



# THE UGANDA NATIONAL NGO FORUM

## POVERTY MONITORING AND EVALUATION BY CIVIL SOCIETY: UGANDA CASE

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23<sup>rd</sup> June 2003

# POVERTY MONITORING

## Key Concepts

### Monitoring

- Monitoring as a word originates from Latin and is derived from the word “warn”.
- It is an integral part of management tasks concerned with observing both the internal and external project environments, checking on activities, their context, results and impact.
- It is that continuous co-coordinated, systematic and periodic surveillance of the physical implementation of the project to ensure that inputs, activities, outputs as well as any other relevant external factors are proceeding according to plan.
- Monitoring is the provision of information and use of that information to enable management to assess progress of implementation and to take timely decisions to see that progress is as scheduled.<sup>1</sup>

### Key Concepts Cont....

### Evaluation

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<sup>1</sup> Lury and Casley (1980)

- Evaluation on the other hand assesses the effects and impact of programmes/project performance, focusing on the analysis of the progress made towards achievement of the programme/project's objectives. It is a key tool for:
  - Enhancing the management of ongoing programmes and projects;
  - Improving the preparation of new programmes and projects;
  - Providing inputs into broader programme or thematic evaluations.

## **THE UGANDA PRSP/PEAP**

- The Poverty Eradication Action Plan (which also became Uganda's PRSP) was launched 1997 as PEAP 1. There has since been a revision in 2000 and one on going in 2002-2003.
- Uganda has also already qualified for new loans Poverty Reduction Support Credit mainly to support in urban water supply and sanitation and Poverty Reduction Growth Facility (PRSC and PRGF) under the PRSP.
- Civil Society participation in the formation and monitoring of the Poverty Action Fund (PAF) (on-going since 1998).
- Therefore there is sufficient track record to base lessons on and learning from Uganda is instructive for other countries.

## Lessons from Uganda

1. When Government takes a strategic decision to invite non-state actors to participate, the chances of success are greatly enhanced. This is because participation is a power-sharing (power-ceding) process, which is easiest when Government accepts proactively as opposed to grudgingly coming along in order to meet externally imposed loan conditions.
2. Participation has far reaching implications because once people taste 'power', they want more and more of it. Therefore, it should not be entered into lightly.
3. In Uganda, when civil society was invited to participate in the PRSP, it accepted the invitation with a lot of excitement and expectation. The concepts of 'participation and ownership' are very appealing to civil society. However, it has come to pass that while helping to significantly improve relations between civil society and the Government of Uganda, the 'participation process' has had serious limitations, including, reluctance on the part of the World Bank to go all the way with opening up key macroeconomic policies for discussion.

## **Lessons Learned Cont...**

4. Ugandan NGOs now believe that while they were invited to provide input on the development of poverty reducing goals (i.e. government expenditure and social policy), they could not participate in the nature of macroeconomic policies to achieve these goals.
5. More worrying than the issue of partial participation is the fact that the Poverty Reduction Support Credit (PRSC) and the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF), the new loans supposed to support the poverty reducing goals created in a participatory process, do not learn from previous structural adjustment programmes (SAPs).
6. The new loans lack an assessment or corrective strategy to avoid the previous negative social impacts of SAP. They also fail to build on Uganda's obligation to its citizens on gender, basic social services, public information, special rights of the vulnerable groups, etc. particularly if these impinge on the basic operative assumptions of the macro-economic framework prescribed by the IMF and the World Bank. These assumptions include: Neoliberal policies lead to higher rates of economic growth; higher economic growth rates alone

## **Lessons Learned cont....**

translate into poverty reduction; and ‘Voices of the poor’ offer no new direction for macroeconomic policy prescriptions and loan condition.

7. As a result, many CSOs are discouraged to see no real change in the new loans, despite the word “poverty reduction” in all their titles. The loans contain policies CSOs did not call for during PEAP consultations. For example, they did not call for the privatization of the last state-owned national bank, further trade liberalization, the privatization of water utility, which CSOs believe will negatively impact the health goals, nor the privatization of agricultural extension services.
8. The continuation of these highly controversial elements in the new loans has led many groups in Uganda to ask, “What good are PRSPs if the SAPs stay the same?” What good are Participatory Social Impact Assessments (PSIAs) if SAPRI findings are not taken seriously? and to conclude that in many ways, participation in PRSPs is engineering consent for structural adjustment policies, a mechanism for cooptation of development activists. This has to change. These are aspects of the PRS that should be open to debate.

## **POVERTY MONITORING**

### **What is Poverty Monitoring**

- Continuous assessments/investigations of the levels, changes and causes of poverty; including the success or failure of public actions/interventions intended to reduce poverty.
- Much broader than just monitoring our own individual projects/programmes and should extend to cover the overall condition or welfare of a target constituency.
- The Institutional Framework for Poverty Monitoring in Uganda
- Poverty Monitoring in Uganda is a process that is not restricted to a single set of arrangements.

## **POVERTY MONITORING cont...**

- Many institutions, organisations and departments have a stake in the process and are through their own mandates, generating a lot of useful information for tracking poverty trends in the country.

### **Traditional Institutions (See diagram attached).**

- Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development/Poverty Monitoring Unit
- Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS)
- Sectoral Ministries
- District Authorities
- Other non-traditional institutions include: the IGGS Office, office of the Prime Minister, Civil Society Organisations including CBOs and Development Partners (donors).

## **POVERTY MONITORING cont....**

### **The Uganda Poverty Monitoring Network**

- Established in 2000 to strengthen cooperation and coordination between the different stakeholders.
- Overall purpose of the Network is to exploit synergies between stakeholder institutions and minimize waste through unnecessary duplication.

### **Levels of Poverty Monitoring**

- Inputs
- Outputs
- Outcomes
- Impact

## **Tools and Instrument for Monitoring**

### a) Field Observations:

These may be in form of checks, inspections or patrols monitored as the project or its activities are in progress. They may be surprise or planned in nature depending on the monitoring body and the situation.

### b) Periodic Reports

Depending on the project, the Management system and the Organisational culture, such reports could be daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, half-yearly, annually, etc. The reports may take the nature of:

Descriptive reports –which narrate the situation as it appears.

Analytical reports - which attempt to reveal the cause and effect relationships including the opinions of the author.

### c) Network Analysis Technique (UBOS)

## **Monitoring Tools Cont...**

May also be used as a tool for monitoring project performance/progress. It reveals how the project activities had been broken into tasks/jobs with details. The tasks are collected and sequenced indicating the starting and ending points/time. It organises the project's activities in a logical, technological and administrative convenient manner/order. The network plans may serve as work plans, or implementation schedules for projects. It ensures that activities are being undertaken as scheduled and inputs are delivered at the right time.

### **d) The Logical Framework**

It is a tool, which is centred on objectives oriented planning. The method in a way structures the main elements of a project, highlighting linkages between the projects objectives, intended inputs at different levels, activities and outputs. It shows the project plan or the project theory of action, indicating various levels of project intentions including the goal, purpose as well as the means of verification that objectives are being met. It also reveals the indicators that will guide the implementation process and measure the levels of success.

## **Monitoring Tools cont....**

#### e) The Work Plan

This projects out expectations for project results revealing each of the project's technical activity by time and deliverable. It is a map showing how activities are married to time and is used to determine whether the deliverables, which were planned to be accomplished by a certain date, are actually realised.

Planning in this respect looks at 3 essential things, i.e. resources, objectives and the means of using those resources to achieve the objectives. To achieve meaningful results the work must be done within a time range determined by a set of things (inputs) including manpower, funds, materials, and equipment.

## **Achievements of Monitoring by Civil Society Organisations in Uganda**

- Input from Members of Parliament was considered very weak in the last revision held in 2000. As a result of this, the NGO Forum organized a workshop for MPs to discuss ways in which they could contribute to the PEAP revision process. As a follow up to this workshop, a PEAP dissemination and review programme was jointly undertaken with MPs in seven districts. Key issues arising from this programme include; the need to improve accountability and transparency mechanisms for poverty reduction by establishing a coalition for checks and balances comprising RDCs, NGOs, CBOs, FBOs, Members of Parliament and the Independent Media. Other issues include, the need to undertake peaceful channels to conflict resolution for effective security and poverty reduction, the need to reinforce a regulatory framework for Micro-Finance Institutions to protect the interests of the poor and prevent their further exploitation, among others.
- With support of World Learning Inc, a one-day training was held in Kampala attended by 38 participants drawn from CSO, the media and donor agencies. This training focused on Outcome-Impact monitoring focusing on flows as opposed to stocks. Three key monitoring tools; User Satisfaction Cards,

**Achievements (Continued...)**

- Expenditure Analysis Instrument and a Check List were introduced as mechanisms CSOs could use to track the implementation of poverty reduction interventions as a critical feedback on the impact of implementation of programmes. As a follow up to this, a Constituency-Based Monitoring programme is planned with CSO representatives on Sector Working Groups to implement and develop key “people’s indicators” for poverty monitoring and input for PEAP Revision.
- An important role Civil Society Organisations play in relation to Government is that of monitoring government performance in delivering services.
- Notable examples were found, both at District level, such as the Poverty Action Fund monitoring Committees by the Uganda Debt Network, National Election Monitoring Group of election monitors, human rights monitors and Forum for Women in Democracy on gender budget allocations.
- Details of the monitoring processes are available.
- The National Poverty Forum, which is managed by the Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR) in conjunction with the Ministry of Finance. The

### **Achievements (continued..)**

- Uganda National NGO Forum has been encouraged to undertake research work that could be discussed in the National Poverty Forum.
- Monitoring has been facilitated by the increased provision of information by the Government, such as the publication in the media of grant releases to local authorities and requirements that local authorities declare the funds received for various sectors, particularly for education services.
- Some level of informal monitoring by Civil Society Organisations is also carried out at district and lower levels of local government but it is not yet institutionalized. This is particularly so in areas of human rights abuses and corruption. Examples: Teso Anti Corruption Coalition working in partnership with UDN and Anti Corruption Coalition of Uganda.
- CSOs find the work of the Inspector General of Government facilitative, particularly at regional level. However, these offices are still few and far between, not easy to reach by simple people who may nevertheless have complaints to make.

## **Challenges/Constraints of Monitoring by Civil Society Organisations in Uganda**

- Despite the achievements above, some Civil Society Organisations showed lack of awareness of the important of monitoring while others, especially at district level were unaware of a potential role of civil society in this area.
- Some CSOs also admitted that while they saw the need to monitor, they were, on occasions, too fatigued by their attempts to influence policy formulation to be able to address the implementation stage of the same policy process.
- CSOs also faced a dilemma when they tried to monitor those on whom they depend for registration. In one example a Civil Society Organisation had its office shut when it attempted to speak against corruption.
- On the other hand, however, Government officials made frequent complaints to the effect that CSOs were themselves not transparent and were sometimes corrupt. This was mentioned repeatedly at district level, with CSOs accused of being 'briefcase'.

**Challenges Continued....**

- Government officials did not see the reason why they should submit to such CSOs for scrutiny when they were not open to the same scrutiny.
- M & E should influence decision-making. As of now it is more of an academic exercise.
- Other challenges include funding, expertise and access to information.
- Monitoring requires funding but the sector wide approach, which requires CSOs to receive from the same coffers, undermines efforts to access resources for monitoring.
- The lack of expertise when CSOs carry out monitoring as third party technical reviewers creates a lot of short falls. CSO do not normally get access to the work plans, logical frameworks, and network analysis and even then most may not know how to interpret them.
- Experience has also shown that most CSOs are able to carry out proportion completed monitoring which of course is easier for construction projects.

### **Challenges continued...**

Concrete information is usually derived. When it comes to projects like access to health, education, and water etc.

- This is usually not easy due to lack of expertise and again CSOs do not normally get access to information like the Workplans, logical frameworks, network analysis techniques and even when they get them, most may not know how to interpret them.
- A recent survey undertaken to assess the capacity of CSOs in policy analysis showed that 68% of Civil Society Organisations have interest in monitoring and evaluation but only 31% have the capacity to carry out monitoring and evaluation. 57% have the interest to analyse policies but only 20% have the capacity.
- Monitoring and evaluation of funds is still under self-initiative and realization and not motivated by government. Other findings included:
  - Low-level capacity of most CBOs and NGOs.
  - Inadequate funds
  - Inadequate resources and facilities e.g. telephone, email and Internet.

### **Challenges Continued....**

- Inadequate information on key policy issues.
- Low-level advocacy skills.



## Way Forward

- A lot of present assessments of poverty reduction interventions have focused more on infrastructure (stocks) and less on contributions of these to poverty reduction (flows). The NGO Forum is due to hold a Constituency-Based Monitoring exercise to focus more on the outcomes/beneficiary assessments of poverty reduction interventions as a critical feedback mechanism to policy makers.
- The Uganda National NGO Forum is planning the following:
  - Sensitizing NGOs on international policies, agreements and other development issues.
  - Training NGOs in monitoring skills, developing monitoring indicators and tolls for effective participation and influencing of policy.
  - Streamlining roles and responsibilities with a view to exploiting synergies of different stakeholders.
- There is need to bring Civil Society Organisations to the front of holding government accountable through appropriate training and exposure to

## Way Forward Continued...

relevant skills and information and also through access to the necessary funds and other resources.

