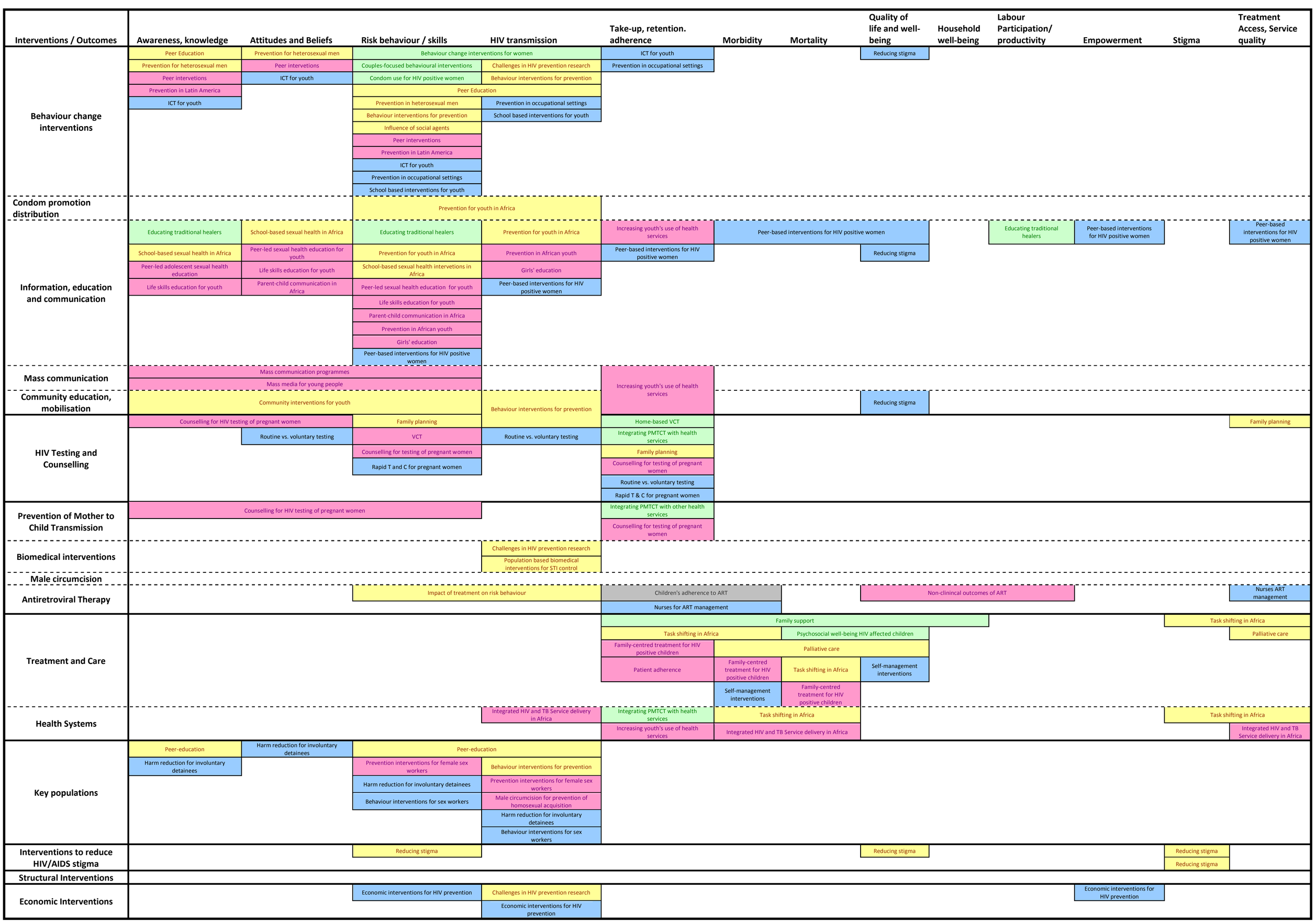
Enable policy-makers and practitioners to explore the findings and quality of the existing evidence and facilitate informed judgement and evidence-based decision-making in international development policy and practice.

How?

Draw up framework of important interventions and outcomes based on policy documents, existing systematic reviews, consultation with stakeholders

Systematic search for systematic reviews (and primary studies if included)

Produce summaries and quality appraisal of relevant systematic reviews

Locate reviews to appropriate part of the framework

Optional: produce a summary report with implications for policy and research