



ROOM DOCUMENT NO. 4

DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation

*WORKSHOP ON EVALUATION OF
DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FOR
POVERTY REDUCTION*

*Submitted by
the United Kingdom*

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Workshop on Evaluation of Development Assistance for Poverty Reduction

Introduction

1. At the 30th meeting of the DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation held in May 1998, Members considered the DAC working paper entitled 'Marshalling Expertise to Reduce Poverty: The Contribution of DAC Subsidiary Bodies' (DCD/DAC(98)18). Two key issues were discussed:

- ways of sharing lessons on methods and approaches to evaluation of development assistance for poverty reduction
- synthesis and dissemination of findings and experiences from evaluations of development assistance for poverty reduction.

2. The United Kingdom has offered to host a seminar or workshop on approaches and methods to evaluation of development assistance for poverty reduction. Arrangements for this are the subject of this paper. Complementing this initiative, the Chair and the Secretariat have undertaken to develop proposals for synthesis of relevant evaluation findings and experiences. The methodology workshop may provide a convenient opportunity to take forward preparations for work on the synthesis.

3. This work is set in the context of rising interest in and commitment to provision of development assistance for poverty reduction, following the Copenhagen Declaration and the DAC's 'Shaping the 21st Century Strategy'. The DAC has established an Informal Network on Poverty Reduction which has commissioned a scoping study to help it to focus its agenda. The study will report early in 1999. The World Bank's Operations and Evaluation Department will hold a workshop in June on evaluation and poverty reduction. Poverty reduction will also be the theme of the World Bank's 'World Development Report 2001', currently under preparation. Preparations for the 5th anniversary of the Copenhagen Declaration are also in hand. Meanwhile, several Members are conducting evaluation studies in the field of poverty reduction which will report in the next year or two. It is therefore timely, in 1999, to take stock of approaches to the evaluation of development assistance for poverty reduction and of the findings and lessons emerging from such evaluations.

Some questions

4. Comments on any aspect of this paper will be most welcome. In considering the proposed arrangements for the methodological workshop, Members may wish to give their attention to some specific questions:

- Are the objectives and outputs satisfactory? Do they provide adequate scope to factor in discussion of the proposed synthesis of evaluation findings and experience, or for relevant prospective activities?

- Are there further issues or topics members would like to include? Which issues should be given priority?
- Members are invited to submit case studies outlining the methods they have used. Would any other kind of input be helpful?
- It is proposed that evaluators from southern partner countries should participate in the workshop. Will Members nominate and sponsor southern delegates? Do Members have views on how the participation of southern delegates could be structured in order to be fully effective?
- Are members content with the provisional date for the workshop of October 1999?
- Are Members content to take planning forward through a Steering Group?

Workshop objectives

5. The proposed *objectives* of the workshop are:

- a) to review and share recent experience of the application of various approaches and methods for evaluation of development assistance for poverty reduction
- b) on this basis, to identify examples of best practice, especially approaches and methods which can contribute to building the evaluation capacity of southern partners (with the emphasis on practical tools, methods and procedures)
- c) to develop an approach for synthesis of relevant evaluation findings and experience and/or evaluation work in prospect.

6. It is expected that the conclusions of the workshop will help to inform evaluation programmes and relevant capacity building work being undertaken by Members. Specific *Outputs* from the workshop could include:

- a) a note of workshop proceedings, including conclusions regarding best practice and new approaches, and guidance for their application; implications for training and capacity-building; and follow up activities;
- b) a note of relevant conclusions for consideration by Members of the Informal Network on Poverty Reduction;
- c) publication of workshop papers;

- d) a plan for synthesis of relevant evaluation findings and experience; and/or for future evaluation work in this field.

Issues and topics

7. To ensure a well focused discussion, the workshop should focus on a limited number of significant methodological issues. members are invited to propose topics for discussion and indicate priorities. A list of possible topics might include the following:

- a) type of development intervention or strategy evaluated: whether directly or indirectly poverty reducing (in other terms: 'focused', 'inclusive', or 'enabling');
- b) unit of analysis and comparison (e.g. project; sector programme, including sector investment programmes; country programme; regional portfolio); also relevant here is the type of development assistance (e.g. technical assistance, programme aid, capital aid) and channel of assistance (e.g. bilateral; multilateral; NGO);
- c) type and source of information on poverty reduction, including the use of various kinds of indicators at different levels: e.g. whether qualitative or quantitative; whether from primary or secondary sources; use of graphical or observational data, including remotely sensed data;
- d) stakeholder analysis for evaluation: identification of evaluation clients, users and other stakeholders (including recipients, beneficiaries and, specifically, various groups of poor people); balancing lesson learning and accountability requirements; dealing with sensitive issues and political concerns.
- e) participatory approaches: extent of involvement of various stakeholders (again, with specific regard to poor people); ownership and control of evaluation processes and products; joint evaluation; evaluation methods promoting capacity building, empowerment, the exercise of poor people's rights, and ensuring that their voices are heard;
- f) design of co-ordinated programmes for evaluation of poverty reduction: e.g. reconciling use of formal models and heuristic frameworks with rapid, relaxed and participatory methods; 'triangulation' using diverse sources of information;
- g) comparison of various evaluation traditions, and the potential of new and innovative approaches and methods, including use of new technologies. This would require critical assessment of new tools, methods and procedures.

Workshop programme

8. It is proposed that the workshop would last two full days, focusing on methodological issues and relevant follow up activities. A further half day of discussions, under the direction of the Chair, would be devoted to preparations for undertaking a synthesis of evaluation experience relating to development assistance for poverty reduction.

9. It is proposed that a professional facilitator would be engaged to support the exchange of Members' views and experience. Members are requested to recommend suitable persons for this role to the Secretariat.

10. The workshop should provide a significant opportunity for dialogue with delegates from southern partner countries on the issues raised including, in particular, the implications of methodological choices for local ownership and capacity. It is proposed that Members of the Working Party should invite and sponsor southern delegates with appropriate interests and experience to attend the workshop. It will be important to ensure that the composition of the group of southern delegates attending is well balanced, and that the delegates have the opportunity to participate fully in the workshop discussions.

Preparatory activities and documentation

11. To provide a solid foundation for the workshop, it is proposed that the Secretariat will circulate, well in advance, an issues paper and bibliographic note. The United Kingdom has offered to assist in preparation of these documents.

12. Members are also invited to submit relevant papers to the Secretariat for distribution and discussion at the workshop. Especially welcome will be case studies outlining experience in using specific methods and approaches for evaluation of effectiveness of development assistance in reducing poverty.

13. Further background documents could include the report on the 1995 DAC seminar on 'Methods for Evaluation of Poverty Oriented Aid Interventions'; and the report of the scoping study commissioned by the DAC Informal Network on Poverty Reduction.

Logistics

14. The United Kingdom will be happy to host this workshop at a UK venue to be arranged.

15. As a number of other activities are scheduled in the first part of the year, it is suggested that the meeting should be held in the second half of 1999, provisionally October.

16. Budget and funding requires clarification.

Planning

17. It will be helpful to set up an Steering Group of interested Members to assist with taking forward planning of the workshop by providing advice and support throughout the planning stages. The Group is open to all Members: those who wish to be involved should inform the UK delegation and the Secretariat.