

Monitoring and Evaluation Under the PRSP: Solid Rock or Quicksand?

Nathalie Holvoet – Robrecht Renard
IOB (IDPM)-Universiteit Antwerpen



Universiteit
Antwerpen

Overview

- **Introduction:**
 - ❑ new aid paradigm & donor's chicken and egg dilemma
 - ❑ PRSP: catalyst for change
 - ❑ PRSP: from theory to practice
- **Desk study :**
 - ❑ Aim
 - ❑ Methodology
 - ❑ Findings + Discussion
- **Conclusions:** PRSP: ... too many challenges at once?

new aid paradigm & donor's chicken and egg dilemma

new aid paradigm and new aid instruments:

.response to analysis of aid ineffectiveness



.failure of ex-ante conditionality ('enforcement' and 'ownership critique')

.aid delivery part of problem ('aid bombardment')

→ from donor to recipient-controlled (alignment), from identifiable to non-identifiable activities

But: low quality of apparatus → (some) donors (partly) keep practicing old behaviour → bypassing and weakening institutional apparatus → lower quality of apparatus... no effective move towards new aid paradigm

PRSP : a catalyst for change

- .**contract approach: reform agenda for recipients and donors**
- . 'process conditionality' (recipients)
- . alignment, harmonisation and investment in recipient's institutional apparatus (donors)
- + recent additional pressure (Paris Declaration)
- .**reforms on the agenda: push M&E & conditional upon quality M&E**
- ✓ results-oriented management and budgeting
- ✓ iterative learning
- ✓ evidence-based approach

PRSP: from theory to practice

- .M&E: section in all PRSP, progress reports, JSA
- .but (so far): attention to M&E in PRSP, JSA and independent reviews on PRSP does not match its importance (e.g. no diagnostic reviews ↔ PFM, = earlier evidence)



some exceptions

- .Booth and Lucas (2002)
- .PRSP Synthesis Note Nr. 7 (2003)
- .Participation and Civic Engagement Group (World Bank)
- .Independent reviews of the evaluation departments of WB & IMF

Desk study: aim and methodology

- **Aim:** stocktaking and assessment of different aspects of recipient M&E 'systems'
- **Methodology:**
 - . *desk study*
 - . *data source:* (for all countries =) official PRSP documents: PRSP, annual progress report (JSA of PRSP and JSA of annual progress reports)
 - . *sample* of 11 countries: SSA + at least one progress report
 - . *questionnaire:* 23 questions regrouped under 6 dimensions (policy, methodology, organisation, capacity, participation of non-state actors, quality)
 - . *four point scoring system:* weak (=1), partially satisfactory (=2), satisfactory (=3), excellent (=4)
 - . calculation of average index for each of 23 questions + ranking
 - . calculation of index for 11 countries + ranking



TOPICS	Weak (=1)	Partially satisfactory (=2)	Satisfactory (=3)	Excellent (=4)	Index [1-4]	Index rank
I. Policy						
1 The evaluation plan	3	6	2	0	1.91	13
2 M versus E	4	3	4	0	2.00	10
3 Autonomy & impartiality	6	4	1	0	1.55	19
4 Feedback	4	2	5	0	2.09	9
5 Alignment planning & budgeting	7	3	1	0	1.45	22
II. Methodology						
6 Selection of indicators	0	3	7	1	2.82	3
7 Selection criteria	2	1	4	4	2.91	2
8 Priority setting	2	5	3	1	2.27	6
9 Causality chain	3	8	0	0	1.73	16
10 Methodologies used	1	4	4	2	2.64	5
11 Data collection	3	3	4	1	2.27	6
III. Organization						
12 Coordination & oversight	5	3	2	1	1.91	13
13 Statistical Office	3	3	4	1	2.27	6
14 Line Ministries	1	9	1	0	2.00	10
15 Decentralized levels	5	6	0	0	1.55	19
16 Link with projects	7	4	0	0	1.36	23
IV. Capacity						
17 Problem acknowledged	0	2	7	2	3.00	1
18 Capacity building plan	0	5	4	2	2.73	4
V. Participation of actors outside government						
19 Parliament	7	1	3	0	1.64	17
20 Civil Society	4	3	4	0	2.00	10
21 Donors	5	6	0	0	1.55	19
VI. Quality						
22 Effective use of M&E in APR	5	5	1	0	1.64	17
23 Internal usage of APR	4	5	2	0	1.82	15

Desk study: selected findings

A. POLICY

- ❑ in general overall policy ('grand design') indicating what to evaluate, why, for whom, importance attached to various basic principles (impartiality, credibility, autonomy, utility, feedback, ...) is lacking

Q.2. monitoring versus evaluation (2.00, rank 10/23)

- ✓ conflation of twin notions of M&E
- ✓ unbalanced emphasis on monitoring, silence on 'evaluation' (linked with Q.9, Q. 22)
- ✓ differences and linkages between both & institutional implications: hardly touched upon

Desk study: selected findings

A. POLICY

Q.3. autonomy and impartiality (1.55, 19/23)

- ✓ neglected issue (problematic for 'accountability')
- ✓ not much attention for **independent** monitoring of outside government actors (demand side)
- ✓ no discussion about trade-off between autonomy and feedback & institutional implications

Q.4. feedback (2.09, 9/23)

- ✓ emphasis on reporting and information dissemination
- ✓ effective integration of M&E results: mostly problematic

Q.5. alignment with planning and budgeting (1.45, 22/23)

- ✓ almost nowhere satisfactory (exception Mozambique)

Desk study: selected findings

B. METHODOLOGY

- ❑ in general: best elaborated section (often even exclusive focus on methodology, but in fragmented way, particularly 'indicators, targets and baselines')
- ❑ improvement over time for some issues (selection of indicators, selection criteria, priority setting) + better in SWAP sectors
- ❑ some issues are and remain problematic

Q.9. Causality chain (1.73, rank 16/23)

- ✓ >missing middle, linkages between different levels
- ✓ some indicate the need to link different levels of indicators, none has really done it
- ✓ absence of causal chain = absence of program theory (process and impact theory) → low 'evaluability', absence of analysis, no identification of critical policy ingredients (see also quality, Q.22)

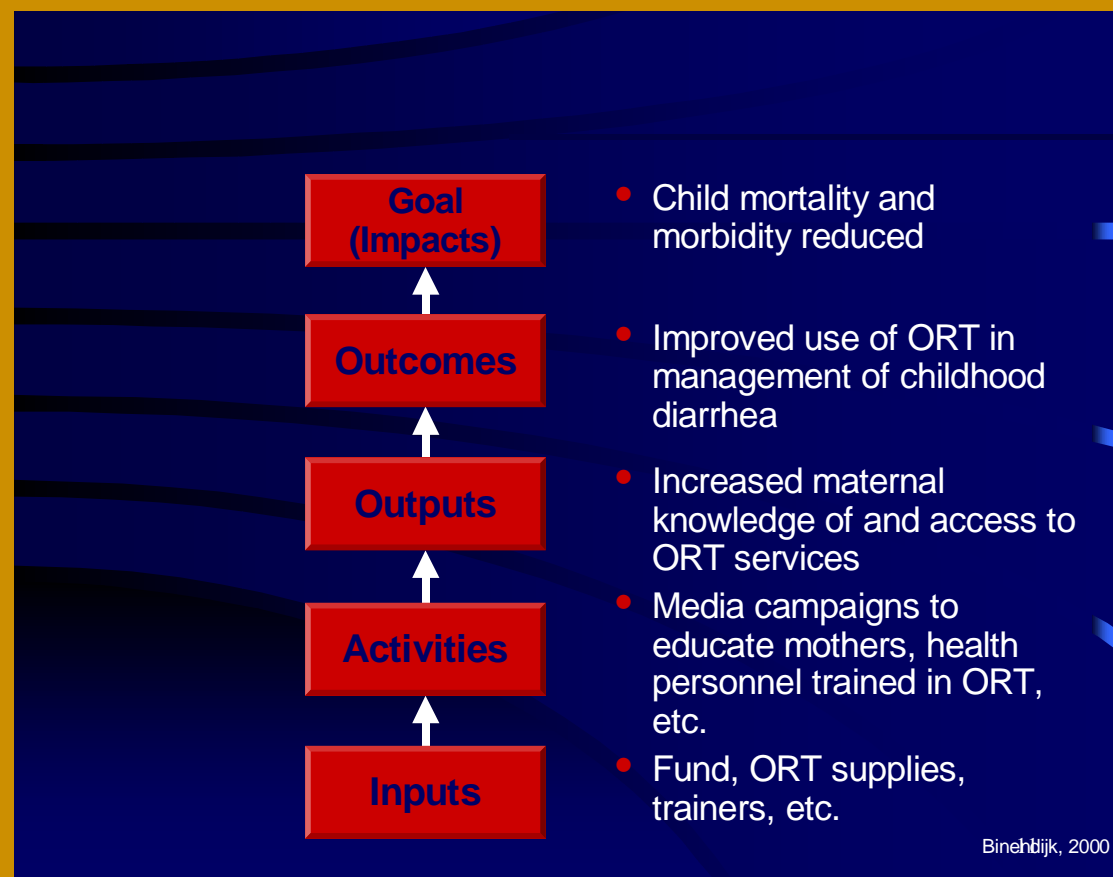


Illustration taken from a presentation by G. Rist

Desk study: selected findings

C. ORGANISATION

- ❑ coordination and oversight: essential (complexity) but not properly addressed + moving location (= earlier evidence)
- ❑ alignment and coordination between pre-existing structures (at line ministry and decentralised level) and new M&E: mostly not touched upon
- ❑ line ministry & decentralised M&E: focus on 'low quality' but neglect of horizontal & vertical integration

Q. 16: link with projects (donor M&E mechanisms) (1.36, 23/23) (see also Q. 21)

- ✓ Issue of harmonisation and alignment in M&E: neglected in PRSP (in spite of some broad references)
- ✓ **Remark: maybe PRSP not the best source of documentation on donor harmonisation and alignment (PRSP: more on recipient's efforts), donors do efforts on harmonisation and alignment, but as integration of PRSP M&E with parallel donor M&E is crucial, need to document efforts also in PRSP**

Desk study: selected findings

D. CAPACITY

Q. 17. *Problems acknowledged* (3.00, 1/23)

- ✓ more regarding human and financial resources, less on institutional capacity

Q. 18. *Capacity building plan* (2.73, 4/23)

- ✓ Relatively well elaborated, sometimes rich details

E. PARTICIPATION OF ACTORS OUTSIDE GOVERNMENT

✓ *participation by civil society* (2.00, 10/23)

gets more attention than

✓ *participation by parliament* (1.64, 17/23)

✓ *participation by donors* (1.55, 19/23)

minor attention in M&E section → influence is exerted in parallel and informal ways

Desk study: selected findings

F. QUALITY

Q. 22. Effective use of M&E in progress reports (APR) (1.64, 17/23)

- ✓ improvement in identification of indicators, baselines, targets (from PRSP to APR)
- ✓ identification of changes: largely absent in first APR (no baselines at time of PRSP), improvement over time
- ✓ identification of impact (& causal analysis): problematic (see also Q.6)

Q. 23. Internal usage of APR (linked to Q. 4 and 5) (1.82, 15/23)

- ✓ APR: more used as an instrument of external accountability than internal accountability

Conclusions

PRSP: catalyst for change but ...
too many challenges at once?

Respecting PRSP philosophy → M&E system that is able to cope with following demands:

- Multi-stakeholder
- Multi-purpose
- Multi-method
- Multi-layer
- Multi-criteria
- ⇒ difficult for any M&E system, unrealistic demands on infant M&E systems
- ⇒ lowers the probability of effective movement to new aid instruments

- ⇒ minimalist approach (basic quality standards) + focus on PROGRESS in M&E (incremental approach)
- ⇒ + more attention needed for DONORS EFFORTS (harmonisation, alignment, effective investment in M&E?)

conclusions

BUT:

- ⇒ take care with naive alignment
- ⇒ proposal of pragmatic twin-track process approach
- ✓ focus on recipient system (joint diagnosis + capacity development)
- ✓ external-driven supplementary M&E (CD, learning-by-doing of national supply & demand side actors)

Desk study: country ranking

Table 2: Average M&E scores of 11 Sub-Saharan African countries

	weak	partially satisfactory	satisfactory	excellent	index (1-4)
Uganda	0	7	14	2	2,78
Tanzania	3	7	9	4	2,61
Ghana	2	12	8	1	2,35
Mozambique	4	9	10	0	2,26
Ethiopia	6	9	5	3	2,22
Malawi	4	13	4	2	2,17
Zambia	7	11	5	0	1,91
Mali	12	7	1	3	1,78
Burkina Faso	11	8	4	0	1,70
Mauritania	15	6	2	0	1,43
Niger	16	6	1	0	1,35

Topics	Question
I. Policy	
1 The evaluation plan	Is there a comprehensive evaluation plan, indicating what to evaluate, why, how, for whom?
2 M versus E	Is the difference and the relationship between M and E clearly spelled out?
3 Autonomy & impartiality (accountability)	Is the need for autonomy and impartiality explicitly mentioned? Does the M&E plan allow for tough issues to be analysed? Is there an independent budget?
4 Feedback	Is there an explicit and consistent approach to reporting, dissemination, integration?
5 Alignment planning & budgeting	Is there integration of M&E results in planning and budgeting?
II. Methodology	
6 Selection of indicators	Is it clear what to monitor and evaluate? Is there a list of indicators?
7 Selection criteria	Are the criteria for the selection of indicators clear? And who selects?
8 Priority setting	Is the need acknowledged to set priorities and limit the number of indicators to be monitored?
9 Causality chain	Are different levels of indicators (input-output-outcome-impact) explicitly linked (program theory)? (vertical logic)
10 Methodologies used	Is it clear how to monitor and evaluate? Are methodologies well identified and mutually integrated?
11 Data collection	Are sources of data collection clearly identified? Are indicators linked to sources of data collection? (horizontal logic)

III. Organization	
12 Coordination & oversight	Is there an appropriate institutional structure for coordination, support, central oversight, and feedback? With different stakeholders?
13 Statistical Office	Are surveys, censuses etc streamlined into M&E needs? Is the role of the statistical office in M&E clear?
14 Line Ministries	Are there M&E units in line ministries and semi-governmental institutions (parastatals), and are these properly relayed to central unit?
15 Decentralised levels	Are there M&E units at decentralised levels and are these properly relayed to central unit?
16 Link with projects	Is there any effort to relay with/coordinate with donor M&E mechanisms for projects?
IV. Capacity	
17 Problem acknowledged	Are current weaknesses in the system identified?
18 Capacity building plan	Are there plans for remediation? Do these include training, appropriate salaries, etc.
V. Participation of actors outside government	
19 Parliament	Is the role of Parliament properly recognised, and is there alignment with Parliamentary control and oversight procedures?
20 Civil Society	Is the role of civil society recognised? Are there clear procedures for the participation of civil society? Is the participation institutionally arranged or rather ad-hoc?
21 Donors	Is the role of donors recognised? Are there clear procedures for participation of donors?
VI. Quality	
22 Effective use of M&E in APR	Is there a presentation of relevant M&E results? Are results compared to targets? Is there an analysis of discrepancies?
23 Internal usage of APR	Is the APR also used for internal purposes? Is it an instrument of national policy-making and/or policy-influencing and advocacy?