

Assessment of sector monitoring and evaluation systems : the education sector M&E system in Uganda

Debriefing

20 December 2012

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1. Objectives and methodology

Objectives

- To elaborate an assessment tool to diagnose/ monitor/ evaluate the quality of sector M&E systems.
- To apply this tool to a number of selected number of cases where Belgium is providing sector budget support.

Methodology

- Combination of desk and field study
- Two sectors and three countries
 - Education: Uganda
 - Health: Niger, Rwanda and Uganda
- Output so far:
 - 3 missions: Rwanda and 2x Uganda
 - 4 reports
 - Niger (February 2011)
 - Rwanda (July 2011)
 - Uganda health (January 2012)
 - Uganda education (October 2012)

Methodology (ii)

- Mission M&E education sector Uganda

- Interviews:

- stakeholders directly involved in and responsible for M&E in the education sector (central and district level) (=M&E supply side)
 - users of M&E output (central and district level) (= M&E demand side)
 - including government actors (central and district), CSOs, Parliament, Office of the Audit General, development partners

2. Background/ rationale

2. Background/ rationale (i)

- Importance of M&E
 - evidence-based, iterative approach (**learning**)
 - results-based management (learning – **accountability**)
 - domestic accountability (M&E by non-government actors)
- M&E reform agenda
 - recipients: Establish results-oriented M&E system (see PD indicator 11)
 - donors: harmonisation and alignment

2. Background/ rationale (ii)

progress in implementation of reform agenda

	Total		Uganda	
	2005	2010	2005	2010
Alignment				
PFM	40%	48%	60%	66%
Procurement	39%	44%	54%	43%
Harmonisation				
Joint missions	18%	19%	17%	24%
Joint analytical work	42%	43%	40%	56%
Managing for results				
Results-oriented frameworks	2 out of 44 (5%)	16 out of 76 (21%)	B	C

→ methodology, statistics > systemic issues

2. Background and rationale (iii)

- Chicken & egg dilemma
- Solution? two-track approach
 - **building & strengthening of recipient M&E system: LT**
 - first step: diagnosis of what exists already
 - **satisfaction of short-term M&E accountability & learning needs**
 - 'complementary' M&E exercises conform Paris Declaration principles
 - interim & adaptive

3. Assessment tool

- no existing comprehensive M&E diagnosis tool (\leftrightarrow PEFA)
- own tool: 6 main topics subdivided over 34 subtopics (see annex)
 - Policy
 - Indicators, data collection and methodology
 - Organisation: structure and linkages
 - Capacity
 - Participation of actors outside government
 - Use
- combination of quantitative & qualitative assessment
 - 5-point scoring system (weak, partially satisfactory, satisfactory, good and excellent) + evaluation grid/standards
 - qualitative analysis

4. Findings education sector Uganda

M&E policy and organisation(i)

STRENGTHS

- There is a sound M&E framework (2002) (~ M&E strategy/plan)
- In M&E framework (strategy) separate attention to M and E
- MoES has a functional M&E section that does M&E coordination and oversight
- Location M&E section under Education Planning and Policy Analysis Department -> in principal positive for feedback
- Efforts for upwards integration (line ministry -> OPM)

WEAKNESSES

- M&E framework (strategy) needs updating and implementation
- Location of M&E section under Education Planning and Policy Analysis Department -> independence might be curtailed (-> affects credibility of evaluation)
- Limited feedback in practice
- Vertical upwards integration hampered:
 - complex interaction between different national players (NPA & OPM)

M&E policy and organisation(ii)

STRENGTHS

- Accountability mechanisms at district level exist on paper

- There is an active M&E working group

- JSRs:
 - strong ownership MoES
 - introduction of field visits prior to JSRs
 - use of thematic papers in JSRs

WEAKNESSES

- Accountability mechanism do not function effectively
 - limited power School Management Committees
 - Ineffective inspection system

- Upward accountability (district -> MoES) undermined by lack of data control

- Information flow upwards, no feedback downwards

- Confusion on term 'M&E' -> rather 'overall technical coordination working group'

- Limited systematic attention in M&E working group and JSR (field missions) for systemic issues (e.g. quality EMIS, limited analysis, limited feedback, etc.)

M&E policy and organisation (iii)

OPPORTUNITIES

- Attention for improving accountability in ESSP
 - District League Table
 - School Management Committees
 - Inspection system

- Presidential retreat -> incentive for data collection and use ->affects data supply

- OPM as M&E champion and cheerleader
 - ring fencing of budget for M&E
 - capacity building in M&E
 - meta-evaluation function?

- UBOS as 'data' champion and cheerleader (Statistics Law)

THREATS

- Without data control and evaluation, risk of perverse effects of (upwards) accountability mechanisms (gaming)

- M&E used as control tool by OPM over line ministries -> at the expense of the learning function of M&E within line ministries

- Resistance of line ministries with management information systems

- Lack of attention to systemic issues
 - boost parallel M&E processes
 - undermine M&E reform agenda

Indicators, data collection and methodology(i)

STRENGTHS

- Limited number of performance indicators in the Joint Position Paper and JAF
 - baseline and targets included
- Relatively strong capacity for data collection & monitoring education indicators (UBOS, NAPE)
- Quality of EMIS is gradually improving
- Value for money audits by OAG

WEAKNESSES

- Too much focus on monitoring and reporting (different formats) (respondent fatigue)
- Weak analytical capacity
- Lack of EVALUATION (analysis)
 - ← lack of causal chains of indicators
 - ← little cross-reading among data sources
 - low analytical quality of M&E output
 - weakens learning
 - weakens quality of JSR
- Incompleteness and reliability EMIS data still a challenge
 - low response rate and incompleteness of information at school level
 - tendency for over exaggeration indicators as allocation of teachers and Capitation Fund is linked to enrolment

Indicators, data collection and methodology (ii)

OPPORTUNITIES

- Initiatives to strengthen EMIS
 - validation and enforcing data collection at school level
 - introduction of new technology system -> school data directly into EMIS
- Comparative analysis through district league table

THREATS

- No decreasing or even increasing reporting burden
- Unrealistically high targets

Participation of actors outside government (i)

STRENGTHS

- Several examples of CSO involvement in education sector M&E
- Financial and technical support of EDP to reporting and M&E system
- (Recently) increasing level of coordination among EDPs
- Alignment/ coordination EDP to MoES system
 - joint (MoES/ EDP) studies/ evaluations
 - discussion ToR and inception reports in M&E Working group
- Active OAG
 - financial, value for money and other audits
- Active, critical young Parliamentarians in new Parliament with higher reading culture
 - increasing use of M&E reports

WEAKNESSES

- Validity of methodologies of CSO M&E exercises (problems of internal & external validity), influence of CSOs findings relatively weak
- Fragmentation of EDP support
- OAG not enough capacity to do regular audits at district level
- Limited linkages among various (domestic) accountability actors

Participation of actors outside government (ii)

OPPORTUNITIES

- Increasing interest of EDPs in M&E
- Support for domestic accountability actors in portfolio approach
 - combination of developing capacity with increasing the room of manoeuvre domestic actors and use of local level information by donors
- Outsourcing of audits at district level might (partly) solve capacity problem
- Innovative initiatives of citizen-led accountability (mobile phones in SE)
- Revamping of Ugandan Evaluation Society

THREATS

- Delay of discussions of OAG reports in Parliament and non-application of system of Treasury Memoranda -> undermines implementation of recommendations of OAG -> feedback rather informal and less effective
- Split of the Social Service Committee (most active members to health) -> detrimental for the quality of debate and follow-up in the education sector

Use of M&E information

STRENGTHS

- ESAPR rich source of information
- EDPs use MoES reporting and M&E systems
- Ad hoc use of information (e.g. PETS)

WEAKNESSES

- Analytical quality of ESAPR still poor
 - no systematically link of performance and expenditure in ESAPR
 - results/ outcomes hardly compared to targets
 - analysis of causes of (non)-performance lacking or shallow
- No systematic or institutionalised use of M&E outputs at central or local level (politics of M&E)
- No systematic feedback to district level

OPPORTUNITIES

- Central database for all MoES and education related documents (ESSP)
- New incentives for using data (increasing central demand)
 - district league tables
 - yearly retreat with president

THREATS

- Low M&E demand (politics of M&E) → effects supply and sustainability of the system

5. Conclusions

- The development of the M&E system is satisfactory
- Fragmented approach to M&E with limited focus on systemic issues
- Focus on data collection & monitoring at expense of evaluation and analysis
 - monitoring bombardment -> reporting fatigue (certainly if unused)
 - evaluation: politically & methodologically more challenging
- Upward flow of information > downward feedback & use
- Limited demand & use -> undermining of M&E supply, but opportunities to reverse situation (OPM)

6. Recommendations (i)

- Update M&E framework (strategy) and discussion/validation in M&E working group
- Put systemic M&E issues on the agenda of M&E working group, the Joint Sector Review (including during field visits) and among the Joint Position Paper undertakings and/or the JAF actions
- Mapping of who is involved in what type of M, E and M&E capacity development
- Capacity development in data production & quality should focus on the full 'data' chain (political economy of data)

6. Recommendations (ii)

- Rationalise/coordinate reporting & monitoring -> more time for analysis and evaluation (first step e.g. cross-reading among data sources) (willingness & capacity & incentives= use)
- Balance among coordination/oversight and M&E needs at different levels
- Stimulate M&E demand & feedback & use (first step: identify & mapping of different cycles & entry points for feedback) → affect M&E supply
- Strengthen (local) domestic accountability actors & inter-linkages
- Evaluate impact of innovative M&E pilot interventions & bring results in M&E sector working group & generalise where possible

7. Questions and answers

Thank you!

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Annex 1. Checklist M&E system at sector level

Policy

	Topic	Question
1	M&E plan	Is there a comprehensive M&E 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?

Indicators, data collection and methodology

	Topic	Question
6	Selection of indicators	Is it clear what to monitor and evaluate? Is there a list of indicators? Are sector indicators harmonised with the PRSP indicators?
7	Quality of indicators	Are indicators SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound)? Are baselines and targets attached?
8	Disaggregation	Are indicators disaggregated by sex, region, socio-economic status?
9	Selection criteria	Are the criteria for the selection of indicators clear? Is it clear who is involved in the selection?
10	Priority setting	Is the need acknowledged to set priorities and limit the number of indicators to be monitored?
11	Causality chain	Are different levels of indicators (input-output-outcome-impact) explicitly linked (program theory)? (vertical logic)
12	Methodologies used	Is it clear how to monitor and evaluate? Are methodologies well identified and mutually integrated?
13	Data collection	Are sources of data collection clearly identified? Are indicators linked to sources of data collection? (horizontal logic)

Organisation: structure

	Topic	Question
14	Coordination and oversight	Is there an appropriate institutional structure for coordination, support, oversight, analyses of data and feedback at the sector level? With different stakeholders? What is its location?
15	Joint Sector Review	Does the JSR cover accountability and learning needs for both substance and systemic issues? What is the place/linkage of the JSR within the sector M&E system? Does the JSR promote the reform agenda of the Paris Declaration?
16	Sector Working groups	Are sector working groups active in monitoring? Is their composition stable? Are various stakeholders represented?
17	Ownership	Does the demand for (strengthening of the) M&E system come from the sector ministry, a central ministry (e.g. ministry of planning or finance) or from external actors (e.g. donors)? Is there a highly placed 'champion' within the sector ministry who advocates for the (strengthening of the) M&E system?
18	Incentives	Are incentives (at central and local level) used to stimulate data collection and data use?

Organisation: linkages

	Topic	Question
19	Linkage with Statistical office	Is there a linkage between sector M&E and the statistical office? Is the role of the statistical office in sector M&E clear?
20	'Horizontal' integration	Are there M&E units in different sub-sectors and semi-governmental institutions? Are these properly linked to the sector's central unit?
21	'Vertical' upward integration	Is the sector M&E unit properly linked to the central M&E unit (PRS monitoring system)?
22	'Vertical' downward integration	Are there M&E units at decentralised levels and are these properly linked to the sector M&E unit?
23	Link with projects	Is there any effort to coordinate with donor M&E mechanism for projects and vertical funds in the sector?

Capacity

	Topic	Question
24	Present capacity	What is the present capacity of the M&E unit at central sector level, sub-sector level and decentralised level (e.g. fte, skills, financial resources)?
25	Problem acknowledged	Are current weaknesses in the system identified?
26	Capacity building plan	Are there plans/activities for remediation? Do these include training, appropriate salaries, etc.?

Participation of actors outside government

	Topic	Question
27	Parliament	Is the role of Parliament properly recognised, and is there alignment with Parliamentary control and oversight procedures? Does Parliament participate in Joint Sector Reviews and/ or sector working groups?
28	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? Does civil society participate in Joint Sector Reviews and/ or sector working groups?
29	Donors	Is the role of donors recognised? Are there clear procedures for participation of donors? Do donors participate in Joint Sector Reviews and/ or sector working groups?

Use of M&E outputs

	Topic	Question
30	M&E outputs	Is there a presentation of relevant M&E results? Are results compared to targets? Is there an analysis of discrepancies? Is the M&E output differentiated towards different audiences?
31	Effective use of M&E by donors	Are donors using the outputs of the sector M&E system for their information needs? Is the demand for M&E data from donors coordinated?
32	Effective use of M&E at central level	Are results of M&E activities used for internal purposes? Is it an instrument of policy-making and/or policy-influencing and advocacy at central level?
33	Effective use of M&E at local level	Are results of M&E activities used for internal purposes? Is it an instrument of policy-making and/or policy-influencing and advocacy at local level?
34	Effective use of M&E by outside government actors	Are results of M&E used as an instrument to hold government accountable?

Annex 2. Selection of publications

- Holvoet, N. and Inberg, L. (2011) - Sector monitoring and evaluation systems in the context of changing aid modalities : the case of Niger's health sector Antwerp: UA, Institute of Development Policy and Management, 2011.- 64 p. - (IOB working paper ; 2011:02).
- Holvoet, N. and Inberg, L. (2011) - Stocktaking and assessing M&E arrangements in Rwanda's health sector : evidence from desk and field study Antwerp: UA, Institute of Development Policy and Management, 2011.- 65 p.
- Holvoet, N. and Inberg, L. (2009) - Joint sector reviews: M&E experiments in an era of changing aid modalities: experiences from JSRs in the education sectors of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger Public administration and development - ISSN 0271-2075 – 29 (3): 204-217.
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- Holvoet, N. and Renard, R. (2007) - Monitoring and evaluation under the PRSP: solid rock or quicksand? Evaluation and program planning - ISSN 0149-7189 – 30 (1): 66-81.

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