The Katine Challenge: How to analyse 540+ stories about a rural development project

Description

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The Guardian & Barclays funded and AMREF implemented, Katine Community Partnerships Project in Soroti District, Uganda is exceptional in some respects and all too common in others.

It is exceptional in the degree to which its progress has been very publicly monitored since it began in October 2007. Not only have all project documents been made publicly available via the dedicated Guardian Katine website, but resident and visiting journalists have posted more than 540 stories about the people, the place and the project. These stories provide an invaluable in-depth and dynamic picture of what has been happening in Katine, unparalleled by anything else I have seen in any other development aid project.

On the flip side, the project is all too common in the kind of design and implementation problems that have been experienced, along with its fair share of unpredictable and very influential external events, including dramatic turn-arounds in various government policies. Plus the usual share of staffing and contracting problems.

Right now the project has completed its third year of operation and is now heading into the fourth and final year, one more year than originally planned.

I have a major concern. It is during this final year that there will be more knowledge about the project available than ever before, but at the same time its donors, and perhaps various staff within AMREF, will be becoming more interested in other new events appearing over the horizon. For example, the Guardian will cease its intensive journalistic coverage of the project from this month, and attention is now focusing on their new international development website

So, I would like to pose an important challenge to all the visitors to the Monitoring and Evaluation NEWS website, and the associated MandE NEWS email list:

How can the 540+ stories be put to good use? Is there some form of analysis that could be made of their contents, that would help AMREF, the Guardian, Barclays, the people of Katine, and all of us learn more from the Katine project?

In order to help I have uploaded an Excel file listing all the stories since December 2008, with working hypertext links. I will try to progressively extend this list back to the start of the project in late 2007. This list includes copies of all progress reports, review and planning documents that AMREF has given the Guardian to be uploaded onto their website.

If you have any questions or comments please post them below, as Comments to this posting, in the first instance.

What would be useful in the first instance is ideas about plans or strategies for analysing the data. Then volunteers to actually implement one or more of these plans.

PS: My understanding is that the data is by definition already in the public domain, and therefore anyone could make use of it. However, that use should be fair and not for profit. What we should be searching for here are lessons or truths in some form that could be seen as having wider applicability, which are based on sound argument and good evidence, as much as is possible.

Category

1. Uncategorized

Tags

1. Database
2. participation
3. qualitative

Date
30/10/2026
Date Created
11/10/2010
Author
admin