

ICD and PRSPs

BCO PRSP Learning Day, July
28th 2005

ICD is fundamental

PRSPs are based on “Participation” –

- so communication and information are fundamental.
There's no participation without communication.

PRSPs are about poverty reduction -

- And, we argue,
There's no poverty reduction without communication.

- But ICD was neglected in early thinking about “How to do a PRSP”.

Three categories of ICD for PRSPs

- 1. Communication as part of designing and carrying out a PRSP**
- 2. ICD identified as one of the poverty-reducing strategies within a PRSP**
- 3. Communication around the PRSP**

Three categories: 1

- Communication as **part of designing and carrying out a PRSP**: consultation within government and with civil society; to inform and mobilise civil society in implementation, monitoring and accountability.
(= “Strategic communication” – communication to make the PRSP work).

Three categories: 2

ICD identified as **one of the poverty-reducing strategies within a PRSP**, or part of the strategies, enhancing development sectors (education, health etc)

Three categories: 3

- **Communication around the PRSP:**
 - an enabling communication environment is an underlying requirement for development, poverty reduction, political dialogue, ownership and critique.
 - Debate about the PRSP by “outside” CSOs, critics, etc

Categories: 1

- “Strategic Communication”
- Planned by government
- Build desired consultation and inclusion
- Build consensus and “ownership”

Additional agenda (eg of donors) may be:

- Transparency, good governance and accountability mechanisms
- Basic principles of social marketing

Categories: 1

Main focus of Strategic Communication often on Civil Society participation – at design and monitoring stages

PRSP also requires communication within government:

- design stage: cross-sectoral dialogue, aligning PRSP with other development plans and cycles. Ownership by ministries other than Finance or Planning; parliamentary participation and ownership; local government involvement
- Carrying out: Budget planning and management linked to PRSP targets. MTEF. (This is a big new step for most governments).
- Monitoring and evaluation: needs transparency (eg for parliamentary scrutiny) of government spending; feedback and analysis mechanisms.

Categories: 1

Good experiences:

- first-ever dialogue between CSOs and govt, new spaces being opened up.
- inter-ministerial communication within governments, and inclusion of parliaments
- Annual Progress Reports: can be key tool for public awareness and discussion.

Issues in Category 1

- “Closed” dialogue
- Lack of capacity for dialogue
- Need for accessible information
- Conflicting timescales
- For monitoring: long-term general goals not turned into clear policy measures and deliverables:
 - Weak analysis – what policy measures would deliver?
 - Weak budgeting and public expenditure management
- Low expectations of parliament
- Place in political agendas?

Issues in Category 1

Role of media:

- Raising public concern and debate about poverty issues, different policy solutions, policy and budget processes, etc;
- forum for debate;
- platform for voices of the poor.
- Media watchdog role for PRSP implementation – demanding clear indicators, transparency and accountability.

Category 2: **ICD within the PRSP**

Not often there as a stand-alone sector.

- *Rwanda's Poverty Reduction Strategy: "The Government has ... established the Rwanda Information Technology Agency (RITA) and developed a twenty year strategy for ICT-led socio-economic development." (Chapter 4.7, para 252)*
- *Mozambique's Poverty Reduction Strategy: "Information Technology, main objectives: to expand access to computers and the internet for rural populations; expand knowledge of computers through educational systems." (PRS, Chapter IV, para 268.1)*
- To what extent is it present mainstreamed within other sectors? –

Category 3: ICD around the PRSP

ICD that is not part of deliberate government-led PRSP strategy:

- challenges to the strategy
- comments on the process
- CSOs or sectors “excluded” from the approved dialogue.
- Free media and FOX are requirements
- May be considered part of a good consultation process -

Category 3: ICD around the PRSP

Rich communication environment - essential enabling factor for *any* poverty reduction.....

- information exchange and knowledge creation
- effective service delivery and take-up of services
- accountability
- political processes
- empowerment
- social and cultural discourse, adapting and adopting

All of which we believe are essential for poverty reduction.