EVALUATION FOR ACCOUNTABILITY: Measuring Development Effectiveness of NGOs

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Policy & Operations Evaluation (1)

Mandate:

• Assessing policy effectiveness
• Promoting learning from experiences
• Improving evidence-based policy-making

→ Accountability to Parliament, Public and Partners (autonomous programming & independent reporting)
Policy & Operations Evaluation (2)

Activities

• Impact studies on main development priorities
• Analysis of the coherence in foreign policy
• Thematic studies on key success factors

→ Creating Transparency & Trust
Key Messages

1. Development effectiveness shows ‘value for money’
2. Effectiveness measurement can enhance public trust (necessary, but not sufficient condition)
3. Transparency starts with autonomy & objectivity
4. Evaluability is key responsibility of donors and recipients
5. No learning without insights in impact
Development Effectiveness

- Delivery of meaningful results
- Net impact over time
- Value for Money
- Attribution/Contribution
- Additionality
Evaluating Civil Society

Large share of Dutch aid:
5% \rightarrow 20\% of ODA

Three components:
Direct Poverty Reduction (MDGs)
Capacity Development (5C)
Lobby & Advocacy
From Input to Impact

Outreach = # of participants

Throughput = activities within the system
Credible evidence

Impact measurement: comparing:
- before/after (time)
- with/without (counterfactual)

Everything else is additional
(e.g. story harvesting, outcome mapping, SROI, etc)

(See: NONIE Guidelines ; 3ie)
Evaluation Criteria

1. Effectiveness
2. Efficiency
3. Relevance
4. Coherence
5. Sustainability

See: OECD-DAC Evaluation Guidelines
Methods & Approaches

Document review
Policy reconstruction

Robust Impact studies
Experiments (Real-time evaluation)

Systematic Reviews (Campbell protocol)
Thematic studies (Key success factors)
Common Pitfalls

1. Strong selection bias
2. Spatial clustering: externalities & free riding
3. Absence of baselines data
4. Scarce controls
5. Long incidence chains
6. Limited additionality
Worrisome Evidence

‘NGO support is highly appreciated, but no evidence can be generated to demonstrate its impact’

‘Local capacities of NGO partners have grown substantially, but it remains unclear whether and how donor support has contributed to this’

‘Access to services and markets for the poor have improved, mainly due to better socio-economic performance of the country’
Reputation & Trust

Insight in development effectiveness is a necessary (but not sufficient) conditions for maintaining public support

Other factors:

• Empathy
• Communication media
• Closeness
Guaranteeing Evaluability

- Intervention theory
- SMART indicators
- Random sampling
- Valid baselines
- Comparison/control groups
Organizing Evaluations

Independency

Quality control systems

Peer review

Horizontal control

Certification
Learning from Evaluations

Single, double & triple loop learning

Defining innovation spaces

Real-time experiments
Future Challenges

Organizing Independent NGO Evaluation Units
Upfront Focus on Evaluability
Training of local (Southern) partners
Web-based data systems (see: www.ngo-database.nl)
Openness on Failures & Successes
Comparing net performance
Thanks for your Attention…