

## South-South partnerships for evaluating SDGs

*Partnerships for the evaluation of SDGs are critical for success. Though Africa's ability to deliver on the SDGs will in part be determined by the strategic choices in evaluation capacity, leadership and policy, Africa needs to strategically map out and harness its opportunities with partnerships which can help guide efforts towards achieving the targets of the SDGs. By stepping into the vast learning potential arena of countries which performed remarkably well in achieving the MDGs, Africa will find shortcuts to the knowledge and skills which helped forge the MDG success stories.*

**Oumar Gninnakan Sako, Strategic Planner, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, Ministry of Planning and Development, Côte d'Ivoire.**

## Introduction

### Problem statement

**I**N 2000, the leaders of the world made a historic commitment: to eradicate extreme poverty and improve the health and welfare of the world's poorest people within 15 years. The global mobilization behind the Millennium Development Goals has produced the greatest anti-poverty movement in history. The MDGs also generated new and innovative partnerships, galvanized public opinion and showed the immense value of setting ambitious goals. Some south countries such as China and Rwanda made good progress in achieving MDGs.

This article contends that China's success with the MDGs, particularly its effort at halving the number of its poor population, holds invaluable learning potential for countries in Africa. Africa can, and should leverage China's extensive experience in development planning and monitoring and evaluation. Additionally, African states should learn from each other's experience in their efforts to achieve the SDGs. For example, countries such as Rwanda which performed remarkably well in achieving the MDGs, should share their learning in evaluation, data management, and reporting via south-south partnerships. In doing so, African countries can ensure accountability at national level, enhance the involvement of parliamentary bodies in the oversight

of government action, and strengthen the power of the Court of Auditors.

In fact, China reduced its poor population from 689 million in 1990 to 250 million in 2011. The infant mortality rate 50.2% in 1991 dropped to 13.8 in 2009 and maternal mortality from 80 in 1991 to 31.9 in 2009. Primary school enrolment rose from 97.8% to 99.4% between 1990 and 2009. And since 2000, access to potable water reached an additional 467 million rural residents.

In Rwanda, a post-conflict nation, population below the poverty line dropped from 60% in 2001–02 to 45% in 2011–2012. Rwanda is a world leader when it comes to women in decision making with 56% of its parliamentarians being women. ▶

---

***Africa can, and should, leverage China's extensive experience in development planning and monitoring and evaluation.***

---





► **How did China and Rwanda get the MDGs right?**

**China**

China developed a participatory planning process to make progress in achieving MDGs, with a number of five year plans which included MDGs as an obligatory indicator. China also made a conscious effort to promote development of key sectors (poverty reduction for rural areas, food-security, educational reform, etc.).

In 2003, SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) crisis heightened the demand for information transparency and accountability within the government. Premier Wen Jiabao repeatedly called on government departments at various levels to establish accountability systems and undertake monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities (Wen, 2004, 2005, 2006). In 2005 for example, Premier Wen pledged to “increase the transparency of government work and boost popular confidence in government...” and “...establish a scientific system for evaluating government performance and a system for comprehensively evaluating economic and social development.”



Premier Wen Jiabao of China

© Photo credit: sage@newsmth.org, May 2009.

The Strategic Planning Department (SPD) of the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), the agency tasked with preparing the Plans, carried out a mid-term review for the tenth plan (2001–2005). The review was a comprehensive exercise, involving every province and Ministry, and opinions from 100 experts and 26 staff of the SPD were collected using a questionnaire. This review was informal and experimental in scope, but it represented a significant change in the mindset of top Chinese policy makers.

---

***China’s efforts at data collection and monitoring, coordinated efforts in education, and women’s education, allowed it to achieve its MDG 4 goals.***

---

Based on the mid-term review of the Tenth FYP, the NDRC decided to develop an M&E framework for the Eleventh FYP and to establish an M&E methodology and institutionalize arrangements for future plans.

The development of the M&E Framework followed an internationally recognized “Ten Steps” model (Kusek and Rist, 2004) and was jointly created by a team of international and domestic experts. Among other activities, the team reviewed the international experiences of the OECD and various developing countries and convened consultative meetings with both international and domestic experts. The model is based on a sequence of ten steps or activities that are considered critical for establishing a results-based M&E framework.

China has a history of helping other countries make progress in achieving MDGs. In fact, since 2000, China has carried out over 1,000 projects in more than 120 countries within the South-South cooperation framework. ►

## ► Rwanda

In the case of Rwanda, the efforts were a focus on participatory planning process. In fact, at country level, Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy, Poverty Reduction Strategy 2002–2005, Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategies (EDPRS 2008–2012 & EDPRS 2013–2018) were developed. The focus was also on sector strategic plans (SSPs) & District Development Plans (DDPs). Rwanda also gave a priority to monitoring and evaluation.

At inception of a medium-term plan, a national M&E matrix was created: the EDPRS Results & Policy Matrix. Each line ministry created a matrix of indicators to measure its performance. An M&E matrix was also developed at district level to monitor the implementation of the EDPRS. The Government also promoted independent evaluation of Plans and use of sector evaluation: Independent Evaluation of the Implementation of the Public Financial Management Reform Strategy 2008–2012; Independent Final Evaluation of the Rwanda Education Alternatives for Children (REACH) Project.

The Rwandese Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN) has played a major role in the country's M&E system building process and has a policy of implementing performance-focused policies. Within MINECOFIN, the Planning and Budget Departments have coordinated M&E activities initiated across the government, with the political support from the Offices of the President and the Prime Minister. MINECOFIN also manages the M&E system. Specifically, the Planning Department manages EDPRS M&E systems and the Budget Department manages MTEF reporting and the less regular public expenditure evaluations.

Rwanda also acknowledged the importance of access to data by developing a data

collection and management system, and investing in its National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) established in 2005.

## What did China and Rwanda do in common?

China and Rwanda both developed planning, monitoring and evaluation processes. Evaluation activities significantly helped them achieve their respective development goals. China and Rwanda both also encouraged donor harmonization in a bid for more efficient harmonization and coordination of aid.

## The SDGs

The SDGs are broad and ambitious, each goal containing several targets (in total 169 targets!) to be achieved by 2030 and every goal is multidimensional, meaning that every goal implies the achievement of different aspects, which are all related and interconnected.

The multidimensionality of the SDGs makes them more difficult in approach and evaluation than the MDGs.

Development in the SDG era does not only imply the improvement of individual conditions, but is considered as a system to be achieved through multidimensional and interconnected layers.

## Alignment of SDGs with Africa's priorities

SDGs are aligned with the AU's Agenda 2063 and also with the AfDB's High-5s. The integrative potential of SDGs and Africa's own development initiatives is real; but action at national level, and cooperation ►►



► globally is imperative. For sub-Saharan Africa, the interrelated nature of SDGs suggests strong partnerships between governments, private sector, civil society.

### Bridging the M&E gap

In many countries of the Southern hemisphere, there is lack of competencies to lead planning, monitoring and evaluation process. Technical assistance is important because it will give the opportunity to local and foreign experts to work together and local experts will learn by doing.

Going forward, it is important to foster partnerships, bridge gaps in implementation and M&E. It is necessary to establish M&E methodologies and institutionalize arrangements for National Development Plans, District and Local Plans.

It is also necessary to enhance data collection/gathering. To achieve this, we should give priority to Domestic Resource Mobilization over Foreign Direct Investment in order to drive & fund the transformative agenda. It is also important to develop principles of accountability, transparency, rule of law, participation and inclusion of non-state actors in the design and implementation of development activities, as well as to resolve existing conflicts, prevent new ones, and guarantee the security of people and businesses. The institutionalization of sustainability in planning at all levels and integration of M&E in Public Policy is also needed.

Financing M&E activities and data collection is still a big challenge in many south countries. Many south countries don't give the priority to these M&E activities because they are very expensive and the

government budgets to finance this kind of activities is limited.

Tracking progress in sustainable agriculture and forest management is challenging: distances are long, populations are sparse, interventions range from policies to crop and livestock practices, and the voice of the farmer is critical for success. Recent approaches focusing on climate impacts and land use pressures (climate-smart agriculture and landscape approach) add to the complexity and require efficient data collection and analysis methods. The systemization of information and communication technology (ICT) in the monitoring and evaluation (M and E) process enables accountability from field staff to regional and central governments and development partners. Promotion of ICT especially mobile technology could represent a valuable tool for M&E of SDGs.

### Conclusion

Africa can gain in transformative leadership, institutional capacity and experience-sharing from South-South partnerships with countries such as China and Rwanda, who succeeded in achieving the MDG objectives. South-South partnerships for evaluating SDGs should, in addition to providing technical assistance, financing M&E activities and data collection, focus on capacity development. Developing capacity in procuring and conducting evaluations can help raise the quality of the SDGs' follow-up and review processes. Monitoring and Evaluation activities in Rwanda's have shown that aligning evaluation with political priorities and national strategies help ensure buy-in, ownership and sustainability.

eVALU







## References

Julian Barr (Team Leader) ; Jing Gu ; Guo Yan ; James Keeley and Johanna Pennarz, China Country Programme Evaluation, Department for international Development, Evaluation Report EV 710.

French, Bell, & Zawacki, 2000, Organization Development and Transformation: Managing Effective Change (McGraw-Hill International Editions: Management & Organization Series).

Thomas R Guskey, 1999, Evaluating Professional Development.

Nathalie Holvoet and Heidy Rombouts, The politics of monitoring and evaluation under changing aid modalities: Towards a conceptual framework and selected findings from Rwanda's health sector.

Adolf Kloke-Lesch, Executive Director, Sustainable Development Solutions Network Germany (SDSN Germany), The G 20 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) : Reflections on future roles and tasks.

Jody Zall Kusek, Ray C. Rist, 2004, Ten Steps to a Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation System.

Cecile Kusters ; Bram Peters ; Joost Guijt ; Herman Brouwer, 17–18 March 2016, Conference Report : Partnering for Success ; A conference on how Monitoring and Evaluation can strengthen Partnerships for Sustainable Development, The Netherlands.

R. Lance, Volume II, Issue 4–Fall 2007, the historical development of program evaluation : exploring the past and present.

Dorothy Lucks and Colin Kirk, EVALSDGs (Evaluation-Adding And Learning to the SDGs) A Concept Paper.

Vitalice Meja, Making South-South Cooperation Partnerships for Work for Africa: A situational analysis and policy recommendations.

Linda G. Morra Imas, Ray C. Rist, 2009, The Road to Results.

OECD, Evaluating Development Activities, 12 Lessons from the OECD DAC.

Piccio S, 2013, Is the international tax system fit for purpose, especially for developing countries? Brighton : Institute of Development Studies.

Republic of Rwanda, 2008–2012, Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy I.

Republic of Rwanda, 2013–2018, Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy II.

Thomas Schwandt, Zenda Ofir, Dorothy, Lucks, Kassem El-Saddick and Stefano D'Errico, April 2016, Briefing, iied, Eval SDGs, Eval Partners.

Anna Stobart, Hafton Consultancy, 22 June 2010, Approaches to Partnership.

United Nations Systems in China, Report on China's Implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (2000–2015), Ministry of Foreign Affairs People's Republic of China.

Mei Wang, (Senior Economist, World Bank); Xu Lin, ( Director-General, National Development and Reform Commission, People's Republic of China), China : Towards Results-Based Strategic Planning Mid-term Evaluation of China's 11th Five Years Plan, December 18, 2008 Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Unit, East Asia and Pacific Region.

Author's profile

**Mr. Gninnakan Oumar Sako** has been an expert in strategic planning at the Ministry of Planning and Development of Côte d'Ivoire since 2010. During his professional career, Mr. Sako has been actively involved in the activities of the Côte d'Ivoire Development Plan and the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Plan. He holds a Diploma of Specialized Higher Education (DESS) in Economic Regulation and Project Management from Félix Houphouët Boigny University, Côte d'Ivoire. Mr Sako has carried out several complementary training courses in the field of economic and social development. In 2008, he obtained a certificate in development strategy from the Institute of Development Strategy (KDS) of South Korea, a certificate in participatory planning and sustainable development obtained from the National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD) of India and a certificate in development planning obtained at the African Institute for Economic and Social Development of Planning in Senegal. In 2016, Mr. Sako received a certificate in project evaluation and development programs from the World Bank and Carleton University in Canada.

