

Dissertation Abstract

Title: Aid Coordination, Competition and Cooperation among UN Organizations for Better Development Results

(開発援助における国連機関間の協調、競争、協力がもたらす
援助効果への影響に関する研究)

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1. Background

The question of “how effective is aid” has been repeatedly raised over the last decades. When the Marshall Plan assistance from the United States to Western Europe after the World War II started as the first form of contemporary development aid, there were few aid providers around the world. As the number of aid providing donors increased, in 1967, already a report by the Commission on International Development pointed out the need to strengthen aid coordination by the donor community. Many of the Paris Declaration principles and commitments, including among others partnership and harmonization were then highlighted in this document. In the 1980s, Morss pointed out that the proliferation of donors and projects was having a negative impact on the major government institutions of developing countries. Government officials at the receiving end of aid were spending too much time and efforts on implementing donor-driven projects, with donors’ own respective agenda and reporting requirements. The need for project consolidation was pointed out with the acknowledgement of its constraint due to the competitive nature of donor interactions. (Morss, 1984)

This was characterized by the Aid-Bombardment Syndrome, in which the sheer volume of resources and numbers of donors, activities, and complex and inconsistent procedural requirements overwhelm the government’s capacity to plan, budget, manage, monitor, and evaluate. (Eriksson, 2001) For instance, in Kenya and Zambia in the mid-1980s, there were about 600 projects supported by 60–70 donors. Since 1975, donor proliferation, on a global scale, has continued almost constantly (Acharya,

et al., 2006) In the phenomena of *proliferation*, not only the number of donors has risen, but also the number of sources and channels of aid have increased faster than the actual volume of aid. (Acharya, et al., 2006, Knack and Rahman, 2003)

Globally, still around 20% of the total population live under poverty line, and poverty reduction is a daunting challenge for the human kind. In 1990s, in the context of increasing regional and internal conflicts globally, aid fatigue, and the trend of New Public Management applied in industrialized countries, there was a push for more effective and efficient aid. As discussed previously, the transaction costs for receiving and implementing aid are often too high for the recipient governments.

2. Objectives

The objective of this research is twofold: to examine the impact of aid coordination on development results within the programmes and activities carried out by the United Nations (UN) system, and to analyze the mechanisms of aid coordination contributing to improved development results. This paper aims to draw practical lessons and policy recommendations to strengthen the aid coordination structure and tools within the UN system and beyond.

3. Case studies

Case studies are selected from two regions and from different development phases: post-conflict Rwanda and an emerging country China. The first case scrutinizes the series of UN joint activities in assisting the Government of China in response to HIV/AIDS in early 2000s. The second case study focuses on a development phase in Rwanda after the immediate post-conflict recovery. Specifically, a joint programme between United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), “Poverty and Environment Initiative”, will be examined as one of the best practices of UN joint programmes. This was a critical building block by UN system in Rwanda in supporting the Government in formulating its second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). The third case looks into aid coordination by UN system with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in post-conflict Rwanda after 1994. This section will specifically examine the examples of aid coordination in natural resource management, in particular, the protection of the habitat of endangered mountain gorillas. In order to draw some general insights into inter-organizational relationships formed and exercised in these cases, I will use the framework of “the 3Cs”. The 3C framework is composed of the following notions: Competition, Coordination, and Cooperation.

4. Findings

For the first case, the UN joint activities in assisting the Government of China in response to HIV/AIDS in early 2000s, the findings were the following. At different levels of coordination, the results varied. There are three levels of coordination: 1. Information sharing level, 2. Strategic coordination and 3. Operational Coordination. UN joint efforts such as Common Country Assessment (CCA) and UN Development Framework (UNDAF) were useful tools. Stronger incentives were in place when there were resource mobilization opportunities and demand from the Government. Coordination was useful and added value in planning and division of labor. However, the joint implementation per se was very costly, and had less impact on the results. Coordination requires changes in business practices, thus, costly initially. Careful diagnosis should be carried out before implementing a blanket approach for coordination in the UN system. Current UN coordination mechanisms do not build in the incentive mechanisms for staff to be actively engaged in UN coordination. For instance, according to the UNDP country office performance appraisal, the Balanced Scorecard, one of the 14 indicators is devoted to UN coordination, but the relevance of the indicator is questionable. The indicator measures if there were more than 2 joint projects between UNDP and other UN organizations. There is a need for a qualitative indicator rather than an over simplified indicator of evaluating the efforts of UN coordination solely by the existence of joint projects.

UN Theme Group on HIV/AIDS provided a forum for multi-stakeholder consultation. Participation by the civil society organizations, especially People Living With HIV/AIDS, was groundbreaking. With a common vision, UN joint advocacy yielded positive results as part of UN concerted efforts in the form of cooperation. Cooperation does not usually require changes in each UN organization's standard operating procedures or business processes, thus, administrative costs are relatively lower than joint programmes. "One voice" from the UN as a whole, carried more weight in negotiating and holding a dialogue with the Government of China. Advocacy with multi-sectoral approach and at multiple levels of bureaucracy contributed to the change in policy-making. The timing was also considered to be right. Knowledge sharing and mutual learning took place in the process of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) through cooperation. For this purpose, M&E framework should be agreed in advance.

The second case, under the joint programme between United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), "Poverty and Environment Initiative" (PEI), the coordination between UNEP and UNDP worked well. One of the critical factors contributing to this result was because, there was a Competition between UNDP and UNEP during the resource mobilization phase for the global PEI programme. As a result UNEP was entrusted to

manage the global PEI funding. UNEP functioned as a donor to UNDP in PEI in a practical term. As UNEP had a final say for decision-making, there was a hierarchy built in within the PEI from the outset. This arrangement made effective coordination possible. UNEP provided technical expertise on poverty and environment issues as a normative organization and UNDP offered project implementation administrative base, country knowledge and professional network. Functional division of labor was in place, which enabled complementarities between the two UN organizations.

5. Conclusion

As a conclusion, this research argues that Competition, Coordination, and Cooperation should be emphasized respectively depending on different stages of the project cycle. According to different project phases, effective inter-organizational relationships vary. Competition should be emphasized for project formulation and resource mobilization phase. Coordination should be emphasized for project implementation phase, and Cooperation is essential in the monitoring and evaluation phase. The functions of Competition, Coordination and Cooperation influence each other and produce both positive and negative impact on development results. Current UN coordination mechanisms do not build in effective incentive mechanisms, both in terms of financial and human resource perspectives, for staff to be actively taking on the UN coordination roles and activities. The performance appraisals are not reflective of these elements. In the post-conflict societies, the 3Cs model applies only partially as the usual project cycle is not in place in those emergency situations.

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