Helpdesk Research Report: Participatory M&E and Beneficiary Feedback

Description

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Query: Please identify the existing literature on participatory monitoring and evaluation, with a particular emphasis on gaining wide-ranging beneficiary feedback. Comment on the coverage, scalability, risks, benefits and applicability. Enquirer: Aid Effectiveness Team, DFID

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1. Overview
PM&E
Participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) is a general term that refers to a wide range of methods â??where primary stakeholdersâ?¦are active participants, [taking] the lead in tracking and making sense of progress towards achievement ofâ?¦results at the local level, and drawing actionable conclusions?. (Hilhorst and Guijt 2006: 4). Participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) approaches can be traced back to various participatory methodologies from the 1970s and were boosted by the rise of the â??good governance? agenda in the 1990s (Estrella and Gaventa 1998). NGOs such as Oxfam and CARE have led the way in developing PM&E tools for use in community programmes and most major donors have been experimenting with PM&E approaches since the 1980s. Almost all development organisations now include some form of participation in their programmes (Jacobs et al 2010). Although PM&E approaches have been widely promoted by civil society organisations, Jacobs (2010) has argued that â??it is striking that these mechanisms have not been widely applied within development agencies?.

Hilhorst and Gujit (2006) have argued that a PM&E process can enhance efficiency and effectiveness of governance projects, improve the exercise of power (i.e. increase openness, transparency and accountability), enhance the equity of outcomes and increase stakeholder interactions. The literature also highlights several challenges that have held back the practical application of PM&E approaches. Chambers (2007) identifies organisational conservatism as an important barrier to the implementation and adoption of PM&E methods. Vernooy et al (2006) argue that it is difficult to establish sustainable PM&E mechanisms and highlight difficulties of building PM&E onto existing community structures and integrating them into local governance structures and political processes. Jacobs (2005) identifies some risks associated with increasing financial transparency: he argues that it may increase tension between agencies, government and other interest groups. He also states that these risks are likely to be

particular acute in conflict situations or in the early stages of an emergency response.

Pratt and Myhrman?s (2009) survey of NGO and CSO accountability mechanisms argues that while most current initiatives are not methodologically new, there has been a recent drive towards producing â??hands-on? tools that are easy to use. They argue that these tools have tended to stifle â??discussion with and involvement of stakeholders and analysis of what the accountability concept actually entails? (Pratt and Myhrman 2009, 12).

Category

1. Uncategorized

Tags

1. beneficiaries
2. ICT's
3. participation

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