Report Working Group Reconstruction Tender

Monitoring & Evaluation
Meeting | 10 July 2014

Summary

The Reconstruction Tender Working Group of the Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law organized a meeting on Monitoring and Evaluation on the 10th of June 2014. The meeting aimed at a) sharing the experiences and indicators of organizations as they are preparing for the mid-term evaluations of their RT projects, b) trying to identify commonalities and possible overarching indicators and c) proposing a number of follow up actions among the various organizations and/or within the Working Group.

The participants in the meeting were clustered in three thematic groups:
1 The **"Statebuilding cluster"**, which included the organization that had worked under the "Institutional Development" Theory of Change during the previous meeting
2 The **"Accountability and Dialogue cluster"**, which included the organization that had worked under the "Root Causes / Justice" and the "Healthy Relationships and Connections" Theory of Change during the previous meeting
3 And the **"Basic services and economic opportunities cluster"**, which included the organization that had worked under the "Economics" and the "Basic Services" Theory of Change during the previous meeting

During the meeting participants made presentations about their various mid-term review frameworks and/or ongoing M&E processes and methodologies. These presentations included discussions about strategic and practical aspects for the programmes and their most important indicators. Based on these presentations the three groups had a closer look at similar indicators across programmes. They then discussed how and whether they could be clustered or aggregated in a meaningful manner.

Main conclusions from the three groups

a. The indicators as they currently exist could not be meaningfully clustered into more limited set of indicators. This was the case for most programmes because this would not adequately reflect the variety of 1) contexts in which the interventions take place, 2) strategic approaches chosen, 3) levels of interventions at which programmes are active nor 4) types of indicators that were identified for the programmes.
Where this appears possible and meaningful however (e.g. Cluster 3 Basic services and economic opportunities) further exchanges and joint evaluations would be useful.
b. Collaboration at this stage could most practically take place at the operational level of M&E. This could include joint evaluations to learn from each other, identify the most meaningful indicators across programmes, and inform common researches and areas of work as well as reducing costs.

Suggested next steps for the RT WG on M&E related issues

On M&E frameworks

a. In depth presentation/analysis of different overarching M&E frameworks such as the 5C model or the M&E framework/ or policy (to be) developed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

On indicators

b. Organize follow-up exchanges to consider how project outcomes and related indicators of various organizations can be clustered in common, overarching outcomes and overarching indicators for various projects or project clusters (e.g. as identified by Cluster 2: Accountability and dialogue)

c. Increase sharing and learning about different approaches, methodologies used and available know-how for measuring indicators that organizations have developed. This was seen as particularly relevant for 1. indicators that would fall under similar outcomes as identified by the relevant clusters, 2. indicators linked to conflict reduction, conflict sensitivity and dialogue as well as 3. perceptions of main stakeholders.

d. Organize a joint evaluation amongst relevant organizations / projects within one cluster a.o. to help identify which indicators have (not) been working and learn from each other.

On strategic and programmatic approaches and exchanges

a. Organizations working in the same geographic and/or thematic area to have more regular exchanges, in particular if and when they encounter difficulties in measuring indicators in order to discuss, learn from each other and share their respective ToC's.

b. Organize exchanges about the different strategic approaches and entry points of organizations in achieving common outcomes as identified by the relevant clusters;

c. Organize a meeting to discuss the results of the MTR's aiming to assess if results from the various MTRs support each other. Based on this evidence a follow-up discussion on (usefulness and relevance) of indicators and ToC's could be organized.

d. More research is needed to understand and measure if and how basic services delivery increases stability, which is a central point in the TOCs of all the organizations working in the basic services and economic opportunities cluster.

The WG will be considering those suggestions and decide on follow-up activities as a WG. Individual organizations and clusters were also encouraged to actively take forward ideas that were seen as most useful in relevant groupings and organize follow ups themselves.

Representatives from the Dutch MFA also indicated that they were in the process of designing an M&E system or monitoring protocol for possible future Reconstruction Tenders. CSOs will be provided with opportunities to comment on these, e.g. through the Reconstruction Tender Working Group. They are considering a system which would aggregate outcomes and result areas as well as aggregate indicators. CSOs, in their programs could place themselves in some of those result areas and choose the most relevant indicators, next to (possibly) their own indicators.

Statebuilding Cluster

Hivos, Oxfam Novib, VNG, Impunity Watch, CARE, Saferworld

The preparations for the mid-term review (MTR) varied depending on the delays faced while starting the programs as well as the, at times major, changes that took place on the ground (e.g. South Soudan). Most organizations faced delays and were only considering the methodologies for their MTR now. Differences included having internal or external M&E/MTR processes and using existing M&E systems or having (additional) indicators that relate to these programs particularly. To deal with the complexity of a range of partners with their own M&E and indicators, Hivos for example is developing on a Theory of Change (ToC) for their program and will use this ToC to focus their mid-term review. While Oxfam will be doing an internal MTR, Saferworld has hired a consultant. For Saferworld this is also a capacity building exercise to develop in-house capacities in the future. Methodologies used will cover focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, score cards as well as, for some, including groups that were not targeted by the interventions. Practical limitations in the M&E processes included the unfolding security situation on the ground (mainly South Soudan), which will probably not allow external consultants to visit some programs/projects.

While all organizations had carried out baselines for their projects, not all of them were equally relevant for the MTR because of at times drastic changes on the ground. Linked to this the issue of measuring behavioral changes and link them to the actual programmatic interventions was identified as an ongoing challenge.

Choice of Indicators and possibility of grouping them

The group discussed how organizations had come up with their various indicators and percentages. This differed per organization, CARE basing it on staff experience and knowledge but revising them after the development of a baseline.

It was suggested that transaction and actual costs for undertaking M&E could be decreased by having more operational coordination on M&E among the organizations supported through the Reconstruction Tender. Such a cooperation could for example develop around the sending out of people to collect data or the pulling together of research and sample questions.

After discussions the group concluded that the development of one indicator was not practical because state building and enhancing capacity and legitimacy of governments is a very broad topic and that, looking at their respective programs, it was felt this could not be captured in one indicator. However indicators could possibly be clustered along a number of definitions, for example: qualitative vs. quantitative indicators, the 5C model or Safer world's model grouping indicators along capacities, experiences and perceptions.

Suggestions for next steps

To look more in depth at different M&E frameworks and systems: e.g. the 5C model, the M&E framework/ or policy developed by the Ministry.

Accountability and Dialogue Cluster

GPPAC, ZOA, NIMD, Oxfam Novib, SFCG

Preparations for the MTR also varied within this Group. This depended i.e. on number and nature of projects and implementation timelines. E.g. Oxfam Novib has three projects under the RT, to achieve some alignment and foster their own learning they nominated a lead person to help consider the results of the different approaches (advocacy focused; linking CSOs to design a roadmap to peace with linked granting of for the implementation of this roadmap; peacebuilding through livelihood and WASH). Organizations indicated that they already had ongoing monitoring in their projects, including the collection of outcome indicators.

Choice of Indicators and possibility of grouping them

Approaches for the MTR varied between exclusively internal or external or a mix of both. Methodologies are not clear cut yet with e.g. SFCG designing them between their M&E and program teams and expected to use more qualitative methodologies, possibly with small-scale surveys with direct beneficiaries, while NIMD expects to have more quantitative indicators for their project. GPPAC has a regular monitoring of mostly qualitative indicators, which had been refined towards mid-term outcomes and will provide internal technical support and capacity building to bring the results together in a coherent way for the program. ZOA, which has 4 projects in 7 countries has designed one global TOR for all four internal midterm reviews with country project staff adapting them to the project/country. ZOA Netherlands will lead the process and they will have M&E staff from various countries teams analyzing other countries. The objective here is to both have a more critical analysis and to increase learning by having a common analysis across the teams. The quantitative survey data is regularly collected, while the MTR will focus on qualitative data collection and learning. They will look at the question of relevance, efficiency, sustainability and adaptability to the evolving context. A regional results sharing session will be organized around a synthesis report with key findings from all projects.

The group identified **three common areas of outcomes** (although activities and indicators are different per project):
(Creating/sustaining) Multi-stakeholder platforms and interactions
- Influencing policy- and decision-making
- Supporting constructive engagements at community level

Suggestions for next steps

- See how respective project indicators can contribute to the three common outcome listed above
- Hold discussions/exchanges about our different approaches to measuring indicators that fall under a common outcomes
- Hold discussions/exchanges about the different approaches and entry points of the organizations in achieving common outcomes;
- Hold a meeting specifically on methodologies for measuring certain indicators (esp. conflict reduction/conflict sensitivity).

Basic services and economic opportunities cluster

ZOA, Oxfam-Novib, MFA, Spark, Save the Children, Care – Facilitator: Koen Faber

The focus will be on finding commonalities on how the TOCs of the organizations can be supported or adjusted with evidence from the programmes. How can we get a better idea of the outcomes of the interventions? Particularly interesting is if we can find ways to monitor dialogue and agreements, which were identified as important steps in the TOCs that we discussed last time. In order to do so we will make an inventory of the outcome indicators that the various organizations use to discuss what kind of indicators are useful and practical to get more insight in our TOC and impact.

Of the five organizations present one will not carry out an MTR while two will hire a consultant and the others do the monitoring internally. In general the emphasis is put on measuring the direct results of the interventions, the output. There will be less attention for outcomes, but the discussion provided some new thoughts on how to possibly pay more attention to outcomes. For Care baselines and the (to be developed) ToR's will have a major role in developing the MTR. The main focus will be on the number of jobs created (outputs) and not so much on outcome/impact (such as increased solidarity). SPARK's MTR will also focus on outputs mostly. They are in discussion with the UNDP in Yemen to set up a longer term monitoring framework that measures the outcomes. But as for Care they found this

rather difficult. They are working with external agencies to assist in this however. Their MTR also will contribute to improving their ISO standards. With Safe the Children their M&E team will undertake the MTR but consultants are asked to develop the methodology for the review. They also faced difficulties in identifying the "right indicators" to measure their impact on livelihoods but have, for another program, used proxy-indicators for stability as a means to measure impact levels (e.g. percentage of increased knowledge on child protection services). Oxfam-Novib has developed indicators for outcomes around "awareness of conflict resolution mechanisms" e.g. awareness of conflict patterns and their causes as well as dialogue with government. OxN also measures access to food and water, the level of food security and income. The indicators then are a mix of output and outcome level indicators. Methodologies used include more participatory tools like focus groups discussions as well as household interviews and surveys.

ZOA is still planning their MTR but will do it internally with advisors and field teams. They are currently working on an overarching TOR for all 4 projects supported through the RT. The main aim for the MTR is to learn, in particular to learn about the added value of cross border activities and to test the ToC. Outcomes being looked at include inter-tribal access to water services and capacity of local governments.

Listing of indicators

The group shared a number of outcome indicators that they use. The list is not exhaustive, but showed the different aspects that organizations tried to focus on and depend on approaches used. The level of detail varied and it was argued that some outcome level indicators could be used as overarching indicators under which other more precise indicators could be formulated. The list below provides an overview of those indicators:

OUTCOME INDICATORS
Overarching
• Improved sense of security (CARE)
• Conflicts reduced in communities (CARE)
• Increase of confidence in the future (CARE)
• % targeted people who perceive a reduction in the # of violent, water and livelihood related conflicts. (Oxfam-Novib)
• Decrease in # of registered or reported violent conflicts. (Oxfam-Novib)
• Increased legitimacy of government (group 3)
Dialogue
• Increased dialogue between formed groups CSOs & Government institutions. (Oxfam-Novib)
• Shared Knowledge on new/innovative livelihood-economic within communities and between districts lead to dialogue. (SC)
• % of peace committees actively meeting and realized joint activities at the end of the project period. (Oxfam-Novib)
• Action points from local peace agreements, and follow-up. (ZOA in Ethiopia/South Sudan)
• Improved perceptions of identity and shared values. (ZOA)
• 70 % of targeted community members can identify the causes of conflict in their area. (Oxfam-Novib) **
Governance
• Partners and key indicators involved in multi-stakeholder dialogue and policy making and policy making on

job creation and agri-business development attributed to government authorities. (SPARK)
• Job creation is attributed to local and national authority involvement. (SPARK)
• Increased government ability on delivery of basic services for youth (MIF). (SC)
• 70% of government representatives and CSOs who participated in trainings are capable of identifying causes of conflict in their area. (Oxfam-Novib)
• In 60& of institutions local conflict prevention mechanisms are functioning. (Oxfam-Novib)
• Increased application of juvenile justice guidelines enabling rights based treatment of youth. (SC in Sudan)
Economic
• Increased income leading to peace dividend (CARE)
• Existing and new agricultural MSMEs increased production and development of (new) products and/or services. (SPARK)
• Increased market opportunities for women/employment showing income livelihood growth. (SC)
• Reduction of dowry prices. (ZOA)
Basic services
• Increased level of commitment government to allow budgets for TVET institutions. (SC)
• Improved health services – eye care. (ZOA)
• Improved food consumption score (ZOA)
• Increased access to drinking water (ZOA)

The ensuing discussion identified a number of limitations of the monitoring (short term vs longer term, perceptions and knowledge vs action. But participants agreed that the overarching indicators provided a good focus and would allow for some comparison between programs. However the unresolved question was: how to come up with common approaches to measuring these overarching indicators when the contexts are different? It proved to be quite a difficult exercise considering that there are so many variations between the programmes, which makes it hard to come up with actual commonalities. Ideas for follow up therefore were not obvious and need more time to be developed.

Ideas for follow-up

- It would be interesting to investigate if we can find overarching indicator that we all use, recognizing that every organization is using their own methodology to get the results that feed into these indicators.
- Organizations might have 10 indicators on a similar outcome. A joint evaluation could be undertaken to identify which indicators have been working, which ones haven't and learn from each other.
- Organizations working in the same area could be exchanging more, in particular if and when they encounter difficulties with measuring indicators. They could then discuss and learn from each other and share their respective TOCs.
- Increased sharing and learning about approaches, knowledge and methodologies used to measure similar "things" such as perceptions and dialogue.
- More work needs to be undertaken to understand and measure if and how basic services delivery increases stability, which is a central point in the TOCs of all the organizations.
- The results of the MTR's and a discussion on indicators and TOC should be organized. Also to see if the results from the MTRs support each other.

List of participating organizations

CARE
Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
GPPAC
Hivos
Impunity Watch
NIMD
Oxfam-Novib
Saferworld
Save the Children
SFCG
Spark
 VNG
 ZOA
 Double Loop (as facilitator)

Knowledge
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