

7. Future Evaluations

7.1 Need for a monitoring and evaluation frameworks

As has been discussed above, although the CA has developed a range of over-arching goals and sets of objectives as well as criteria for project funding, this study represents the first opportunity to discuss overall monitoring and evaluation frameworks, baselines and indicators.

The Alliance's work programme has no overall logical framework, which expresses the overall programme methodology and assumptions in terms of the linkages between activities funded, the expected outputs and outcomes, and the overall purpose and goal of the Cities Alliance. Without such a conceptual framework, it is difficult to construct a consistent and manageable range of indicators and a simple method for the collection and collation of evidence towards the overall objectives of the CA. To add to the difficulty, the range of interests and energy released by the CA, and the global nature of the enterprise have given rise to a multiplicity of objectives and potential indicators without any agreed mechanism for or assignment of roles for conducting monitoring activity. This is a missed opportunity because a monitoring framework with agreed data collection roles for different actors and stakeholders, could provide a necessary step to ensure that the learning goals of the CA are realised.

Although the CA refers to an Action Plan for Cities without Slums and produced an Annual Report for 2001 after 18 months activity, there is no formal monitoring and evaluation framework in place to draw all the elements of CA together. The benefits of such a framework would be that twofold:

1. It would allow the action plan to be managed and reported on regularly and coherently to keep all the stakeholders informed and to ensure progress against the overall objectives; and
2. It would allow the methodology behind the CA to be made explicit and assessed from time to time through independent evaluation. More intermittent evaluation could make use of this monitoring and evaluation framework and the regular monitoring reports to show what is actually happening in a more systematic way. More importantly, it would tease out why things are happening in particular ways, and what impact the CA is making against its key objectives. This process would enable the CG to re-think their methodology or project funding criteria, as necessary, in order to meet CA outcomes more effectively.

At present, the CA does set out a set of objectives that make explicit the outcomes it wishes to see. This goes some way to explaining the overall methodology, namely reducing the number of households living in slums by promoting CDSs and the scaling-up of slum upgrading programmes and applying the lessons learnt more broadly through the formation of an accessible 'learning alliance' and the leverage of funds. However, as the activities of the CA are extremely complex, the monitoring framework must be able to show how all the activities of CA fit together to contribute to the overall goal.

The way in which any monitoring and evaluation process is introduced will need to take account of the natural resistance at this stage of imposing extra burdens on project task managers and the Secretariat. To be effective the monitoring framework cannot be imposed from outside. A process for gaining ownership of the monitoring activity is required to overcome any sense amongst those implementing CA activity that they are being over-burdened or policed.

Internally valued processes of monitoring and evaluation should be constructed as a means of both extracting lessons and sharing those lessons amongst potential users. It is proposed that evaluation could be part of the capacity building and dissemination process of the CA itself, if peer review processes were used to generate lessons involving a joint evaluation unit of the LGAs.

Besides learning and disseminating the other key use of evaluation would be to ensure accountability for the use of funds and to clarify whether the organisational arrangements of the CA are optimal as the consultative and decision-making aspects of the CA evolve and as they develop a more regional and national focus.

It is recommended that a participative workshop involving the key CA actors should be convened to bring together a monitoring framework against which progress towards shared objectives can be measured, and to clarify who will be responsible for gathering this data. Performance against this framework could be the basis of the next evaluative exercise.

7.2 Focus for monitoring and evaluation

It is suggested that monitoring and evaluation should be utilisation focused at several levels:

At the level of development effectiveness, in terms of the contribution of the Cities Alliance to the Millennium Development Goals and in particular Target 11.

The CA evaluation should be able to comment on how far and in what way the CA has been able to contribute to this goal.

- At the level of the overall organisational effectiveness of the Cities Alliance:
 - is the CA fulfilling the objectives it has set itself/
 - does its structure permit the Alliance to operate optimally to deliver its objectives?
 - are plans sufficiently well laid out to permit the monitoring of progress towards the objectives, or to alter course?
- At the project level, in terms of the lessons learned from the activities funded by the Cities Alliance:
 - do these contribute to overall organisational objectives and overall development effectiveness as described above?
 - are projects monitored and evaluated to reveal interim progress and to provide lessons?

7.3 Baselines

Establishing any standardised form of counterfactual will be difficult given the different city contexts in which the CA is operating. The suggestion to group projects in different categories and similar contexts has been made earlier in the text. It may be useful at a future evaluation to choose a sample and to make comparisons between situations which have been funded and those where funding applications were rejected. In addition, sample surveys of clients – for example, in CDS, of the poor, of stakeholders, of business (formal and informal) in order to seek to assess impacts.

To establish “before” and “after” scenarios in CDSs – and the problems of evaluating CDS are considerably greater than in Slum Upgrading – each application for funding for a CDS ought to require an audit of the city beforehand to establish the baseline data (for example, on poverty and service deficiencies, legal and regulatory restrictions on slum dwellers and on business, the indices of municipal performance etc) which can be compared to the city at various times after the completion of the CDS. To try to isolate the impact of a CDS, in a country with good data, a comparator could be created – if the CDS is a half-million population city in a country, the constructed comparison would be the average on the same indicators for the other half-million cities in the country. However, in the poorest countries, with severe data deficiencies, this is probably utopian and another standard of comparison must be employed (perhaps drawn from the UN-Habitat urban indicators program).

Otherwise baselines would need to be established more clearly as part of the monitoring arrangement for each component of funded activity in order that an assessment of achievement can be made at the conclusion of the project. This assessment should be required in order to contribute to lesson learning. There should be much emphasis on learning about the factors contributing to lack of success as well as any reasons for success. Project managers could be asked to contribute a short report on lessons learned, but the detailed proforma for this must be designed to offset the tendency to see each project as a success. The most significant of these lessons could then be fed into a national level discussion and then national level lessons distilled into significant lessons at the regional level for contribution to the global learning pool.

The task of distilling learning from CA activity and distributing it in appropriate formats to potential learners is key to the success of the CA. At present there are anecdotes but no real databank of lessons to be used to create manuals and toolkits. This report describes the current baselines for this aspect of CA’s work and makes suggestions for how learning and dissemination could be improved.

The application of significant and innovative lessons in new contexts demands some reflection on the relationship of outcomes to the original methodology and context. Pawson and Tilley explain that “context + methodology = outcomes”. (See: *Realistic Evaluation*, Pawson and Tilley, 2000) In a global initiative like CA it is important to be able to unpack the context and methodology that lies behind particular projects funded in particular city contexts in order to reveal the reasons about why intended outcomes were achieved or not, and why unintended outcomes were achieved. By un-picking the relationship between these variables, the real lessons may be revealed in ways which make it possible to apply lessons in other contexts, by adjusting methodologies.

7.4 Indicators

Below is a selection of indicators that could be used in the creation of an overall monitoring framework. Indicators would need to be agreed to show the following outputs:

Output: The CA portfolio of activities is prioritised to address the poorest and a reasonable geographical spread in terms of relevant global experience

Indicator: The spread of the overall portfolio in terms of numbers and spend increasingly reflects the following priority areas:

The text in section 4.2 and 4.3 provides a number of examples of criteria which could be applied to the different groups of slum-upgrading and CDS activities.

Output: CA funds are targeted at lesson learning opportunities
Indicator: Lessons expected to be learnt are featured on the website as part of project descriptions, perhaps with a tighter link to demand for this knowledge over time (i.e. it would be useful if knowledge needs could be identified so that projects could be funded to address these needs)

Output: Positive and negative lessons are being learned from core and non-core funded activities.
Indicator: Lessons are being disseminated to where they can be applied, in publications in relevant languages and through workshops, seminars and conferences that make them accessible to local government and NGO officials.

Output: The application of lessons is helping to scale-up the rate of improvement
Indicator: Evidence of the application of lessons from one context to another

Output: Additional funds are being leveraged because of the work of the CA
Indicator: Rise in overall spending on CDS and slum upgrading schemes and overall spend channelled through the CA core and non-core funds estimated as a proportion of overall donor and international financial institutional spend on slum-upgrading and CDS development.

Output: Increasing application of CDS principles, including economic growth elements that benefit the poor.
Indicator: Number of cities with credible CDS proposals and an increasing number implementing these strategies

Output: CA creates an increasing number of opportunities for cities to learn from each other
Indicator: Evidence of increasing city partnerships promoted by CA, evidence of regional and national partnerships and meetings and dialogues promoted by the CA.

Output: CA organisational structures represent the optimal arrangements for fostering learning between key city improvement actors
Indicator: Evidence that the CA is promoting and supplying demands from priority cities and is re-shaping its structure to address this demand year on year.

Output: Opportunities for reflection are built into each funded activity
Indicator: Pre-planned monitoring and evaluation procedures are built into the project approval process and implemented so that each funded project reports lessons to the CA on an annual basis at least.

Output: Informed contribution to investment bank thinking
Indicator: Documented lessons from CA leading to behaviour change in investment patterns and processes. Baselines needed now to provide a counterfactual.

Output: Lessons are reported in such a way that they enable application in different contexts
Indicator: Evidence of city change agents adopting and amending lessons to achieve local outcomes

Output: Increasing number of partnerships, fostered by the CA.
Indicators: A growing number of banks as donors joining up their funding arrangements through the CA, a growing number of partnerships between cities working on applying similar methodologies in their CDS.

Output: Increasing examples of constructive involvement of slum dweller (especially women) and municipal planners in slum upgrading and CDS,
Indicator: Innovative projects funded and lessons disseminated.

Output: Increasing examples of constructive involvement of private and public partnerships in slum-upgrading and CDS development.

Indicator: Innovative projects funded and lessons disseminated.

7.5 Evidence or Methods of verification

Some evidence will be needed to relate to processes and behavioural changes that the CA is trying to bring about in areas which are unpredictable and where CA has influence rather than direct control. To track these kinds of changes a clear picture of the current situation is needed along with a fairly well-defined picture of the desired state and the steps in between. Then progress can be checked against this projected pathway. Here the data collection may be an audit trail of documented evidence showing for instance how lessons have been learned and recorded in one situation, disseminated to another, and actually taken up and applied in the new context.

The organisation of the Secretariat as it is now allows for the creation of an audit trail that can also facilitate (or make impossible) future evaluation. The most important single element is the regular and consistent evaluation of current activity, the very essence of a learning alliance. Take for example, the mundane issue of the organisation of project files that are crucial for quick evaluation. Each file should contain a standard set of materials – and only those materials. These might be, for example, the successive applications (as they evolve and are resubmitted); the successive commentaries of Secretariat and peer reviewers; the baseline audit and, where possible, the comparison audit of the “average city”; the Secretariat’s account of the innovatory rating (with the context for this), and the risk rating; monitoring reports during the project; end of project evaluation (with predicted final outcomes), task manager’s report, client feedback; any independent evaluations, and year end evaluation.

There are other pieces of evidence. In an evolutionary approach to organisational learning which tries to percolate up what groups at different levels regard as significant changes, these pieces of anecdotal evidence are collected and reviewed by different groups at different levels from the field to the centre so that the process of identifying and agreeing on the most significant changes provides an opportunity for these key groups to learn about the changes and incorporate lessons as a by-product of their reporting on progress.

7.6 Outline Draft Terms of Reference

In summary the draft ToR for a future evaluation exercise could comprise:

1. Assessment of the performance, from April 2002 to 2005, of the programme-level activities of the Consultative Group, PAB and Secretariat and of the individual activities funded from the Cities Alliance Trust Fund. The assessment will be made in terms of criteria of the Development Assistance Committee Working Party on Evaluation namely Relevance, Efficacy, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability.

2. An analysis of lessons learnt at the overall programme level and at the level of individual activities and how these are being disseminated and made use of by urban decisions makers.
3. Analysis of and recommendations about how the institutional arrangements of the CA could be improved to recognise evolving relationships and priorities to ensure more efficiency and to achieve greater impact on the lives of poor people living in cities under stress, especially the lives of women.
4. Analysis and recommendations relating to the representation of personnel on CA consultative, technical and decision-making bodies and how far they reflect a geographical and role distribution that is consistent with the areas of emphasis within the CA.
5. Assessment of the involvement of Regional bodies and national groupings such as such as LGAs in terms of their capacity to act as effective bodies for generating lessons from CA activities and disseminating these amongst their members.
6. Analysis of the non-core funding portfolio in terms of the geographical spread of spending and the trends in funding support and the current rationale for the types of innovation supported.
7. Assessment of the ways in which innovation has been sought in the types of projects funded and how far lessons have emerged and been effectively disseminated to enable up-scaling in the same city or wider application beyond the original city where the lessons were generated.
8. An assessment of the ways in which lessons are best made available to potential users of the information (targeting, translation, use of web and non-web material, specifically facilitated meetings and managed dialogues, integration into formal academic curricula, user-manuals and guides for city officials and other knowledge-sharing mechanisms.
9. Discussion of the financial sustainability of the Cities Alliance – the ability to sustain and grow support from traditional and non-traditional donors, and to achieve the grant-funding targets of the Cities Without Slums action plan. This analysis should show the trend in funding from global to regional/country level sources, the ratio of multilateral to bilateral donors, the volume of leverage of private sector funds and the overall leverage of funds towards slum up-grading and CDS since the analysis up to April 2002, which can be attributed to CA efforts.