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**DAC WORKING PARTY ON AID EVALUATION**

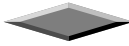
# **EVALUATION OF DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FOR POVERTY REDUCTION**

## **WORKSHOP REPORT**

**Submitted by  
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**32nd Meeting  
10-11 February 2000**

# **Workshop on Evaluation of Development Assistance for Poverty Reduction**

**Edinburgh, 12-14 October 1999**

## **WORKSHOP REPORT**

### **Summary**

1. This report outlines the proceedings of the *Workshop on the Evaluation of Development Assistance for Poverty Reduction* held in Edinburgh on 12-14 October 1999. The Workshop was held under the auspices of the DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation (WP-EV). Details of the papers presented, the Workshop schedule and list of participants are all annexed, as well as notes on the proceedings of each session.
2. The workshop's objectives were, in brief, to share relevant experience, identify examples of good practice and identify lessons for the design of evaluations relating to poverty reduction. All of these were achieved.
3. The workshop was well-attended with a high level of interaction throughout. Given the broad topic and the diverse backgrounds of the participants, discussion was at times rather general but breakout groups provided opportunities for focused discussion. Eventually a broad consensus emerged around several key issues, notably:
  - a) the importance of taking a multidimensional view of poverty;
  - b) the need for a range of context-sensitive strategies for reducing poverty, as well as combining, as appropriate, qualitative and quantitative approaches;
  - c) the need to shift the focus of evaluation from projects to higher levels;

- d) the growing recognition that joint evaluation is required to provide, despite difficult institutional constraints, 'joint accountability through joint attribution' and to take better account of partners' perspectives;
  - e) the importance of further evaluation capacity building at all levels; and,
  - f) the importance of developing innovative, 'real time' methods to ensure relevance, balanced by longer historical perspectives.
4. While much of this agenda was familiar to many participants, others were less aware of current thinking. The workshop served a useful purpose for all in highlighting the relevance of these broad issues to the workshop topic, evaluation of development interventions intended to reduce poverty. In particular, the workshop provided an opportunity to strengthen communication between evaluators and those working on poverty issues, whether on policy or at the level of practice. Few participants were familiar with the activities of the DAC Poverty Network, to which a special session was devoted.
5. Papers submitted to the Workshop will feed directly into the work currently being undertaken by the DAC Poverty Network, to develop *Guidelines for Poverty Reduction*. An annotated bibliography and a 'compendium' of good practice (possibly web-based) will be developed as reference material. It was also suggested that small follow up seminars focused on specific methodological issues should be held. Meanwhile, in the margins, a number of proposals for joint evaluation were discussed. Finally, Canada has offered to host a follow-up workshop focusing on specific themes arising from the discussions at the Edinburgh Workshop.

## Introduction

6. Meetings of the DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation in 1998 and 1999 included discussions on the evaluation of development assistance for poverty reduction. The UK offered to host a workshop on this topic, and preparations were made throughout 1999 by a Steering Group comprising representatives from Canada, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, and Switzerland, chaired by the UK and supported by the DAC Secretariat. Financial contributions were made by the Netherlands, Switzerland and Sweden as well as the host country, and several countries undertook to sponsor southern participants. An *Informal Seminar* was held in London in May 1999 to identify key conceptual and methodological issues, and this provided an opportunity for detailed planning by the Steering Group. A consultant, Dr Neil Thin of the University of Edinburgh, was engaged to prepare a literature review and issues paper. Finally, the *DAC Workshop on Approaches and Methods for Evaluation of Development Assistance for Poverty Reduction* was held in Edinburgh on 12 - 14 October 1999.

7. The Workshop was attended by over 60 participants from a wide range of bilateral and multilateral agencies and by some evaluators from southern countries. Most DAC members were represented, with particularly strong representation from German agencies (who contributed several papers) and of course, the host country. Steve Jones provided tireless and highly effective facilitation. Neil Thin introduced his issues paper and served as a resource person throughout.
8. Some 20 papers were submitted, several in the form of notes. The papers, and ensuing discussions, covered a wide range of topics and regions. They largely reflected work in progress and, in general, were refreshingly free of airy aspirations and rhetoric.
9. This report outlines some of the key issues discussed at the workshop, and summarises the key actions for follow up. Readers will find brief summaries of the Workshop papers at Appendix A (the papers themselves are available on the Evaluation section of the DAC website at [www.oecd.org/dac/Evaluation](http://www.oecd.org/dac/Evaluation)). The Workshop programme and notes on the conclusions of the various workshop sessions are also annexed.

## **Objectives**

10. The workshop's objectives were, in brief, to share relevant experience, identify examples of good practice and identify lessons for the design of evaluations relating to poverty reduction. All of these were achieved.

## **Process**

11. The programme was designed to promote interaction between participants, with plenary sessions interspersed with sessions in working groups. Write-ups from each working group reporting back were quickly copied and distributed to promote exchange of information between groups. The programme was treated flexibly and the facilitator renegotiated several aspects with participants as the workshop wore on. The final programme appears at Appendix B, Annexe 1, followed by notes on the conclusions from each session.

### **Box 1: Workshop Objectives**

*The overall purpose of the Workshop is to strengthen the focus on poverty reduction in the evaluation programmes and relevant capacity building work being undertaken by Members.*

*Workshop objectives are:*

- to review and sharing of recent experience of the application of various approaches and methods for evaluation of development assistance for poverty reduction*
- to identify examples of best practice, especially approaches and methods contributing to building the evaluation capacity of southern partners (with the emphasis on practical tools, methods and procedures)*
- to develop an approach for synthesis of relevant evaluation findings and experience and for the design of future evaluation work in this field.*

### **Box 2: Workshop Sessions**

*Session 1: Approaches and methods in the design of specific studies for evaluation of development assistance for poverty reduction*

*Session 2: Approaches and methods in the design of systems for monitoring and evaluation of development assistance for poverty reduction*

*Session 3: What have we learned? Where are the gaps? Identifying lessons, challenges and proposals*

*Session 4: Developing practical proposals for a medium term agenda for improving and strengthening members' future evaluation work in this field*

12. The workshop opened with welcome addresses from Peter Freeman (Principal Finance Officer (designate), DFID), Neils Dabelstein (Chair, WP-EV) and Baroness Amos, Spokesperson on International Development in the British Parliament's House of Lords. Baroness Amos' speech touched on new approaches in the provision of development assistance for poverty reduction, including a stronger focus on sectoral and national policy frameworks, better donor collaboration and, crucially, stronger leadership of the development process by southern governments themselves. As she noted, these trends pose challenges for evaluators in developing appropriate corresponding methods, approaches and systems and for development of evaluation capacity in southern countries. These proved to be recurring themes throughout the Workshop.

13. On the first and second days, papers were presented and discussed in four parallel breakout groups, organised in two sessions: the first focused on the design of specific studies; the second on the design of systems. A third session provided the opportunity to reflect on what had been learned, where there were gaps, and finally identified lessons, challenges and proposals for action. A discussants' panel at the end of Day 1 provided an opportunity for feedback from senior evaluators.
14. The final morning was devoted to consideration of ways of taking the agenda forward. It included a session on the activities of the DAC Poverty Network in preparing *Guidelines for Poverty Reduction*. This aroused considerable interest among participants, many of whom were unaware of the details of the Poverty Network's programme. A range of follow up actions were identified for consideration at the next meeting of the Working Party, scheduled for February 2000 (see below). Closing addresses were made by Peter Freeman, Niels Dabelstein and Richard Manning (Director General (Resources), DFID) - Richard Manning, in particular, reminding participants of the expectations and requirements of those who use evaluations in formulating policy and reporting results.
15. Overall, the workshop process seemed to work well in raising the awareness of participants about emerging issues in relation to poverty reduction and evaluation. While a number of participants at the end of the first day appeared disappointed that a specific 'toolbox' for evaluation of poverty reduction had not been identified, and others appeared to be in search of a unifying, 'one-size-fits-all' framework, there was widespread recognition in the course of the second day of the need for a more sophisticated response.

### **Issues arising**

16. The workshop discussions seemed to be very successful in terms of building consensus around emerging good practice in the following areas:
  - a) multidimensional understanding of poverty;
  - b) use of a range of context-sensitive strategies for reducing poverty;
  - c) shifting from project evaluation to higher levels;
  - d) partnership and joint activities in evaluating poverty reduction, including a sharper appreciation of partner country perspectives (both of government and more widely);
  - e) the requirement to make greater use of and strengthen evaluation capacity in partner countries (again not only in government but also more widely);

- f) the combination of quantitative and participatory approaches;
  - g) the delivery of 'real time' findings for greater relevance (i.e. concurrent rather than ex post evaluation), balanced by longer term 'historical' perspectives.
17. It is worth recording a little more fully the conclusions emerging around each point.

#### *Widening conceptions of poverty*

18. In stating their expectations for the workshop, a number of participants expressed their wish to identify a simple, comprehensive evaluation model or set of practical tools and terms with which to evaluate poverty reduction activities. They were quickly disappointed. In discussion, participants observed that conceptions of poverty have widened in recent years in recognition of the complexity and diversity of its causes and characteristics. The experiences of poor people themselves have received greater recognition. The range of interventions to reduce poverty has correspondingly broadened and deepened.
19. Niels Dabelstein noted that the idea of poverty as multidimensional is now widely accepted (that is, it broadly embraces notions around livelihoods, access to resources and knowledge, and the exercise of rights rather than being concerned in a narrow sense with income).
20. Neil Thin pointed out that many development agencies have accepted poverty reduction (broadly defined) as their central or overarching mission. In this context, he questioned whether it is meaningful to separate evaluation of poverty reduction activities (EPR) as a specific field of enquiry. He argues that it is more useful to analyse the conceptual basis or 'theory' underlying particular projects, programmes or policies, and to adopt an evaluation approach which is relevant to the specific character and strategic orientation of a given intervention. He proposed a 'SPOT-check' for this purpose, breaking down the conceptual basis of any intervention along four key axes (see Box 3).
21. Although participants did not take up this handy mnemonic, some papers looked at evaluation of *targeted* interventions (e.g. those presented by Neubert, Kirsch and Haga), others looked at interventions where poverty reduction outcomes were to be achieved *indirectly* (e.g. White's paper on SIDA's programme aid; Jahn's paper on infrastructure projects financed by KfW). In his evaluation of Swedish programme aid, Howard White was critical of the fallacy of evaluating the *direct* results of a poverty reduction strategy which has, essentially, an *indirect* orientation. He argues that we need to understand programme aid in relation to the overall country strategy, and it is the latter which constitutes a more appropriate focus for evaluation. Here and elsewhere, the lack of evaluation of policy dialogue, influence and advocacy were identified as a significant gap.

22. By the end of the workshop, participants generally agreed that, given the complexity and diversity of manifestations and perceptions of poverty and the great range of approaches to reducing poverty, there were no simple answers. It was concluded that it is often helpful to focus evaluation efforts on particular topics and levels; and to use specific tools and methods for specific purposes. The search for a unified theory of poverty and model of evaluation looks unpromising: 'one size does *not* fit all'.

**Box 3: 'SPOT-check'<sup>1</sup>**

A framework for the analysis of interventions to reduce poverty, based on four axes of distinction:

**S**trategic Distance: (direct or indirect interventions)

**P**overty dynamics: (relation of an interventions to poverty causes and effects)

**O**perational level: (i.e. international, macro/national, meso, micro/local)

**T**argeting: (intended direct or indirect beneficiaries identified)

*'Look at the forest not at the trees'*

23. Participants recognised that much evaluation effort has, in the past, focused at the project level, neglecting higher operational levels and policies. Given a broader, more holistic and multidimensional view of poverty, it is increasingly recognised that evaluation needs to develop methods and approaches for moving upwards to sector and country levels, and even to the global level (for example in relation to progress towards the International Development Goals). As some participants put it, 'Look at the forest not at the trees'. Nevertheless, participants also noted that project evaluation work should continue where appropriate and useful.

*Collaboration, partnership and joint evaluations: 'joint accountability through joint attribution'?*

24. Partnership, participation and empowerment are also key features of recent perspectives on poverty reduction, and were reflected in the workshop through

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<sup>1</sup> Neil Thin: Methods and Approaches for Evaluation of Development Assistance for Poverty Reduction: a Literature Review. See Annex 1.



the attention given to collaboration, partnership and joint evaluations. Although not uniquely linked to poverty concerns, these issues have a particular resonance when considered in relation to comprehensive or integrated approaches to poverty reduction.

25. Discussion of joint evaluation inevitably raised concerns about attribution and accountability. It was widely felt that evaluators in partner countries should ideally be 'in the driving seat'. Yet existing structures of accountability (for example to Finance Ministries and Parliaments in donor countries) are recognised as major structural constraints. Donors and recipients inevitably have differing perspectives and it may be that accountability, too, is necessarily multiple.
26. Nevertheless, many felt that southern partners may realistically take on the role of 'co-drivers'. Beyond this, there is a prize to struggle for which was summed up as 'joint accountability through joint attribution'.
27. Congruence and reciprocity are steps towards closer partnership. The Netherlands/Mali paper presented an interesting case study of joint assessment of congruence between Netherlands and Malian policies. Refreshingly, this required evaluators from Mali to visit Holland to interview senior Dutch policymakers - much to the surprise of the latter!
28. Ideally, collaborative or joint evaluation should allow rationalisation of evaluation effort. Yet this was seen to be 'easier said than done'. Collaborative work can initially generate high transaction costs, acting as a disincentive. Yet the costs of *not* going down a more coherent, collaborative path are incalculable. 'Just do it' and see what benefits emerge was a strong message from the WP-EV Chair. But all recognised that there is a long way to go.

#### *Evaluation capacity building*

29. A related issue which recurred throughout the workshop was the need to make greater use of local evaluation capacity in partner countries, and to strengthen evaluation capacity (not only in government but also more widely: crucially, in civil society, where evaluation capacity can help to ensure the public accountability of government and business and hence is a form of empowerment). Capacity building implies not only the development of skills but also the development of effective systems for evaluation and performance assessment.

#### *Numbers or narrative?*

30. No evaluation workshop would be complete without debating the relative merits of quantitative and participatory approaches! Participants widely agreed

that both were needed in appropriate combinations, reflecting a consensus which is related, once more, to the acceptance of a multidimensional understanding of poverty.

31. However, this debate was given an interesting twist by Rob van den Berg's plea for greater use of historical rather than scientific perspectives in evaluation: focusing less on 'the *theory* of development' and more on 'the *story* of development'. As with participatory approaches, qualitative historical narratives allow many voices to be heard and for a range of alternative interpretations.

#### *Relevance and 'real time' evaluation*

32. The question of time was also raised in an innovative paper presented by UNDP's Nurul Alam. A perennial challenge for evaluators is how to deliver results which are relevant and useful today, while being based on rigorous assessment of yesterday's experience. In discussion, participants noted the trend for evaluations and work on 'real time' performance assessments to converge. While innovation was welcomed, the traditional evaluators' virtues of prudence and probity were also extolled.

#### **Linking evaluation, policy and operations**

33. Surprisingly, the new poverty agenda seemed unfamiliar to many participants. This view was confirmed on the final morning, when participants were briefed by Raundi Halvorsen-Quevedo of the DAC Secretariat on the work of the DAC Poverty Network, particularly current work in preparing *Guidelines for Poverty Reduction* (see Box 4). Few participants were familiar with the details of the Poverty Network's programme and they welcomed the briefing. This highlights the gap in many agencies between policy and evaluation departments, and the need for improved communications both within agencies themselves and between the various subsidiary bodies of the DAC.
34. The DAC *Guidelines for Poverty Reduction* will include discussion of the role of evaluation; and the discussion of 'good practice' in Chapter 3 will draw upon relevant evaluation findings and lessons. This represents a significant opportunity to bring together policy, operations and evaluation effort in the field of poverty reduction.

**Box 4: DAC Informal Network On Poverty Reduction  
Poverty Reduction Guidelines**

Chapter 1	Concept and Approaches
Chapter 2	Country Assistance Programming and Management
Chapter 3	Good practice
Chapter 4	Institutional Learning And Change
Annexe:	Policy Coherence

**Follow up**

35. One workshop objective was to develop practical proposals for a medium-term agenda for strengthening Members' future evaluation work in the field of poverty reduction. A number of proposals were made for consideration by the next meeting of the Working Party scheduled for February.
36. Firstly, it was proposed that the following outputs should be produced Immediately:
  - a) a summary workshop report (i.e. this document);
  - b) all workshop papers to be made available on the Evaluation Section of the DAC website;
  - c) a revised literature review and annotated bibliography; and
  - d) a 'compendium' of approaches and methods for evaluation of poverty reduction, developing into a web-based resource to which further additions should be made over time.
37. All of these can be fed directly into the ongoing work of the DAC Poverty Network on 'good practice' in poverty reduction.
38. Alongside the extensive discussion of joint evaluation and partnership at the workshop, there was, in the margins, discussion of a number of joint initiatives. It is expected that these will be discussed further at the WP-EV meeting in February.

39. It was proposed that further work on methodological issues should be undertaken. Given the complexity of the issues, it was suggested that this might be better accomplished through small, focused seminars rather than large workshops.
40. Building on the issues raised at the Edinburgh Workshop, Canada offered to host a follow-up workshop in 2001. Although this, too, would address the subject of methods and approaches for evaluation of development assistance for poverty reduction, it was proposed that several key themes would be identified to provide a tight conceptual focus. Background papers could be commissioned to help to focus the Workshop on specific issues. It was agreed that Canada should develop detailed proposals.

***DAC WP-EV Workshop on Approaches and Methods for Evaluation of Development Assistance for Poverty Reduction, Edinburgh, 12 – 14 October 1999***

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## Welcome addresses

### ***Peter Freeman, Director (Africa Division), DFID***

Welcome to Scotland. This country has a long tradition of involvement and investment in what are now developing countries. Around Edinburgh, in particular, there are many centres of specialist knowledge, including the University of Edinburgh where Neil Thin is based. And nearly half of DFID's headquarters staff are based in Scotland, around 50 miles west of here.

I am substituting for Christopher Raleigh, whom many of you know as the Head of our Evaluation Department. Unfortunately, Christopher is away having medical treatment. We will pass on to him the expressions of concern and best wishes which many of you have given.

My own experience is as a consumer and user of evaluation work. In the last few years I have worked on our bilateral programmes in Africa, and have been closely involved in sharpening their focus on making an impact on poverty reduction.

This seminar is very timely. The revival of the political impetus for development assistance, which we are beginning to see in many of our countries, is based on the claims that it can, and will, reduce poverty. The initiatives on debt and on changing the design of IMF programmes at last month's annual meeting of the IMF and the World Bank are examples of this reversal. The World Development Report next year, and the five year review of the Copenhagen UN summit on social development, will keep poverty in the newspapers. Some of our governments are now also introducing poverty reduction programmes at home which would help create an interested and informed audience for assessing poverty and thinking about the rest of the world.

The papers I have read so far show that evaluation work has tended to say rather little about the impact of poverty. This is not surprising, as this was a much less explicit aim of development aid in the past. A few years ago World Bank Country Assistance Strategy papers, and DFID's own Country Strategy Papers, rarely addressed the issue of poverty reduction directly.

So all of us, evaluators and policy makers, have much to learn. We need quickly to be able to give our ministers the results and impacts of current work. Some of the indicators and interim targets are only five years away. And our parliaments and taxpayers will expect signs of progress even quicker, and will not be very impressed by explanations of the difficulties in measurement.

I would like to thank Lady Amos for joining us today. She was in the House of Lords until 2.00 am this morning, and has to be back there at 2.30 pm this afternoon. She does not just speak on DFID issues - she has direct experience of delivering technical assistance in South Africa and elsewhere.

I look forward to our debates, and to the conclusions for improving our knowledge and understanding that will come from them.

**Niels Dabelstein (DANIDA), Chairman, DAC Working Party on Evaluation**

Baroness Amos, Mr. Freeman, dear colleagues and guests,

I am particularly pleased to welcome you to this workshop on evaluation of efforts to reduce poverty. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to DFID for hosting the Workshop here in Edinburgh, and for leading the preparation. It has been no small task.

Poverty alleviation and poverty reduction are the overarching goals of our development assistance, and measuring the results is a central theme for the Working Party.

Poverty is the deprivation of basic human needs and rights

Encompassing not only economic and social needs and rights in terms of consumption, access to resources and public services, but also dignity and autonomy, personal security, rule of law, freedom of expression and equality of opportunities.

This concept of poverty can be broken down into four dimensions, which to some degree are overlapping and not all inclusive, but for the sake of simplicity:

- livelihood
- resources
- knowledge
- rights

These dimensions can be measured at different levels: individual, household, community, country or global levels. And they should be – for different purposes.

Globally we can look at distribution of wealth between countries, access to resources, the rule of international law, etc. as root causes of conflicts. If for no other reason, this provides a good argument for global redistribution and resource transfer - and more development aid. Even if the 0.7% target is met, it is only a drop in the sea.

From a collective donor perspective the country level should be our focus. Of course all four dimensions should be addressed in country strategies and policy dialogue. Aggregate indicators will tell us how our resources could best be distributed to address these dimensions. We all need not address all these dimensions – and we all should not address the one that by chance is the most popular in the current development discourse. The key here is co-ordination, and possibly the Comprehensive Development Framework will improve performance at this level.

From the individual donor's (and the partner country's) perspective one would look at how effectively your country strategy, sector policies and strategies, and interventions in different sectors address the four dimensions. We may assess adequacies of policies and strategies. But assessing outcomes of individual donors' interventions is no easy task – in fact it is probably becoming impossible as we move more and more in the direction of



sector programmes and budget support where attribution becomes difficult. The key issue for evaluation is, again, how to carry out joint evaluations including both host and donors together.

Still, the aid community and individual aid agencies are under increasing pressure to show results – to directly link progress to aid. But how much can we learn from evaluation?

As Neil Thin points out in the background paper, donor agencies should not be held accountable for achieving impact on poverty, since this is dependent on so many other agencies and factors beyond their control.

Chris Raleigh – whom we miss today – illustrated this on his “back-of-an-envelope” drawing at the Vienna seminar, which I – with his permission – have refined a bit. It clearly shows the complex pathways of aid, and puts a question mark on attribution. The last time we discussed methodologies and approaches for evaluating poverty was in Copenhagen in 1995. Since then much effort has gone into developing better tools. Looking at the papers prepared for this event indicates to me that these efforts have brought us several steps forward, but much remains to be done.

I hope that at the end of these two and a half days we will have three products:

- a better tool box of evaluation approaches and methods
- a clear sense of what we as a group still need to do
- a better understanding of how far evaluation with some validity can attribute societal changes to development assistance.

Thank you.

## ***Baroness Amos, Spokesperson on International Development, UK House of Lords***

### **Introduction**

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to this Evaluators' Workshop, to the United Kingdom, and to the beautiful city of Edinburgh. I hope you will be able to find some time, in the course of the next few days, to explore the city a little, although having seen your programme, I know you will be working extremely hard.

### **Evaluation and poverty reduction**

I am particularly pleased that your focus this week is on the central challenge for development: the reduction of world poverty. As you know, the DAC has played a key role in focusing the attention of world leaders on the International Development Target of reducing the proportion of poor people by half by 2015. This means that, over the next 15 years, we will need to help around 1 billion people to escape from poverty. This is a massive undertaking, but it is achievable with the combined and co-ordinated effort of the international development community and, above all, through the committed leadership of governments and the mobilisation of civil society in developing countries themselves. The private sector, with its tremendous resources, expertise, and dynamism also has a key role to play.

The focus on the International Development Targets reflects renewed interest in development outcomes and results. This has been matched by fresh efforts to co-ordinate development interventions and to ensure policy coherence. As new ways of working together emerge, there is a pressing need for greater collaboration, both among donors and with recipients, in evaluation of impact; and for stronger focus on the total outcome of development efforts rather than on the separate contributions of individual donors. I will say more about this in a moment.

Political commitment and financial resources are important in reaching international development goals, including our poverty reduction target. But knowledge is just as important. In Britain we have started the process of reversing the long decline in the proportion of our wealth used for development assistance, and I am pleased to say that the government has the support of the British people in honouring what was a manifesto commitment. But to sustain this support, we must show that poverty is being reduced, and that we are effective and efficient in working towards achievement of our targets. We need to know what works and why, and we need to be able to use that knowledge to maintain broad-based support for our development efforts.

### **Information, knowledge and evaluation**

The 1990s have seen an explosive increase in the volume and availability of information. Yet, despite significant improvements, there remain major gaps in our knowledge of social, economic and political conditions and trends in developing countries, and of the ways in which conditions can be improved. We need better social and economic statistics; and this means that we need to strengthen statistical capacity in developing

countries. We also need diagnostic studies which will help to give us a better picture of the causes, characteristics and correlates of poverty; and we need to hear the voices of poor people themselves, through participatory assessments. Although much has been learned already, our understanding of the ways in which people move in and out of poverty remains hazy. Without a stronger information base, our knowledge of the 'progress of nations' will remain weak and prone to error. And, of course, if we are able to support developing country governments to put in place pro-poor economic and social policies, they need to be able to share the knowledge and information which will contribute to growth and development.

However, better information is only part of the story. Information by itself is not knowledge. It must be weighed, probed and analysed and to yield useful and meaningful results. Evaluation studies are one important channel by which information is gathered, filtered, and pieced together to yield knowledge which can be acted upon to generate practical improvements in policies and programmes.

### **New approaches to development - and to evaluation**

This is where the value of evaluation work lies. But we need to maximise this value by ensuring relevance. In the past, much evaluation effort has gone into project evaluation. Projects, of course, have their place as a means of focusing development effort; but it has been widely understood in recent years that we need a better co-ordinated and more consistent approach to development than is possible through a piecemeal, project-based approach. Well-planned, adequately resourced, collaborative sector and country programmes allow a more coherent approach. We also need to establish international policies which are more consistent with our development aims, and that is why it is so good to see so many countries represented here today.

New approaches such as Sector Wide Approaches and the Comprehensive Development Framework require much closer co-ordination and integration of effort, both by donor and recipient institutions. Southern governments must lead. At the same time, integration must not stifle the innovation and diversity from which future improvements grow.

As development assistance flows more strongly through broader based channels, so evaluation needs to keep pace with these changes to help us to learn from them. The new approaches and policies need to be set within transparent structures of accountability which provide a basis for confidence and trust among all parties. Policy development requires the relevant and timely evidence which appropriately focused evaluation studies can supply. Ex post-evaluation studies have their place, but there is a need for stronger emphasis on improved monitoring and performance assessment.

Ad hoc collaboration on project level monitoring and evaluation systems is no longer sufficient. I very much welcome the emphasis placed by the DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation on linking the evaluation efforts of donors and recipients through joint evaluation. There is a need for greater integration and collaboration; and there is a need to organise this at higher levels, in the shape of comprehensive sectoral or national

systems. In building and strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems, there is a need to ensure that statistical data is complemented by qualitative information, including the case histories which evaluations often provide. In particular, it is important to accommodate participatory approaches, so that policy makers hear the voices of those who are poorest and most vulnerable: those whose lives we seek to improve.

### **Building national evaluation capacity**

Broad-based monitoring and evaluation systems cannot be built and run mainly by donors, as project level monitoring and evaluation systems often were. National systems, developed within national institutions, should make for better links between evaluation and national evidence-based policy development; and should strengthen the accountability of governments to their own people.

This means that building national capacity for monitoring and evaluation is a critical part of the agenda. National systems run by national staff must form the backbone of systems of accountability and lesson learning in future. But we recognise that, in many countries, there is a long way to go and that the support of the international development community will be needed for some time to come.

Finally, a plea for wider sharing of the results of monitoring and evaluation studies. International development is too important to be left to a few people in a few countries. Evaluators have a vital role to play in informing a broad public - North and South - about lessons learned, and so to strengthen public accountability.

### **Conclusion**

May I wish you success in taking your important and substantial agenda forward in this workshop, and beyond that, into the future. I look forward to hearing your conclusions and seeing their impact. And perhaps I can tempt you to work even harder this week by suggesting that Edinburgh might be a suitable place for evaluators to meet in 2015 to take stock of global progress in eliminating poverty.

## Day 1 Papers

**Neil Thin, University of Edinburgh**

### ***'Methods and Approaches for Evaluation of Development Assistance for Poverty Reduction: A Literature Review'***

This overview paper, commissioned by the DAC WG-EV in preparation for the workshop, traces a sequence for the analysis of evaluation of poverty reduction (EPR) starting with identification of problems and their causes and dynamics, through the policies, strategies, and instruments, to the evaluation process itself.

Key relevant changes in aid management are summarised, including: the almost universal assertion of poverty reduction as the fundamental objective of aid, together with adoption of International Development Targets (IDTs); increased attention of aid agencies to broader influences on poverty such as trade, economic management, and civil/political stability, and consequently greater emphasis on learning, innovation, and knowledge sharing; and increased promotion of multidimensional concepts of poverty and well-being, rights-based approaches, gender equality, and empowerment of poor people. These changes in aid approaches are linked with new emphases in approaches to evaluation and knowledge management: upscaling evaluation from project to sectoral and country levels, Results-Based Management, balancing quantification with qualitative analysis and interpretive presentation of information on poverty, and increasing emphasis on evaluation as a set of long-term planned processes of learning, adaptation, and knowledge management.

Various approaches to the conceptualisation of poverty are reviewed and linked with classification and analysis of poverty reduction strategies, the key finding being that analysis of poverty and poverty reduction is still hampered by weak conceptualisation. The paper argues for a more analytical rather than 'labelling' approach, recommending a 'SPOT check' based on a minimal set of four axes of distinction:

- Strategic distance*** (direct/indirect approaches)
- Poverty dynamics*** (relation of an intervention to cause-effect patterns)
- Operational level*** (international, macro, meso, or micro)
- Targeting*** (intended direct/indirect beneficiaries)

Such analysis reveals that donor literature which is explicitly on 'poverty reduction' has tended to focus on relatively direct approaches to poverty reduction, on work which addresses either symptoms or proximate causes of poverty, on micro-level operations, and on targeted interventions. The paper speculates that this focus is driven by the institutional imperative to identify *aid-attributable* poverty-reducing outcomes - i.e. those with the simplest and most visible cause-effect linkages.

The review concludes that it is no longer helpful to see 'poverty reduction' as a distinctive sub-category of aid evaluation work, since almost all donors now see poverty reduction

as their over-arching objective. Instead specific sub-categories could be devised and applied, differentiating among approaches to poverty reduction and operational levels.

The inherent optimism of the term EPR is found to be potentially problematic unless strenuous efforts are made to ensure that evaluators cover cases where poverty is increasing, including those where poverty increase is in part attributable to aid interventions. Since most evaluation work is still focused on achievement of objectives rather than unintended outcomes, aid's adverse impacts on poverty go under-recorded. Further critiques are made about the limited analysis of counterfactual scenarios and of fundability issues.

The paper points to a need for more careful assessment of the influence which different approaches to evaluation and results-based management may have on the incentives for various kinds of development work, including the kinds of high-risk and diffuse work needed to reduce poverty.

The paper discusses the rapid rise in donor interest in strengthening the capacities of partner agencies for evaluation, and queries whether such efforts are yet sufficiently focused on poverty reduction and whether they adequately address the roles of civil society and local government organisations in EPR.

The paper discusses and provides examples of the adaptation of evaluation methods to different contexts and strategies, showing how multidimensional concepts of poverty demand greater emphasis on qualitative and interpretive dimensions of assessment. It identifies the dangers of letting evaluability be used as a criterion for judging whether or not an intervention is worth doing, and of confusing evaluability with measurability. Bearing in mind the powerful rhetorical force of numbers, evaluators may need to put more effort into enhancing the rhetorical force of qualitative and interpretive information.

In a brief review of participatory learning methods, the paper shows how these have justifiably grown in importance, but still have three kinds of weakness: they tend to relate only to the micro-level of grass-roots projects, so need to be scaled up; they often fail to spell out operational recommendations for application in poverty reduction strategies; and they are typically lacking in aggregative and comparable information.

Finally, various suggestions are made for further actions and investigation, concerning:

- the process of defining the different ways in which all aid evaluation can improve understanding of poverty reduction
- further research and development of approaches to the evaluation of very indirect and diffuse international and macro-level instruments for poverty reduction
- ensuring that outputs from qualitative, interpretive, and participatory approaches to EPR is disseminated in usable and influential forms
- modifying the DAC evaluation database so as to facilitate learning about poverty
- greater emphasis on unintended impacts on poverty - both desirable and undesirable
- more development of indicators and assessment of social development, with stronger emphasis on qualitative interpretation, on rights and empowerment, and on inequality at all levels from intra-household inequality to international inequality.

***Philippe Coquart (for Groupe Agence Française de Développement)***

***'A few factors in the evaluation of local water engineering: A priority field of action to combat poverty for the French Development Agency'***

The GAFD conducted evaluations of 16 local water-engineering projects (mainly village water-supply) in 1998 and 1999 in five countries (Benin, Chad, Ghana, Guinea, and Niger). The studies identified two sets of factors affecting the poverty-reducing impact: operation and management of equipment (including usage, operation of management committees, maintenance funds for sustainability), and health/hygiene factors (water quality and water-borne diseases, problematic focus on women in sanitation and hygiene work). The paper summarises the objectives of the studies.

***Ulrike Mueller-Glodde with Chris Pain (for GTZ Social Policy Advisory Services)***

***'Qualitative Impact Monitoring of Poverty Alleviation Policies and Programmes in Malawi. An Approach based on Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) in 12 Malawian Villages'***

In 1996, the Government of Malawi launched a **Poverty Monitoring System (PMS)** in order to establish a nation wide information system dealing with poverty-related issues, policies and their impact. It also introduced several national policies, since 1994, for poverty reduction and alleviation of the detrimental effects on the poor of some aspects of structural adjustment.

The Qualitative Impact Monitoring system was based on rapid appraisal in twelve Malawian villages in 1997, aimed at capturing people's attitudes and perceptions on poverty issues with the intention of factoring them into the policy debate at higher levels. The team of 18 was composed of agricultural economists, social and natural scientists, statisticians and planners including 4 staff of the National Economic Council (the GoM organising agency), 2 from GTZ-SPAS (the financing and supporting agency), 7 from Malawian line ministries, 2 from Malawian NGOs, and 2 free-lance consultants. The main findings from the 12 village studies were as follows:

- it is necessary to distinguish poverty at two levels: **household** and **community**; at household level people emphasise basic material needs for food, water, shelter, and clothes, whereas at community level, people describe their poverty as lack of infrastructure (boreholes, clinics, schools, roads) and lack of institutions delivering social and economic services, particularly health institutions
- the perception of poverty is fairly homogeneous across the 12 villages and among men and women
- villagers attribute their poverty to four kinds of cause: **natural factors** (especially drought, flood, unfavourable rainfall pattern); **policies** (resulting in a lack of credit, low produce prices, high input prices, lack of infrastructure, limited access to markets, lack of transport, and limited employment opportunities); **individual factors** (e.g. laziness

and men's drinking, illness, numbers of dependants, low levels of education); and **community factors** (weak leadership, poor communication and lack of initiative).

***Renate Kirsch (GTZ Social Policy Advisory Services, Lilongwe)***

***'Qualitative Impact Monitoring of Poverty-Oriented Policies and Programmes in Malawi. Points of Discussion Concerning the Participation of Primary Stakeholders'***

[See summary of QUIM under Mueller-Glodde paper]. This paper summarises key benefits to policy formulation of the kind of rapid stakeholder consultation exercise conducted in 12 villages. Examples given include: identification of housing as an important concern for villagers which was under-emphasised in national policy; highlighting of the dangers of individual rather than communal approaches to housing improvements (the former resulting in jealousy, witchcraft accusations and house-burning); identification of the need for special initiatives to generate community empowerment and overcome passivity. Particularly important has been the substantial research involvement of government officials from planning units of sector ministries at national level, and the associated process of integrating the participatory approach within a policy-formulating institution (resulting, for example, in a future emphasis on problem-solving rather than extraction of information in village visits, and in recognition of the District level as the hub of the consultative process).

***Susanne Neubert, German Development Institute (GDI), Berlin***

***'MAPP: A New Method for Impact Assessment of Poverty Alleviation Projects'***

GDI have developed methods for assessing impacts on poverty (MAPP based on the multidimensional definition of poverty associated particularly with the Nobel prize-winning economist Amartya Sen. The method, so far test-run for assessment of large-scale resource management projects in Mali and Burkina Faso, uses the fourfold classification of key dimensions of poverty and well-being as developed for the UK Overseas Development Administration in 1995 *livelihoods*, *access to resources*, *knowledge*, and *rights*. The question of attribution is addressed by attempting to distinguish among three main sources of influence on poverty in a given area: project measures, initiatives of the population itself, and external factors. Qualitative assessments are quantified through participatory evaluation in discussion groups among the target population, on the basis of five-point-scales in order to identify developmental trends.



***Ulrich Jahn (Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW))***

***'Do Railroad and Electricity Projects Help to Alleviate Poverty? Four Studies from German Financial Cooperation'***

Summarising studies of German-supported electricity projects in Egypt and Indonesia, and railway projects in Bangladesh and Tanzania, this paper seeks to offset the under-recognition of economic infrastructure projects in analysis of poverty reduction. These studies concluded that the orientation of the economic and social policy of the state creates scope for action and distribution for the benefit of the poor. Looking at rural electricity, for example, it is noted that 'an indirect positive effect occurs when the electricity is used in the irrigation of previously uncultivated land and this land is available to the poor population' but that 'the operation of electrical machinery leads to additional employment but may also cause the substitution of manual labour and thus the elimination of jobs (for typically less skilled workers) and, as a result, may increase poverty.'

***Howard White [University of Sussex, Institute of Development Studies (IDS)]***

***'Evaluating The Poverty Impact Of Programme Aid: Methodological Issues And Swedish Experience'***

White takes a macro-level theoretical and economic approach, based on the approach followed in the Global Evaluation of Swedish Programme Aid (GESPA), to the difficult topic of assessing impact at programme level. GESPA examined programme aid in eight countries (Bangladesh, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam and Zambia) and Sida will publish the reports by the end of the year.

White identifies three kinds of question typically addressed by programme aid evaluators: whether programme aid funds affected economic aggregates linked to growth, whether donor involvement in policy dialogue has affected policy outcomes, and what has been the economic impact of reforms supported by donors. Noting that 'evaluations have by and large steered clear of macroeconomic analysis of aid impact', he argues that to analyse the impact of aid on growth at the country level it is necessary to examine effects on 'intermediate variables' such as savings, fiscal response (government spending, taxes and borrowing), and the real exchange rate.

A section on policy dialogue notes that most academic literature has tended to focus only on the formal conditionality of IFIs rather than on the roles of bilaterals and on informal channels of policy dialogue. White suggests that a theory-based evaluation approach would be appropriate for assessing policy dialogue, but that this is difficult to follow when donor agency officials deny (as Swedish officials do) that there is any intention to influence policies. While acknowledging that 'bilateral donors have played an increasingly important role in policy dialogue', White also points out that 'Sweden's role in policy dialogue at the country level does not reflect what may have been expected from a 'progressive' donor, and that 'there is no evidence of trying to put poverty more strongly on to the conditionality agenda.'

The paper briefly discusses a variety of approaches to economic analysis which will be of interest primarily to those already well-versed in economic concepts such as fiscal aggregates, computable equilibrium models, decomposition analysis, growth regression, and Dutch disease.

***Andrew Shepherd and Alicia Herbert (University of Birmingham, for DFID)***

***'Evaluation of DFID Support to Poverty Reduction. Country Studies: Approach and Methods'***

This paper gives extracts from the inception document for a major evaluation study of DFID's work on poverty reduction 1990-98, which has now been completed by a team led by the International Development Department in the University of Birmingham. The studies included a review of the evolution of central policy and guidance with respect to poverty reduction within DFID, followed by four country case studies (India, Zambia, Uganda and Mozambique), followed by participatory synthesis work involving various workshops and discussions. The inception document noted that poverty is a contested concept with a diversity of definitions even within DFID. It proposed a broad distinction between '**descriptive poverty profiling**' based on 'concepts and approaches that occupy the same terrain as poverty profiles based on household consumption data' on the one hand, and on the other hand '**explanatory poverty analysis**' based on 'approaches to the policy-oriented analysis of poverty that move one from constructing a basic poverty profile to bring into focus particular processes, proximate causes or deeper explanations of poverty'.

This broad distinction is related to two 'clusters of indicators' - '**outcome indicators**' (relating to economic measures of income and wealth and to measures of 'human development' e.g. health, security, capabilities), and '**social capital indicators**' (harder to assess in most situations, relating to 'voice poverty' and social relations). It was made clear that the distinction cuts across three other sets of distinctions: quantitative vs qualitative data; contextual (e.g. ethnographic) vs non-contextual (survey) methods; and analysis of context-specific causal "stories" about poverty vs econometric modeling and testing of causal hypotheses.

At a presentation at the May DAC WP-EV workshop in London, the evaluators gave a presentation on some of the outcomes of the studies. The policy review raised questions concerning organisational capacity to address poverty effectively, and concerning inter-sectoral and inter-professional group relations within DFID. The review also raised the importance of influence as an aspect of effectiveness, and added an extra study of UK influence over the World Bank through the SPA. The team also found it hard to include effective primary stakeholder involvement given the 4-5 month timeframe for feedback and breadth of topics.

***Caroline Heider (Asian Development Bank)***

***'Special Evaluation Study of the Bank's Assistance for Poverty Reduction'***

Since poverty reduction became a strategic objective for ADB in 1992, it has committed \$5,901 through 123 projects with poverty reduction as primary or secondary objective. These projects have been in 20 subsectors in 21 countries. This study addressed three questions: how well did ADB incorporate poverty reduction into its country strategies? how well are ADB projects' M&E systems geared towards assessing poverty reduction results? and which effects and impacts on poverty have been attained so far? Five countries were involved in the study, with four projects in each: Bangladesh, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao PDR, Nepal, and Philippines.

On the country strategy question, the study found that these contain a lot of poverty-related information on income, employment, poverty incidence, living standards, education, health, malnutrition, and food security, but that this is aggregated at national level, treating the poor as a homogeneous category and not distinguishing for example those that have potential for self-help and the 'destitute' who will need 'continuous charitable relief'.

Project M&E systems were found to provide an increasing amount of information on poverty-related indicators, but that much of this was not collected at the design stage, so that 'information necessary to design pro-poor projects is missing'. A striking conclusion is that among the data collected by project management units, 'benefit data receive the least attention', and that therefore it would be better to locate responsibility for benefit data collection in government agency M&E units.

Assessment of results was classified in four 'dimensions of poverty': **wellbeing, access to resources, knowledge, and rights**. 'None of the projects produced results that cut across all dimensions of poverty in a systematic way, which is not surprising given the absence of a conceptual framework or operating guidelines.' The studies found good immediate effects on employment, wages, access to infrastructure, wellbeing, microcredit, social services, and training or awareness raising, and judged that these effects were likely to translate into beneficial longer-term impacts on production and income, trade, prices of goods and services, and health.

***Christoph Feyen (GTZ) and Hans Gsänger (GDI)***

***'Poverty Impact Monitoring Unit (PIMU) Sri Lanka'***

The Poverty Impact Monitoring Unit (PIMU), a joint German-Sri Lankan project, aims to improve the poverty related impact monitoring of donor supported projects. PIMU provides consultative services to projects and acts as a catalyst for poverty reduction and impact monitoring. Currently in its initial development phase (1998-2000) PIMU is developing and testing innovative approaches to poverty-related impact monitoring. There is particular focus on finding suitable blends of quantitative and qualitative approaches in order to achieve valid impact assessments at acceptable cost. PIMU provides consultancy services and hopes to serve as a catalyst stimulating innovative

assessment work by others. While demand from clients for help with impact assessment in general, specific interest of clients in poverty issues has been less prominent so far.

### ***UNDP Evaluation Office***

#### ***'Concept Paper - Evaluative Research Programme on Poverty Alleviation'***

The UNDP-EO has embarked on an Evaluative Research Programme (ERP) focused on 'poverty alleviation' and designed for flexibility, responsiveness and short turn-round time to meet UNDP's information needs. The paper notes that the UNDP lacks a 'clearly defined operational strategy for poverty alleviation' despite its promotion of 'complex conceptual ideas', and points out that despite the importance now attached to 'Human Poverty' the assessment of this is still in need of development, and measurement is still dominated by the concept of 'income poverty'. ERP has identified four priority topics for its studies: 1. pro-poor governance; 2. Linkage between macro-policies and micro-level initiatives 3. Definition and measurement issues (particularly 'results-based assessment'); 4. Skills to meet goals. The first two of these are described as 'programme issues' and will be studied first, and the last two are 'broader issues' which will be tackled later. The four studies are expected to be published in a UNDP book on its poverty work by Summer 2000, shortly after the June five-year review of the World Summit on Social Development.

### ***Khalid Malik (Director, UNDP Evaluation Office)***

#### ***'Evaluating New Approaches to Poverty'***

This paper outlines the processes by which UNDP has sought to operationalise its 1995 declaration of poverty eradication as its 'overriding priority', tracing the evolution of global and national-level Human Development Reports and noting that a mid-term review of UNDP's 1992-96 phase of poverty programmes had emphasised the need UNDP to develop an agency-wide operational definition of poverty. UNDP has responded to that review with a Change Management Initiative, establishing Strategic Results Frameworks (each making explicit its links to the goal of poverty reduction), and strengthening its emphasis on learning and monitoring, clarifying goals, and trying to become a 'results-driven organisation'.

Malik summarises recent UNDP reviews on poverty reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean (which looked at destabilising effects of macro-economic "stabilisation" packages), and Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union (which looked at the erosion of public services). It also gives brief information on various UNDP initiatives such as the worldwide Poverty Strategy Initiative (evaluation due in late 1999), the South Asia Poverty Alleviation Programme (developing village organisations in over 2,400 villages), the Africa 2000 Network (in 12 countries supporting 700 locally designed small projects involving 1.6mn people directly and 16mn indirectly), and the Civil Society Empowerment Programme (with the NGO Codesria, involving participatory research, training of policy makers, and facilitation of dialogue from national to grassroots levels).

***Alison Evans (World Bank)***

***'Evaluating the Effectiveness of the World Bank's Strategy for Poverty Reduction 1990-99'***

This presentation outlined the key components of the Bank's poverty strategy since 1990 (supporting labour-intensive growth; macro/price/ regulatory policies; supporting basic social services; health, population, and education; and safety nets), making a broad distinction between 'enabling' and 'targeted' work. Three key questions are identified for evaluating effectiveness, relating to whether the Bank is: doing the right things, doing things right, and achieving sustainability and results. These questions are then addressed at three levels of analysis are distinguished: global, country, and programme/project level.

After further discussion of methods and assessment of results, the presentation concluded by identifying key factors contributing to pro-poor outcomes: institutionally embedded design and implementation; flexible, transparent and participatory approaches; consciousness of side effects/building on synergies; cautious decentralization (with strong central authority); policy coherence at sector/macro levels (global); and borrower capacity and ownership.

## **Day 2 papers**

***AusAID***

***'Policy Approaches to Poverty Reduction in the Australian Aid Program and Issues for Performance Measurement and Evaluation'***

Following the 1997 definition of poverty reduction as the central objective of Australian aid, AusAid has produced country strategies which make explicit the intended contributions to poverty reduction. But this paper points to a weakness in AusAID's Guidelines for the Preparation of Country Strategies, which do not include poverty monitoring indicators or targets. The Australian Parliament has set a new performance target of 75% of bilateral and regional activities, as well as programmes funded through NGOs and multilaterals, receiving a quality rating of "satisfactory overall" or higher.

The paper acknowledges that given their traditional focus on the success of individual activities in achieving their stated objectives, AusAID's evaluators have 'limited experience in evaluating impact on poverty'. AusAID's new Quality Assurance Group has reviewed a sample of 20 bilateral and regional projects at the front end of the project cycle and found that poverty reduction is rarely mentioned as an explicit project objective although often said by project staff to be an implicit objective. AusAID is currently considering the possibility of establishing a poverty marker on its activity management database. Other new steps include requirements that each activity identified in a logframe should have a delineated link with poverty reduction (direct or indirect), and that all Terms of Reference for designs, evaluations, and reviews should include impact on poverty.

## **AusAid**

### ***'Case study of evaluation of three rural development projects in Thailand - Targeting Poor Farmers: Contributions to Rural Development in Thailand'***

This paper summarises a major evaluation report (available at [www.ausaid.gov.au](http://www.ausaid.gov.au)) assessing the poverty reduction effectiveness of three poverty-focused projects in Thailand (Agricultural and Social Development Project, the Agricultural Extension Project, and the Ubon Ratchathani Land Reform Area Project). Key lessons from the evaluations are that further efforts are needed to target and reach the poorest (rather than just poor people in general); that more attention must be given to helping people develop the investment capital needed to sustain income increases; that strategies to reach the very poor must be independent of land ownership and could include livestock distribution and relocation grants to support migration to areas with better employment prospects; and that in poor rural areas more attention must be given to supporting systems based on rainfed agriculture.

## **Jeanne Nanitelamio et al (CAMIRE, Estadística y Analisis, Pasaia, Spain)**

### ***'Determining the impact of the co-operation projects funded by the European Union, on reducing poverty in developing countries'***

Arguing that 'there is no tool for the Commission [EC-DGVIII] to assess ...the impact of its portfolio on poverty levels', and that 'existing poverty evaluations ...have no, or only very limited, impact on re-directing aid policies or individual projects toward more poverty focus', this paper sets out methods for developing EC capacity to determine its poverty impact in Africa, based on field tests of these methods in Burkina Faso. There are four 'conceptual foundations' to the approach advocated by CAMIRE:

1. 'an alternative view of poverty' - avoiding the practices of 'externally-conceived definitions and models' which focus on individuals rather than groups, base the concept of wellbeing on material assets, assume logical and linear relationships between economic operators, and target specific issues by 'segmenting, stratifying, and dissecting reality'
2. 'inner perception and global approach' - 'allowing the poor to describe their own economic and sociological systems, and to indicate their own standards of well-being' but also 'adopting a global approach'
3. 'systems, situations, and needs' - trying to understand how individuals experience and influence these
4. 'the notion of impact' - a distinction is drawn between impact 'based on intrinsic project rationality' and impact 'based on local rationality' (local initiatives, for which the project may only act as a trigger)

**Durga P. Ojha (GTZ Kathmandu)**

***'Impact Monitoring Unit: A GTZ Approach to Improve Evaluation Capacity in Nepal'***

Since 1993 The Impact Monitoring Unit (IMU) has served as a support unit to seven GTZ regional rural development and poverty alleviation projects. The IMU was set up to improve the effectiveness of monitoring, develop institutional memory and to disseminate experience. IMU is not meant to take responsibility for evaluation (which GTZ feels should be reserved for external evaluators) or project management. Its impact assessment work studies have been useful as a basis for periodic evaluation and review missions. Particular importance is attached to the establishment of base-line information on household living conditions for longitudinal monitoring of impact. This work has been based mainly on qualitative indicators, since income and expenditure indicators are felt not to be meaningful in the rural context of Nepal.

GTZ emphasises the importance of developing IMU as an institution staffed by full time professionals, reducing dependence on the limited pool of free-lance professional consultants in Nepal. It regards its efforts to support development of monitoring and reporting systems in NGO partners as problematic so far, since partners are reluctant to change their own system of information collection and reporting. Successful introduction of a self-monitoring system in Small Farmers Cooperatives is reported.

**Konimba Sidibe and Anneke Slob (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands)**

***A Policy Evaluation of the Dutch International Cooperation Programme in Mali: How to Assess Policy Congruence in the Field of Poverty Reduction?***

In a major evaluation (1994) of Dutch assistance to Mali 1975-92 it was concluded that although Dutch aid to Mali was reasonably effective, there were problems with sustainability and with integration of aid efforts into the Malian context. In 1997, OECD-DAC reviewed the overall aid system in Mali with a view to strengthening partnerships and promoting Malian ownership of the development process. A new evaluation study is now looking at policy aspects of the Dutch aid programme in Mali, with separate studies of macro-economics (especially budget support), rural development, and social sectors (basic education and health care). The overall study focuses on five main themes:

1. Policies, policy congruence and composition of the Dutch aid programme in Mali;
2. The change from a project approach to a programme approach;
3. Ownership and partnership relations;
4. Decentralisation
5. Results, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

The evaluation has found that the Government of Mali is not yet 'in the driver's seat' of the Dutch aid poverty strategy in Mali, which is controlled by the poverty desk of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A general conclusion is that 'the national poverty strategy so far seems to have played only a ritual role in the discussions, but has been

marginalised by most of the donors including the Netherlands as a superfluous strategy' and that it therefore 'does not serve as an overall coherent policy framework.'

The picture is much more promising, however, as regards coherence of sector policies with good policy dialogue and collaborative preparation of implementation strategies, covering issues of poverty, gender and equity. The paper concludes by saying that 'at this stage of the evaluation no results can be reported of the Dutch contribution to poverty reduction in Mali ... no extensive reports on concrete results can be expected, because the emphasis is not put on field research to measure effects of Dutch aid interventions', since the more emphasis put on national ownership of poverty reduction strategies, the more donor evaluation will focus on policies and on national-level rather than project- and programme-level outcomes.

### ***JICA Forestry Cooperation Division***

#### ***'Evaluation Methods on Poverty Alleviation: A Case of the Community Development and Forest/Watershed Conservation Project in Nepal'***

Following three years of research 1991-94 on community participation in natural resource management in Nepal, JICA launched the Community Development and Forest/Watershed Conservation Project and Greenery Promotion Cooperation Project in Nepal in 1997, mainly run by Japanese volunteers. Both projects (which together comprise some 900 sub-projects and 250 capacity-building programmes) are trying out innovative approaches to reduction of poverty particularly among women and people of 'occupational castes'.

Targeting of beneficiaries is based on a set of criteria including landholding, educational status, female-headed households agricultural output, and ownership of productive assets. Empowerment of poor people (participation, co-operation, consciousness, self-reliance) is described in the project design as a set of means (outputs) to achieve improvement in the natural environment (Goal and Purpose). The paper summarises methods and indicators used for assessing empowerment - e.g. looking at such processes as changes in attitude, links between community demands and the needs addressed by the project, participation in planning, and information networks. It also notes that the impact survey has itself been a process of empowerment.

### ***JICA Office of Evaluation and Post-Project Monitoring***

#### ***'Evaluation of Poverty in Tanzania: The Kilimanjaro Village Forestry Project'***

JICA and UNDP are currently collaborating in this evaluation which attempts to develop understanding of poverty in Kilimanjaro region. The KVFP project (1991-98) was not itself designed to be poverty-oriented; it was focused on reforestation in a semi-arid area, and developed participatory social forestry approaches during implementation after learning that standardized extension methods and provision of inputs was too inflexible to meet



the diverse needs of poor people. The current evaluation will have a particular focus on vulnerability, and will assess this by looking at individuals not just whole communities.

## **Concluding Comments**

### ***Raundi Halvorsen Quevedo (DAC)***

#### ***Synergy with other DAC activities***

##### **Overall context**

- DAC has adopted international development targets, of which poverty reduction is a key focus
- Aim to use this focus to reverse the decline in aid
- Partnership and ownership have a new emphasis

##### **Closing ranks**

- Donors working together to achieve aims of reducing poverty
- DAC has appointed group of poverty reduction experts
- World Bank has made poverty a prerequisite for HIPC

##### **DAC poverty network (PovNet)**

- Has a mandate to develop Guidelines on Poverty Reduction by December 2000
- Focus is on helping donors to move to a greater focus on partnership and ownership in reducing poverty
- PovNet started off with a scoping study to assess donor and partner attitudes to address poverty. This showed gaps and areas of greater coherence needed, and laid the base for ongoing draft Guidelines

##### **Guidelines on Poverty Reduction**

###### Chapter 1: Concepts and approaches

- Defining key concepts
- Based on pro-poor, sustainable livelihoods, rights-based paradigms

###### Chapter 2: Country programming and management

- Country strategies - content and formula
- Analysis of dimensions of poverty and their causes
- Importance of embedding in national policy

###### Chapter 3: Best practice

- Aimed at assessing what intervention is most effective in specific country contexts

#### Chapter 4: Institutional change and learning

- Examining organisational and cultural change necessary for mainstreaming poverty reduction
- Also address skills/training, learning and evaluation, and how to manage change

#### Annex: Policy coherence for poverty reduction

#### **Helping each other**

- PovNet aims to assist DAC in poverty evaluation, especially Chapter 1 of the Guidelines
- Chapter 2 should help in move to sector and country-wide approaches
- Hope to strengthen demand for learning
- DAC can help PovNet by developing a database on poverty studies, developing guidance on how to achieve poverty reduction, and establishing what constitutes best practice.

#### **Discussion**

**Colin Kirk:** the work most relevant to us from these guidelines is Chapter 3 on good practice. We already know much about this on the project level, but have much to learn on the country/sector level.

Q. Why has policy coherence been relegated to the annex?

A. This is an issue on which there is some disagreement. We believe it is central, but we need to be able to achieve consensus. The annex will be provided to OECD ministers, so it will have a high profile, and could become a chapter after further discussion.

Q. Is the scoping study going to be published?\*

A. Yes, we are awaiting publication.

Q. Are there parallel discussions happening in the south, especially with regards to the content of Chapters 1-3?

A. There are five consultancies, as well as upcoming conferences in Ethiopia, East Asia, Africa (Tanzania) and Latin America.

A. A lot of work has already been done, and we plan to build on it

#### ***Concluding Comments by Peter Freeman, Director (Africa Division), DFID***

This was an extremely useful first international meeting on the experience of evaluation. Thanks to all those who contributed.

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\* "DAC Scoping Study of Donor Poverty Reduction Policies and Practices", Development Assistance Committee, OECD, 1999. The Report was published in December 1999 by the Overseas Development Institute, Portland House, Stag Place, London, SW1E 5DP.

The literature review brought out how little evaluations in the past focused on poverty reduction. Fortunately this has been changing. One way we can change to reflect this new priority is to see how they can be linked to other DAC development indicators.

There is a need for higher level evaluation, and there are some examples of this to learn from. For example, the World Bank evaluation of the Special Program of Assistance to Africa (SPA), and the external review commissioned by the IMF of ESAF. The lessons learnt from these can be used, for example, in evaluating the revised HIPC initiative.

Thanks to Steve Jones, the facilitator, and all for coming.

### ***Concluding comments by Niels Dabelstein***

It is always difficult to sum up 3 days of rich discussion: what were the main issues emerging? Did we meet our expectations?

First of all, we have had some very rich discussions. And even if we have not come to any firm conclusions, we have moved the signposts further.

Jean Quesnel, on the first morning had the expectation that we could provide a definition of poverty which he could use to explain his mother what we are doing. And someone else hoped for a simple evaluation approach for poverty reduction.

They did not get that: If anything we have made it clear that poverty is complex and context specific – and that therefore our evaluation approaches and methods should be context specific.

We have not come up with the solution – the prescription - for evaluating poverty. But we have heard and discussed several different approaches, which together provide some of the tools we need for our toolbox.

We have approaches for evaluating at different levels and we have ideas of how to involve stakeholders at various times and for various purposes.

We have a commitment to move forward collectively in the Working Party – on specific issues, both in the short term and the medium term. And we have a commitment to take stock in about one year.

We also have individual commitments to test new approaches. And to share the lessons.

I personally have a much clearer impression of where I need to go – and of the difficulties lying ahead.

So in short, I feel confident to say that this workshop – and it has indeed been working – has been a success. The reasons are many.

The steering committee who has put the programme together and coordinated the papers – and worked hard during coffee breaks and breakfasts to adjust as we went along.

All the people who prepared and presented papers – a rich source of information and inspiration.

Our facilitator, Steve, with high good humor and colorful guidance, has brought us safely and effectively through a heavy schedule.

And the "gang of four" it seems to me they were more than 4, who have serviced us so well and always very quickly.

And we should not forget all those who have worked behind the lines at DFID but who have contributed.

And last, but not least. All you participants, who have indeed participated and contributed to the richness of the workshop

Thank you all.

***Concluding Address, Richard Manning, Director-General, DFID***

From the point of view of a user of evaluations, there are several pressures we face:

- The insistent pressure on progress in targets - from DAC and developing countries, and our own Ministries of Finance. Our own ministers want us to be able to respond in order to retain public support. Fortunately development has taken a high profile at the G8 summit.
- The pressure to reduce transaction costs, for ourselves and our partners. Genuine joint working as donors is therefore necessary at all stages, and the national obstacles in the way of this must be reduced. There are few good examples of joint evaluation so far. They must be programmed as such from the start. We need to move as well to an 'all trust one' mindset, in which we are prepared to allow one member to evaluate for all.
- We need to shift our focus from projects to more strategic interventions. We therefore depend on the evaluators to tackle the methodological issues this raises.
- To do so requires full participation from partner governments and civil society, which may depend upon capacity building.
- The DAC needs to integrate evaluation and several other areas of work, such as the poverty network. This is relevant to assessing what 'operations' wants from 'evaluation'.

I look forward to seeing results.

## **APPENDIX B: Annexes**

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## Annex 1: Programme

### Tuesday, 12 October

9.00	Registration	
9.30	Welcome addresses: Peter Freeman (Director, Africa Division, DFID); Niels Dabelstein (Chair, DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation (WP-EV); Baroness Amos (Government Spokesperson for International Development in the House of Lords, UK)	Plenary
10.00	Steve Jones (Facilitator): Introductions; Workshop aims and expectations	
10.30	Dr Neil Thin (Consultant): Key findings from the literature review	
11.00	Tea/Coffee	

### ***Session 1: Approaches and methods in the design of specific studies for evaluation of development assistance for poverty reduction***

11.30		Working groups
Group A	Australia: Targeting poor farmers: contributions to rural development in Thailand	
	France: Tools for the evaluation of poverty reduction projects	
Group B	Japan: work in progress: Nepal and Tanzania	
	Germany (Neubert): A new method for impact assessment of poverty alleviation projects	
Group C	Germany (KfW) The Contribution of Railway and Electricity Projects to Poverty Alleviation: Four Case Studies of Financial Cooperation and its Implications	
	Sweden: evaluating the poverty impact of Programme Aid	
Group D	UK: evaluating poverty reduction in DFID's country programmes	
	Asian Development Bank: Special Evaluation Study of the Bank's assistance for Poverty Reduction	
	World Bank: The Effectiveness of the World Bank's Poverty Reduction Strategy: An Evaluation	
13.30	Lunch	
14.30	Working groups prepare report back	
15.30	Tea/coffee	
16.00	Report back from working groups	Plenary
	Plenary discussion	
17.00	Review of the day: discussants panel	
17.30	Close	
18.30	Reception	

## Wednesday 13th October

### **Session 2: Approaches and methods in the design of systems for monitoring and evaluation of development assistance for poverty reduction**

9.00	Planning the day - Facilitator	Plenary
9.15		
Group A	Germany (GTZ): Qualitative impact monitoring of poverty alleviation policies and programmes  EU: Determining the impact of the co-operation projects funded by the EU	Working groups
Group B	Australia: Assessing the Australian Aid Programme  Canada: Poverty, Process, Framework	
Group C	Germany (GTZ: Gsaenger): Poverty Impact Monitoring Unit (PIMU), Sri Lanka  Germany (GTZ: Ojha): Impact Monitoring Unit: A GTZ Approach to Improve Evaluation Capacity in Nepal	
Group D	Netherlands: A policy evaluation of the Dutch International Co-operation Programme in Mali: how to assess policy congruence in the field of poverty reduction?  UNDP: Evaluative Research Programme in Poverty Alleviation	
11.00	Tea/coffee	
11.30	Working groups prepare report back	
12.30	Report back by working groups Plenary discussion	Plenary
13.30	Lunch	

### **Session 3: What have we learned? Where are the gaps? Identifying lessons, challenges and proposals**

14.30	Identifying key issues and topics	Plenary
14.45	Discussions on key issues and topics	Working groups
15.45	Tea/Coffee	
16.15	Report back and discussion	Plenary
17.00	Discussants' panel	
17.30	Review of the day	

## Thursday 14th October

### ***Session 4: Developing practical proposals for a medium term agenda for improving and strengthening Members' future evaluation work in this field***

9.00	Niels Dabelstein (Chair, DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation): The way forward on the evaluation of work on poverty reduction DAC Poverty Network representative: Synergy with other DAC activities	Plenary
9.30	Working groups prepare proposals for ways forward: for members of the DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation	Working groups
11.00	Tea/coffee	
11.30	Report back; plenary discussion	Plenary
12.30	Concluding addresses:  Peter Freeman (Director, Africa Division, DFID); Neils Dabelstein (Chair DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation) Richard Manning (Director-General (Resources), DFID)	
13.00	Close and lunch	



## **Annex 2: Expectations of participants at the workshop (from a plenary ‘brainstorming’ on day 1)**

- To provide a definition of poverty reduction that we could explain to our families.
- Can we devise a simple evaluation approach for poverty reduction and put a human face on it?
- To have the operational means to divide poverty into manageable bits with supporting methodologies.
- To be able to deliver dynamic process-oriented and real-time information to decision-makers.
- To have a coherent understanding of critical variables/entry points for poverty evaluation.
- To come up with concrete suggestions on how to co-ordinate institutional stakeholders.
- To assess the place of evaluation in management systems, and building the ‘learning loop’.
- To assess International Development Targets-related needs and capacity on the ground, especially where the evaluation takes place, whose capacity is built, and distinguishing between qualitative and quantitative capacity.
- To provide practical suggestions on how to move forward, for example on assessing poverty on project to sector levels.
- To discuss means of working better on joint evaluations, by moving from an agency to a co-operative, in-country approach.
- To be humble, open and participatory as donors.
- To remove the question mark from ‘attribution’ .
- To develop a common language on poverty reduction.
- To clarify different ‘measurement’ levels at which we evaluate, ensuring transparency and clarity in what we are doing.
- To follow a comprehensive approach to integrating poverty into evaluation, especially in how to involve local partners in the process.
- To distinguish the unique problems of large and small donors.

## **Annex 3: Charts From Working Groups**

### **SESSION 1 – GROUP A**

**Australia Targeting poor farmers: contributions to rural development in Thailand.**

**France Tools for the evaluation of poverty reduction projects.**

Two good examples of development projects:

1. Three separate rural development projects in Thailand targeting poor farmers (AusAid)
2. Local water engineering to combat poverty in Africa (France)

Evaluations had positive conclusions but also had limitations:

- a) Time and resources dedicated for evaluation – adequacy
- b) Difference in project expectations from the time of setting up the project to the time of evaluation – information system was not adequate; populations moved out; outside project area not included in project information system for comparison; dependence on project completion reports and on anecdotal information
- c) Despite targeting poor areas and populations the poorest were left out – so project activities/strategies need to be specific for the poorest
- d) Links of project specific achievements to poverty reduction are often assumptions, lacking concrete verification

### **Discussion points**

1. **Specific projects (short term) compared to poverty reduction programmes (long term) – what are we evaluating? (Poverty reduction objective was not explicit in projects)**
2. **Evaluation Methodology: selecting indicators (including process indicators) and designing evaluation around them.**
3. **Selective Evaluation: Not all projects need in depth evaluation. When they do they need careful designing, appropriate resource allocation and independent research.**
4. **Need to develop national commitment to poverty reduction and local evaluation capacity.**

### **SESSION 1 - GROUP B**

**JICA: Work in Progress: Nepal and Tanzania Community Development**

**Germany (Neubert): A new method for impact assessment of poverty alleviation projects, MAPP - Mali**

- Participatory Approaches
- Mixture of Quantitative and Qualitative
- Context - top down
- social mapping
- Use in local administration
- Use by wider development community
- Attribution
- Feedback to policy/programmes

### **Issues in Participatory Approaches:**

- Time-consuming - for all (e.g. how much baseline information will really be needed?)
- High expectations of oral memory
- Sustainability and ownership (throughout project cycle management)
- Raising expectation of beneficiaries
- Need for transparency/reciprocity
- Evaluation as an empowerment process
- Quality of participation - legitimacy of information
- Sensitivity and knowledge
- Scaling up - micro to macro
- Local capacity for Evaluating

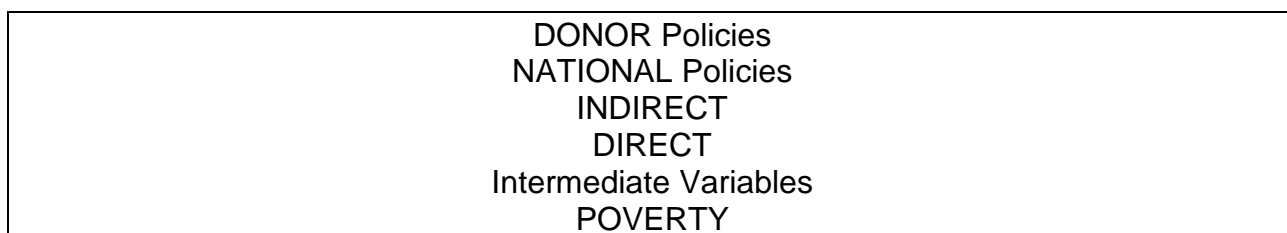
## **SESSION 1 - GROUP C**

### **Germany (KfW): The Contribution of Railway and Electricity Projects to Poverty Alleviation: Four Case Studies of Financial Cooperation and their Implications.**

### **Sweden: Evaluating the Poverty Impact of Programme Aid**

1. Different definitions of poverty (flexible frameworks)
  - Who are the poor?
  - Aims and policies?
  - Quantitative and Qualitative Analyses
  - Definitions
  - Policies
  - Partners definitions

2. Domestic politics should be central to analysis / evaluation
    - Need for poverty orientation for success
  3. Growth - Broad-based growth
  4. Humility: Poverty policies and evaluation
  5. Accountability without ‘attribution’ joint accountability through joint attribution
  6. Need for data, base line.
    - We should not seek attribution if not possible
    - We should accept that some projects have no direct impact on poverty (intermediary variables)
    - How to evaluate indirect effects
    - Better evaluation poverty impact of macro-economic aid
    - Understand links to poverty of intermediary variables.
- A. Donors and domestic policies
- B. Attribution of accountability
- C. Genuine change takes time (ideas, perceptions)



## **SESSION 1 - GROUP D**

**United Kingdom: Evaluating Poverty Reduction in DFID’s Country Programmes**  
**Asian Development Bank: Special Evaluation Study of the Bank’s Assistance for Poverty Reduction**

**World Bank: The Effectiveness of the World Bank’s Poverty Reduction Strategy: An Evaluation**

### **Need to move to greater coherence among ourselves**

- Develop compendium of alternative methods – merits and de-merits
- harmonization of concepts – issues for evaluation
- more shared learning
- becomes the basis for joint evaluation

### Paradigmatic nature of PR

- Evolving paradigm – ‘moving target’
- Global dimension becoming important
- Do we need to focus on poverty ‘head on’?
- Causes and processes of poverty are many – some more important than others.

### Shift the focus (?attribution)

- The country as the unit of account
- Lose exclusive donor perspective – gain recipient perspective – can we lose attribution?
- Need to balance context specificity with cross-country lessons and global implications
- Need to add up from projects

### Managing/maintaining/supporting evaluation capacity development

- Recipient/NGO/civil society capacity – multiple accountability
- Who ‘owns’/uses evaluation results – building constituency for evaluation
- Developing country level analytical capacity as the infrastructure for evaluation

## **SESSION 2 - Group A**

### **Germany (GTZ): Qualitative Impact Monitoring of Poverty Alleviation Policies and Programmes**

#### **EU: Determining the Impact of the Co-operation Projects Funded by the EU.**

- We examined two approaches to poverty evaluation- clear that one size does not fit all.
- One approach- A national system designed to support national poverty alleviation policy
- A strong planning tool and monitoring
- Other- designed to support need of a donor to understand impact of its programmes on poverty
- What has changed as a result of interventions?
- Information generating tool
- Produces information on qualitative and quantitative aspects of impact / change
- An open window on aspects of poverty changes
- Both raise questions of integration of different approaches to poverty assessment in a given country and among donors involved.
- Link between methodologies and program/project cycle.

## SESSION 2 – GROUP B

### Australia: Assessing the Australian Aid Programme

#### Canada: Poverty, Process, Framework

- Changing global context - tripartite alliance around PRS and agreement from donors creates a new challenge for evaluation (also links with S21)
- Putting the country at the centre means much more than government - must be inclusive of PS, CS and reflect voices of the poor
- Evaluation capacity must be embedded in governance FFW, aligned with institutional capabilities and with strategy. Need to avoid simplistic assessments of “ownership”.
- Request creation of a repository of methods/approaches discussed here along with information on agency strategies/policies and principles for poverty reduction
- Security
- Opportunity
- Empowerment

PR STRATEGY	
PARTNERSHIPS	
COMPETENCES (PERFORMANCE)	
• COUNTRY	• INNOVATION
• PS	• CREATIVITY
• CS	• PRUDENCE
• DONORS	• PROBITY
• ACADEMICS	• SELECTIVITY
ALIGNMENT / CONSISTENCY / COORDINATION	

## SESSION 2 – GROUP C

### Germany (GTZ: Gsaenger): Poverty Impact Monitoring Unit (PIMU), Sri Lanka

### Germany (GTZ: Ojha): Impact Monitoring Unit: A GTZ Approach to Improve Evaluation Capacity in Nepal

#### a) Linkage to decision making

- generating greater recognition of the importance of reaching the poor (goal)
- local evaluation alliances can inform decentralised decision making
- identification of results/experience as a prerequisite for policy/programmes

#### b) Involvement of poor people

- process monitoring important to analyse whether the poor are involved

- working with organisations that represent the poor
- variety of methods (monitoring)

### **c) Scaling up from area/project-based to country level**

- understanding development changes and impact on poor people requires local level analysis
- complementarity and dialogue between different levels
- “scaling out”

## **SESSION 2 – GROUP D**

**Netherlands: A policy evaluation of the Dutch International Co-operation Programme in Mali: How to assess policy congruence in the field of poverty reduction?**

### **UNDP: Evaluative Research Programme in Poverty Alleviation**

The Dutch paper asked, ‘What type of evaluation is needed for ‘policy congruence’? This would include the following:

1. Data of poverty for analysis, including:
  - macro assessments
  - causes
  - constraints to reduction at all levels
  - an efficient monitoring and evaluation system
2. Partnership and co-ordination.
3. Strengthened local capacity for evaluation, and perhaps analysis.
4. Related factors, including quality documentation and a quality monitoring system.

The UNDP paper emphasised the need for responsive, client-oriented information and timeliness.

## **SESSION 3 - GROUP B**

### **EXPANDING CONCEPT AND IMPROVEMENTS FOR EVALUATIONS**

OECD/DAC Definition is helpful.

differing concepts unavoidable for evaluation

poverty definition contextual depending on level:

- national
- local
- international

Poverty focus / entry points is design issue.

Evaluation to ask right questions

Upscaling issue

- facilitates looking at ‘forest’ rather than ‘trees’.
- brings up issues of sectoral / national significance.
- identifies gaps, overlaps, policy inadequates

What is required

- upscaled design (prog. / sector approach)
- common understanding of issues among partners.

**DOES NOT EXCLUDE NEED FOR PROJECT EVALUATION.**

Partnership:

- among all stakeholders (government, donors, civil society etc.)
- focus on developmental change.
- national ownership of developmental strategy / objectives.
- mutual trust
- conscious effort
- some pilot beginning and learn from these what works and what doesn't.

**EASIER SAID THAN DONE**

- Seeing the manifestations of poverty
- Understanding the causes of poverty

<b>Country</b>	<b>Donor</b> <i>(individual and collective)</i>
1. Pro-poor policies <i>(relevance to causes)</i>	Country Strategy <i>(relevance to pro-poor policies)</i>
2. Conducive environment democracy, rule of law, good governance	Projects programmes relevance, complementarity
3. Coherent strategies	Projects and programmes Relevance and complementarity

- effectiveness of program and projects
- impact: perceived, measured, assessed

**SESSION 3 – GROUP C**

Q Individual evaluations will be more expensive than joint evaluations because of multiplicity.

A Joint evaluations can also be expensive, as can take a lot of time to achieve consensus. Need to see which is more efficient.

Q Does the partner really want to be in the driver's seat?

A Partner countries have little demand for evaluation. We must at least get them in the co-driver's seat

Q Are there good examples of partners evaluating what the different donors are offering, and what their opinions are of our own policy contexts?

A (No Comment)

Q There are incalculable costs of NOT doing joint evaluations e.g., opportunity costs of not learning



### ***Other points***

- Partnership is more important because comprehensive analyses needed, as well as ownership (important that partnership starts from the start).
- Partnership/joint evaluation is the ultimate goal, but there are several intermediate approaches.
- There are few ‘partner-driven’ evaluations, but at least partners should be in the ‘co-driver’s seat’.
- Practical and pragmatic approach to involve all relevant stakeholders in the appropriate parts of evaluation.
- Different levels of evaluation require different types of participation
- High transaction cost - how do we reduce this cost?

### **SESSION 3 – GROUP D**

#### **1. POVERTY CONCEPTS**

- There already exist a wide range of concepts/indicators. No need to make more.
- MAYBE DAC poverty network should propose common definition (UNDP definition?)

(NB Not all projects have to have direct poverty impact)

#### **2. HIGHER LEVELS**

- Approaches/tools exist, but need poverty focus (missing bits?)
- Do need to continue project evaluation but may need wider context

#### **3. PARTNERSHIP**

- Joint Evaluation: Must be common base, constraints but can be overcome (pro-active). Can propagate.
- Government/Civil Society Involvement: A challenge to be confronted?

## **Annex 4: Discussants' Comments**

### **Discussants panel – Day 1**

#### **Robert Picciotto (World Bank)**

How do we demonstrate that aid is reducing poverty? This is the crucial question that we did not deal with, and that we seem to be uncomfortable with. Five issues underlie our uneasiness:

- Not all of us accept that poverty reduction has been fully endorsed as the overarching goal by the donor community. We need to come to terms with this development.
- Our evaluative frameworks lag behind the general development community about what it takes to achieve poverty reduction. Here too, we need to catch up with the general consensus which has been achieved on issues such as policies, institutions, capacity building, empowerment, etc.
- As an institution ourselves, we have been caught in the 'project' mindset of the past. We urgently need to move to a higher level of evaluation; national, and even global, policies and institutions.
- In solving the problem of attribution, we need to have a less fragmented approach. Development partners are jointly responsible for development outcomes while having distinct accountabilities for performance. Allocation of tasks among partners must reflect comparative advantage.
- This implies joint evaluation, for which we have no appetite. We need to create the demand, not just wait for it. We need to create a framework that outlines reciprocal obligations for results, but distinct accountabilities. This involves partnership with not just governments, but civil society and the private sector as well. Where governments are not interested in the goals of poverty reduction, we should move elsewhere.

#### **Jean De Rette (USA)**

There are three points I have to make:

- Fundamental to our work is a general understanding of what poverty reduction means, and what this objective demands. This happens in a changing environment, which demands that we refine our evaluation procedures. Important areas need to be identified on which we focus, such as institutions. Who, what, and at what level are we targeting our evaluation? These questions cannot be answered unless we are clear on our objectives. Our methodologies also need to shift to achieve a balance between quantitative and qualitative assessment. Qualitative data will give us more emphasis on cultural and contextual issues.
- We face the challenge of engaging nationals in evaluation, at both grassroots and government levels. This requires capacity building. Joint evaluations are important, but they are an alternative rather than a panacea.
- On the question of attribution, we will always be accountable to our own public. We need to be able to show them the links between programmes and the goals agencies have been set by their governments.

## **Rob Van Den Berg (Netherlands)**

I have two observations, a question and a prediction:

- Observation: As evaluators, we are all very professional, attempting to ground our work in thorough, scientific methodologies. Our response to the challenges we face is to make our methodology more sophisticated, and there may be a tendency to unite it in a general 'theory of development'. I propose we focus instead on the 'story of development'. Questions such as attribution can be better tackled in a historical perspective. Our interest then becomes the logic of narrative rather than an encompassing theory.
- Question: We are told failure cannot be accepted. But development is a risky business. With this attitude we will end up only investing in 'safe' projects, which will have low returns. Are these not less interesting than 'risky' projects, which if they succeed could yield high returns?
- Observation: A shift in focus is necessary from policy formulation that takes place within the confines of the donor community. We must be able to address the problems of poverty, not the priorities of our own parliaments. The general development community has adopted principles of recipient participation, but we are still evaluating according to our own governments' priorities. We too must take on this principle, even if it takes time to put it into practice.
- Prediction: We have spoken of competitive evaluation. This already exists in private industry, known as 'benchmarking', and it is only a matter of time before we do the same.

### **Q (Neil Thin)**

The World bank is aiming for a 100% success rate, and JICA claim they have already achieved it. Will such emphasis on ratings not result in risk aversion and give perverse incentives that have adverse influences on poverty focus?

### **A (Robert Picciotto)**

If we regard success as professionalism, or 'total quality management', and evaluate the entire portfolio rather than individual programmes, then full success is possible.

### **Q (Arjan de Haan)**

It is not realistic to assume project managers have the factors that determine success under their control. Will they not then attribute the wrong factors?

### **A (Robert Picciotto)**

The issue is not the performance of the task manager, but performance on a corporate level. We don't take risks if they are uncalculated. We believe that we can evaluate accurately if they have potentially high returns, i.e. if they are 'good risks'.

## Annex 5: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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