

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SUCCESS OF DONOR FUNDED PROJECTS

Critical Success Factors For Donor Funded Projects

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What do we mean by responsibility?

1. Rights and responsibilities - respect
2. Latin *respondeo* to answer, reply, respond
3. Contemporary meanings
 - Legally responsible, accountable in law - causal link (for blame or praise)
 - Moral obligation – stepping up to take responsibility, personal willingness to act
 - Wanting to make a difference
 - Agency brings responsibility - donors and implementers both have agency

Responsibility

- Accountability, liability, can be imposed by donors
- Respons-ability, has to be taken and requires *phronesis* – practical wisdom or prudence – even if the practice of donors does not change implementers can take responsibility.
- Donors should be holding implementers to account

Responsible Tourism and Sustainable Tourism are NOT the same thing

- Sustainability is an aim – quite possibly unrealisable.
- Responsible Tourism is about
 - More than the green agenda
 - Focusing on what matters locally
 - Taking action and being able to demonstrate impact.
 - It is about what you do.

Operative and inoperative ideas

- Nigel Harris (1968) Beliefs in Society distinguished between operative and inoperative ideas.
- Ideas can be
 - operative – guides action
 - inoperative – legitimates action
- Where does the idea of sustainability sit?

When and how does aid succeed ?

How do we understand failure/success?

- Success. Achieving the project's goals and objectives, in time, cost and quality and in the context of the project's terms of reference (Abdullah *et al.*, 2010).
- Donors
- The business aid
- Project evaluation
- Delphi results

How does the system work? (1)

1. Donor agency develops a budget line based on the latest thinking about development.
2. Looks for proposals which meet the donor's budget line criteria
3. Potential implementers (government agencies, NGO's, consultants, academics) bid to spend the money they are the experts, known to the donors

How does the system work? (2)

4. Donor evaluates the bids and decides based on amongst other things an assessment of likely satisfactory completion rather than delivery against the policy objectives.
5. Donor then (micro-)manages the project to ensure that the money is spent according to the agreement.
6. Reports on satisfactory completion – on budget and on time

I wish that this was an exhaustive list.....

What goes wrong?

- Poor ideas
- Purpose
- Language
- Slippage
- Fusion
- Failure to learn
- Unintended but not unforeseeable consequences

A poor idea driven by expediency



Purpose

- Poverty reduction or MDGs is the aim
- Donor “advertises” that funds are available
- Potential implementers prepare costed bids based on defined outputs – it is the outputs that the money will be spent on.
- The outputs define the inputs – deny responsibility for impacts

Language

The jargon we use	An example
Outputs – what is funded	Places on MSc in Conservation Biology
Inputs of resources necessary to deliver the outputs	Course fees and bursaries
Outcomes – the results of the outputs	Students receive grades and either pass or fail
Impacts – the change achieved	What the students do with their MSc

Language

The jargon we use	Another example
Outputs – what is funded	Training days – the more days of training the better
Inputs of resources necessary to deliver the outputs	The costs of providing the training and the time of the economically poor who attend.
Outcomes – the results of the outputs	Completed days of training – rarely tested.
Impacts – the change achieved	The money earned from learning to

Slippage

- This is at the heart of the project management challenge.
- Who are to be the main beneficiaries?
 - The economically poor who are used to justify the expenditure?
 - or
 - The donor managers and the implementers who directly benefit from the inputs?
Their careers depend on it.

Fusion: colleagueship

- A good thing?
- A relationship develops between the donor and
- standing “shoulder to shoulder” can deteriorate into collusion

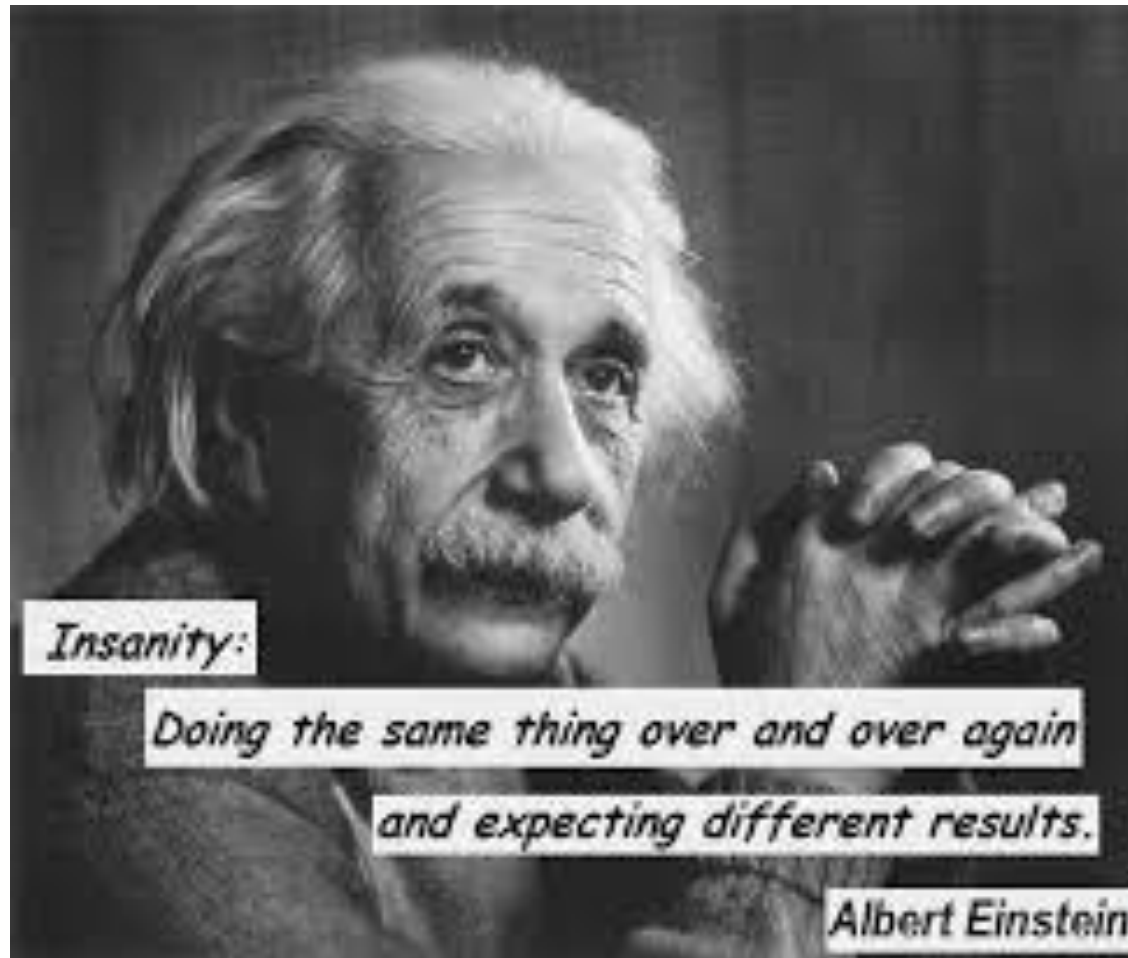
Failure to learn

- Most of us recognise that we learn more from our failures than from our successes
- We want our children to learn from our, and other people's, mistakes
- So why are evaluation reports kept secret.

You should never make the same mistake twice. There are plenty of others to choose from.



So why do we not learn from our mistakes and continue to fail to deliver on our objectives?



Insanity:

Doing the same thing over and over again

and expecting different results.

Albert Einstein

Professionalising the relationship

- Managers in donor agencies need to be held to account for the **impacts** of the programmes they administer. It is not enough to get the money spent on time.
- Implementers need to be held to account for the impacts of their outputs and outcomes.

SMART OBJECTIVES

- *Specific*
 - *Measurable*
 - *Achievable or Actionable*
 - *Realistic*
 - *Timelined*
- Most log frames require **verifiable measurable indicators**
 - **The indicators need to be of impacts not of the outputs.**
 - The outputs are only a means to an end.

DONORS

- lack of transparency in decision making about development assistance
- development assistance is often assumed to be apolitical, in reality practice has been closer to enlightened self-interest
- Donors prefer to finance short term, target driven projects; whereas effective aid usually requires core funding over a longer period in order to facilitate local empowerment (Birdsall, 2004).

World Bank

- Mosley, Harrigan and Toye (1995) have argued that staff are under pressure to meet disbursement targets and spending the budget is a primary management objective.
- Failure to disburse funds may be seen as an indicator that there are problems in the country department which reflects badly on staff (Edgren, 1996).
- Budgets are committed to interventions based on pledges, not performance, or when the latter is taken into account, it relates to procedural due diligence and not impact (Svensson, 2003).

THE BUSINESS OF AID

- principal–agent relations. Agency problems from having unclear aid contracts that do not provide sufficient incentive to the recipient to use aid effectively (Paul, 2006)
- Rent-seeking behaviour arising from aid dependency (Svensson, 2000)

Project coordinators

- Coordinators of development projects perceive success of their own projects based on the management performance (as commonly defined, by time, cost and quality) and on the project's profile (visibility/ reputation/ image)
- Project impact (performance against objectives in the logical framework) not an important criteria for coordinators of projects. All about getting the job done on time, on budget and on spec, and being seen to do a good job (Diallo and Thuillier, 2004)

Donor or need driven?

- technical assistance projects are donor-driven and not based on the local needs (Godfrey *et al.*, 2002),
- the result of having limited knowledge of the local realities (Williamson, 2010).
- All too often donors have not shown respect for the knowledge of others (Chambers, 1997),
- and then wondered why the intermediaries and implementers do not do as they are told.

Learning needs

- Fallen short of its intended purpose, failing to adapt to local conditions, being used as a short term fix, not measuring or reporting the impacts, and lacking in consistent approaches (Wilson, 2007).
- Learning needs to take place collaboratively, and slowly, based on trust and mutual respect (Wilson, 2007).
- Technical assistance rarely creates communities of practice for joint and long term collaborative learning (Johnson, 2007).
- Self-reliance does not happen overnight, changing mental structures and allowing the recipients to see for themselves what can be achieved is far more complex (Briedenhann, 2011).

PROJECT EVALUATION

- How all stakeholders learn from previous experience through project evaluation, as impacts of interventions are rarely reported
- The argument that since all impacts cannot be captured it is not worth reporting, needs to be resisted
- We know more about whether programmes met the expected milestones and spend on the right budgets than about the impact of these interventions (Savedoff, Levine and Birdsall, 2006).

What is valued

- Valuing the timely spending of budgets and accomplishing of outcomes over the achievement of measurable impacts
- SNV's focus in monitoring and evaluation was on outputs and outcomes, not impacts (Hummel and van der Duim, 2012)
- lack of incentives and the numerous technical, bureaucratic and political challenges that impede good impact evaluations (Savedoff, Levine and Birdsall, 2006).

DELPHI RESULTS

The top six reasons for project failure

1. unprofessional project management,
2. lack of understanding of the local situation,
3. unskilled/unprofessional implementation,
4. lack of leadership,
5. Lack of collaboration and communication between stakeholders and
6. poorly defined project scope and scale

	Low importance	med	High importance
High likelihood	Relevant administrative procedures	Monitoring and evaluation	Partners believing in the project The project is well-defined Effective budget management The project is appropriate for the location
med	Political support and stability Multi-stakeholder involvement A stakeholder management approach	Having access to market Coherence between resources and scope & scale, early strategic thinking Professionalism and skill of staff Public/private engagement Collaboration & communication between stakeholders Realistic timeline A consistent and stable project team	Sustainability of the project The involvement of local people Leadership Professionalism of project management
Low likelihood	Synergies with other ongoing interventions Flexible/dynamic project Innovative project		Sufficient funding Realistic and achievable project Rationale and objectives clearly understood by all

Feasibility-desirability gap in policy options

Issue	Gap
Engage local people in the project approval process	34%
Ensure there is a mechanism for ensuring that the development of supply does not outstrip demand	34%
Gather credible evidence that the project will be sustainable and will not be donor dependent	33%
Not fund projects unless all positive and negative impacts will be monitored and reported publicly	32%
Ensure experts effectively transfer knowledge and skills so as to build local capacity	31%
Determine the Return on Investment of the project	30%
Ensure there is a clear market, tourists or tourism businesses, for the goods or services	28%
Ensure the difference between project success and failure is clear	28%