

Précis



WORLD BANK OPERATIONS EVALUATION DEPARTMENT

FALL 2001

NUMBER 213

Developing African Capacity for Monitoring and Evaluation

Good governance—supported by monitoring and evaluation (M&E)—is essential for sustained and rapid development in Africa, concluded participants in the Johannesburg 2000 Workshop and Seminar on developing African capacity for evaluation. Several converging priorities in public policy reform—reducing corruption, strengthening civil society, and reducing poverty—require sound analysis based on adequate information. Demand is growing for M&E and for the benefits of networking within a regional evaluation community to develop African perspectives on development and evaluation. Evaluation skills and experience exist on the African continent, but they are scarce. The challenge is to expand the supply of evaluation know-how, to create local ownership of M&E and to link it to other national development processes.

Johannesburg 2000

At a 1998 conference in Abidjan, teams of senior officials from 12 African countries and 21 international agencies for development assistance acknowledged that developing Africa's capacity for M&E is essential for improving governance and ensuring the proper management of public resources. Participants highlighted the need for an African Evaluation Association; for more institutional support for the continent; for more training in evaluation design, methodology, and practice; and for databases of evaluators, lessons learned, and good practice. A newly formed African Evaluation Association (AfrEA) held its inaugural conference in Nairobi in 1999.

More than 300 evaluators attended, from 25 countries. The AfrEA committed itself to developing indigenous capacity for evaluation by providing high-level training throughout Africa and establishing national associations to conduct peer training. National professional associations were expected to collaborate with their governments to formulate national evaluation policies.

Building on progress made at the events in Abidjan and Nairobi, *Johannesburg 2000*—hosted by the Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA)—was held in September to promote both the demand for and the supply of M&E in Sub-Saharan Africa. The workshop and seminar brought together 56



participants from 11 countries (Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia) and 32 participants from multilateral and bilateral donor agencies. This Précis synthesizes insights gained from the Johannesburg Workshop and Seminar, which were organized collectively by the evaluation departments of the Development Bank of Southern Africa, the African Development Bank, and the World Bank. Support was also provided by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

Strengthening Governance and Economic Reform

Over the past few years, with rapid changes in Africa's political landscape, stronger governance has risen from relative neglect to the top of Africa's development policy agenda. After years marked by authoritarian regimes and frequent political and economic disasters, since the early 1990s many countries have held multiparty elections, with high voter turnouts. Although sustained progress has been recorded in some countries, the record is uneven, and a number of countries are experiencing a veritable crisis in governance.

Weaknesses in governance are increasingly recognized as limiting the benefits from economic reform. A first group of countries, in which economic reform is more advanced, are more liberal, but more extensive reforms are needed to provide a strong institutional base for market-driven growth and to ensure that citizens can participate in the development that affects them. A second group of countries has been slower to adopt and sustain "good" policies for reasons that essentially reflect weaknesses in governance. And in a third group, which faces the breakdown of the state itself, governance issues loom large in the struggle for development.

M&E can support sound governance in several ways. First, the information produced can be used in government decisionmaking and in setting priorities, especially in the budget process. Second, it can help managers by providing information (particularly about costs and benefits) useful for planning or by monitoring the performance of ongoing activities. M&E can also be used to assess the performance of organizations and institutional reform. Third, by providing valuable information about the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of government activities, it can help hold managers accountable to their administrative superiors, and governments to parliament, citizens, the private sector, and donors. While M&E can support relationships in accountability within the government—between sector ministries and the minister of finance, for example, and between officials and the elected government—it can also permit public servants and politicians alike to participate in continuous learning.

Comprehensive Development

The Comprehensive Development Framework is a means of achieving greater effectiveness in reducing poverty. It is

based on the principles of a long-term, holistic vision of needs and solutions; ownership by the country; country-led partnership among internal and external partners; and a focus on development results. Development is viewed as empowering people to take charge of their lives, while poverty is seen as depriving people of the rights needed to lead the kind of life they want.

The Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative covers about 41 countries, 33 in Sub-Saharan Africa. To qualify for debt relief under the HIPC initiative, a country's government must prepare a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP). In accordance with the principles of comprehensive development, the strategy must be country-driven, with broad participation by representatives of civil society, key donors, and regional development banks. Progress on international development goals must be monitored with measurable indicators.

Both the Comprehensive Development Framework and the poverty reduction strategy papers emphasize measurable results and civil society's role in assessing government performance.

Poverty-Focused Evaluations

Evaluators must address two basic questions: What are the right things to evaluate? And what is the right way to evaluate them? The very definition of development is based on a judgment about what development should be and about what dimensions or qualities of life are worth promoting. Development evaluation concerned with the consequences of public action should focus on outcomes in terms of the standard of living (outcomes in areas such as health, education, and income, especially for the deprived) and the social arrangements that bring about the desired outcomes.

Evaluation must pay attention to the socioeconomic incentives that motivate people and the governance structure that constrains their activities. Evaluation should also address an activity's relevance, extent of ownership by the country, and long-term outcomes—key tenets of comprehensive development. Finally, M&E should be an integral part of development. The lessons learned should affect the course of development and representatives of civil society should participate in M&E to ensure that the value judgments embedded in the process are relevant to the needs of the country's people.

Developing National Capacity

Developing national capacity for M&E requires building both supply (the skills, tools, technologies, and institutional framework for evaluation) and demand (awareness of the need for M&E and understanding of its purpose and uses). One size does not fit all—national M&E systems must be tailored to local conditions. Performance indicators, for example, must suit a country's norms and values, not be taken off the shelf from international donor agencies and used "as is." At the same time, countries can learn from each other, and emerging priorities across the African conti-

ment are likely to play a strong role in the expectations of—and the expectations placed on—any country in the region.

Rather than overdo technical methods and techniques, national M&E teams must first develop strategies suited to their particular country context. Surrounding the discussion of M&E with too much technical language creates barriers to its popularization and institutionalization in a country. Efforts must be made to promote greater understanding of the potential role for official M&E, and of civil society's participation in it.

There is a growing appreciation of the range of M&E tools now available. Some are less demanding than others in skills, data requirements, and costs, and there is usually a tradeoff between the cost and depth of understanding provided by each tool. The list of available M&E tools and techniques includes performance indicators (monitoring), logframe analysis, cost-benefit analysis, cost-effectiveness analysis, impact (program) evaluation, process evaluation, financial audits, performance audits, service delivery (beneficiary) surveys, expenditure-tracking surveys, sector reviews, and rapid reviews.

Availability of skilled staffing is a major constraint. Civil services in Africa usually cannot compete on local or global markets for skilled evaluators, and there is an undersupply of such individuals in Africa. With this in mind, workshop participants met in national groups to formulate possible national action plans to develop capacity for M&E. Action plans tended to highlight common themes:

- The need for training
- The need for common M&E standards
- The distribution of responsibilities among agencies and associations
- The power of networking among societies and associations
- The importance of using existing capacity and linking M&E activities to current national strategies, including those for public sector reform.

Support from Donor Agencies

Representatives from AfDB, AusAID, DBSA, IDRC, the Netherlands, Norway, USAID, UNICEF-ESARO, and the World Bank committed themselves to helping:

- Strengthen national evaluation associations and networks.
- Address training gaps in monitoring and evaluation with scholarships, fellowships, and other capacity-building programs (using local consultants wherever possible).
- Develop databases of local consultants.
- Emphasize learning-oriented evaluation.

The Comprehensive Development Framework, together with international strategies to reduce poverty and help highly indebted poor countries, provides the opportunity for fostering successful M&E in Africa.

Preliminary thoughts on an International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS) were presented at the meeting. It was suggested that IDEAS be formed as an asso-

ciation devoted to strengthening M&E capacity in developing countries, and that it exchange knowledge and build networks and alliances. This could be done through scholarships, internships, exchange programs, a biennial conference, and regional meetings.

A Pan-African Network

Top priority was given to strengthening national evaluation capacity, but there was general support for the African Evaluation Association—independent of, but sensitive to, governments, nongovernmental organizations, and donors. It provides a forum for the exchange of ideas, information, best practices, and lessons learned; supports the development of new evaluation networks and provides a link between new and established evaluation networks within Africa; supports capacity building efforts and helps to deepen understanding of evaluation issues; and has the potential to channel human and financial resources to the right places, when possible. The African Evaluation Association is also reviewing good-practice evaluation standards with an eye to adapting them to the African environment.

Reflections after Johannesburg

The Johannesburg Workshop and Seminar provided the opportunity to strengthen Sub-Saharan Africa's evaluation community and to sharpen its focus on M&E. Among the lessons learned:

- A number of themes and priorities in public policy reform emphasize good governance and public sector reform. These include fighting corruption, strengthening the role of civil society, and developing well-planned poverty reduction strategies with an emphasis on results.
- Monitoring and evaluation can help countries south of the Sahara meet the many and varied development challenges they face: there are clear links between M&E, good governance, and sound development.
- Donors and governments increasingly appreciate the need for sound analysis based on adequate information, fueling a growing demand for M&E.
- Meetings such as Johannesburg 2000 allow cross-country team-building and networking; provide a chance to exchange experiences, insights, and information; and allow participants to explore opportunities for collaborative work. A Pan-African network of experts in M&E will help systematize knowledge, establish standards and best practices, and stimulate growth in national M&E. Such a network needs to be constantly nurtured through regular contacts, communication, and collaboration within and across borders.
- Evaluation skills and experience are available on the African continent. The challenge is to strengthen local ownership of M&E and to link it to other national development processes.

Recent OED Précis

- 212 Chile's Model for Educating Poor Children
- 211 Strengthening Tunisian Municipalities to Foster Local Urban Development
- 210 Connecting with the Information Revolution
- 209 Participation in Development Assistance
- 208 Integrating Gender into Bank Assistance
- 207 Adapting Transport Institutions to Romania's Transition Needs
- 206 Meeting India's Energy Needs
- 205 Progress in Java's Villages
- 204 ARDE 2001: From Strategy to Results
- 203 Striking the Right Balance: World Bank Forest Strategy
- 202 Poverty Reduction in the 1990s: The World Bank Strategy
- 201 The Drive to Partnership: Aid Coordination and the World Bank
- 200 Evaluating Gender and Development at the World Bank
- 199 Ghana: Building a Stronger Transportation System
- 198 Agricultural Extension: The Kenya Experience
- 197 Toward a Comprehensive Development Strategy
- 196 Evaluation and the Development Challenge
- 195 Poverty Assessments: Maximizing Impacts
- 194 Involuntary Resettlement: The Large Dam Experience
- 193 Partnership for Education in Jordan
- 192 Reforming Bolivia's Power Sector
- 191 Bangladesh: Progress Through Partnership
- 190 Transport in Indonesia
- 189 Health Care in Brazil: Addressing Complexity

Précis aussi disponible en français

@ <http://www.worldbank.org/html/oed>

Précis en español también disponible

@ <http://www.worldbank.org/html/oed>

OED Study Series

- 2000 Annual Review of Development Effectiveness
- Agricultural Extension: The Kenya Experience
- Bangladesh: Progress Through Partnership
- Developing Towns and Cities: Lessons from Brazil and the Philippines
- The Drive to Partnership: Aid Coordination and the World Bank
- Financing the Global Benefits of Forests: The Bank's GEF Portfolio and the 1991 Forest Strategy
- India: The Challenge of Development
- Information Infrastructure: The World Bank Group's Experience
- Investing in Health: Development Effectiveness in the Health, Nutrition, and Population Sector
- Nongovernmental Organizations in World Bank-Supported Projects
- Poverty Reduction in the 1990s: An Evaluation of Strategy and Performance
- The World Bank's Forest Strategy: Striking the Right Balance
- The World Bank's Experience with Post-Conflict Reconstruction
- Uganda: Policy, Participation, People

Editor-in-Chief: Elizabeth Campbell-Pagé

Series Editor/Writer: Caroline McEuen

Dissemination: Juicy Qureishi-Huq

PRÉCIS ORDER FORM

▶ *Précis* are available at no charge by contacting the OED Help Desk: tel: 1-202/458-4497, or fax the form below to: 1-202/522-3125. You can also e-mail your request to: eline@worldbank.org

▶ Mail this form to:
Précis-OEDPK, World Bank
1818 H Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20433, U.S.A.

Quantity	Title	Précis #

▶ Please add my name to the *Précis* mailing list.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Postal Code _____

Country _____

Telephone _____

▶ For large orders, please contact the World Bank InfoShop at tel: 1-202/458-5454, fax: 1-202/522-1500, or through e-mail at books@worldbank.org

▶ This and other OED publications are on the Internet, at <http://www.worldbank.org/html/oed>

▶ To order our books, please contact:
The World Bank Fulfillment Center
P.O. Box 960
Herndon, VA 20172-0960, U.S.A.
Tel: 1-703/661-1580
Fax: 1-703/661-1501
Internet: <http://www.worldbank.org>
From the World Bank homepage, select publications.
e-mail: books@worldbank.org

DISCLAIMER: OED *Précis* are produced by the World Bank Operations Evaluation Department, Partnerships and Knowledge Group (OEDPK), Outreach and Dissemination Unit. The views in this paper are those of the Operations Evaluation staff and editors and should not be attributed to the World Bank, its affiliated organizations, or its Executive Directors.

ISSN 1564-6297

Précis 213 Developing African Capacity for Monitoring and Evaluation

▶ This *Précis* is based on the papers and discussions from Johannesburg 2000, available online at <http://www.dbsa.org/M&E/M&E.htm>. Proceedings will be available at www.afdb.org and at www.worldbank.org/evaluation/me. Direct queries on M&E capacity building to eline@worldbank.org. *Précis* are available to Bank Executive Directors and staff from the Internal Documents Unit and from regional information service centers, and to the public from the World Bank InfoShop.