
Evaluation of long term country level aid

Lessons from the evaluation of DANIDA's
programme in Mozambique

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Overview

- Background and approach to the DANIDA Evaluation in Mozambique
 - Reflection on strengths and weaknesses
 - Implications
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The Mozambique case - Background

- Evaluation conducted in 2007 covering 15 years (1992 through 2006)
 - Intended as a joint exercise in the spirit of the Paris declaration (Moz MPD and DANIDA)
 - Main purpose:
 - a) assess how Danish aid has responded to rapidly changing aid context and development needs in Mozambique, examining issues such as geographical and institutional focus, choice of partners, modalities, etc. and,
 - b) extract experience to inform decision making concerning future Danish (and international) support
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Used four of the five OECD/DAC evaluation criteria ...

- Examining DANIDA's assistance to Mozambique in terms of:
 - *Relevance* to country needs, national policies, and alignment
 - *Effectiveness* in making contributions to overall development at national, local and sectoral levels
 - *Efficiency*, in comparison with other ways of delivering assistance
 - *Sustainability* of aid modalities and strengthening of capacity of national, regional and local authorities
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Evaluation challenges

- Time frame (15 years), including issues of identification of informants, recall and documentation
 - Changing objectives and standards of aid over time (i.e. need to see interventions in their context)
 - Focusing on the level of strategic choices, rather than programme components
 - Clearly identifying and analyzing both tangible and intangible outputs and influences
 - Environmental issues:
 - Donor driven nature of the exercise, taking place in a context of SWAps, PARPA's etc.
 - Participation of partners and local stakeholders
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Overview of the approach

- **Systematic, sequential approach to analysis**
 - Starting with broader performance of country and aid, over time
 - Then focusing on Danish contribution and assessing this against the OECD/DAC criteria
 - **Development of an evaluation matrix following distinct levels:**
 - Context and framework conditions
 - Combined donor efforts
 - Contribution of Danish activities
 - Implementation modalities and follow up
 - **A perception study juxtaposing DANIDA and non-DANIDA stakeholder perceptions on key issues**
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Specific tools and steps

- Preliminary compilation and classification of docs.
- Pre-study of key projects and decisions (by DANIDA)
- Synthesis report of relevant evaluations and studies
- Workshops with key stakeholders
- Comprehensive time line (persons and events) as a guideline to the inquiry
- Evaluation matrix
- Development of working papers on specific themes of the evaluation (to assist treatment of issues and demarcation of roles within team)

What I learned - good practices and strengths

- It is possible to go back 10 years or more and “reconstruct” the story
 - This reconstruction has an added value in understanding how donor and country perspectives have developed
 - ‘Local’ consultants play a key role in grounding perspectives
 - DANIDA exercises strong oversight in design phase, which left the team to carry out the work independently in the implementation phase
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What I learned - good practices and strengths

- Key techniques (mundane but important):
 - Value of synthesis report as an input
 - Importance of the time line and key events (overall and sectorally)
 - Careful selection of informants (balance and quality over quantity)
 - Constantly formulating and validating/refuting emerging findings (triangulation)
 - Write up and sharing of interview notes reflecting the main evaluation questions
- Workshops to validate emerging hypotheses

What I learned - challenges & weaknesses

Specific challenges

- Scope of the TORs (all themes and sectors)
 - Documentation (access, language and interpretation)
 - Size of the team
 - Complexity of linking themes and sectors, difficulty of drawing out lessons across sectors and settings
 - Difficulties of getting respondents to make their reflections on the basis of the situation at the time (i.e. without the benefit of hindsight)
 - Challenges of reaching a sufficient level of understanding to be able to add value to what insiders already know i.e. avoiding simplistic analysis
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What I learned - challenges & weaknesses (cont)

- Thematic papers:
 - Relatively time consuming process of producing thematic papers which are little used or referred to afterwards

Broader challenges

- Perception of evaluations by selected staff
- Fitting evaluations with on-going decision making on priorities of Danish Aid i.e. when is the right time
- Fit between this evaluation and the evolving context = challenges of making this relevant to the context and truly recipient focused (driven?)

Final reflections

- Joint evaluations require change of donor culture – adherence to Paris and Accra still weak
 - Follow up to such evaluations continues to be poor – lesson learning at agency and stakeholder level needs to include:
 - Defining criteria for what characterizes good joint evaluations
 - Reflecting on how partner country capacity for governance and management of evaluations be strengthened
 - Ensuring evaluations include an agreed strategy (and funding) for dissemination and follow-up of recommendations
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