

Towards An Alternative Development Management Paradigm?

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Outline

- What is RBM?
- RBM in international development cooperation
- RBM in UK Aid
- Alternative ideas
- Experience of implementation
- Implications for organisations
- Conclusions
- Implications for policymakers?

What is RBM?

- Central to results agenda and New Public Management
- Uses principal agent theory and quantitative indicators to decentralise control
- Used for planning, management and evaluation of outputs, outcomes and impacts

The Power of Measuring Results

If you do not measure results, cannot tell success from failure.
If you cannot see success, cannot reward it.
If you cannot reward success, probably rewarding failure.
If you cannot see success, you cannot learn from it.
If you cannot recognize failure, cannot correct it.
If you can demonstrate results, can win public support

Kusek and Rist (2004) adapted from Osborne and Gaebler (1992)

2000s RBM: Opportunities

- Opportunity:
 - Paris Declaration & MDGs
 - Management *for* development results
 - Mutual accountability
 - Mutual learning



2010 RBM: Opportunities & Risks

- Opportunities: Better monitoring, learning, decision making & accountability to tax payers
- Risks: ‘Obsessive Measurement Disorder’:
 - Less strategic rights based/solidarity
 - Promotes transactional development
 - No money for risky ventures
 - Hard and expensive to implement
 - Leads to poor quality learning
 - Controlling behaviour by donors disempowering for partners



2010 UK Results Agenda

“Our bargain with taxpayers is this,” says International Development Secretary Andrew Mitchell. “In return for contributing your money to help the world’s poorest people, it is our duty to spend every penny of aid effectively. My top priority will be to secure maximum value for money in aid through greater transparency, rigorous independent evaluation and an unremitting focus on results.”

Action Aid press release 21 October 2010



Power & Complexity Aware Alternatives

Problematic RBM assumption	Proposed solution
Development problems results fix are technical & commonly understood	Politically smart approaches that engage various local actors in defining problems and leading experiments to find ‘best fits’
Change to achieve results – is linear, controllable or predictable	Iterative approaches to setting flexible results indicators that can be amended as a result of testing assumptions and learning from real time monitoring
Evidence re measurement of results for donor policy makers is generalisable	Context aware pluralist evaluation methods that focus on local stakeholders learning if, how and why approaches work or not to produce results
Relationships required to achieve results unaffected by power	Less donor procedures, more power & complexity aware approaches e.g. payment by results; more trusting relationships

Experience: Possible but Challenging

Idea or approach	Experience
Politically smart approaches	Politically smart locally led programmes achieve results e.g. The Pyoe Pin in Myanmar/Burma programme but hard to institutionalise & can be gender blind
Adaptive learning and management with flexible indicators	Can encourage testing assumptions, learning & accountability reporting , e.g. State Accountability and Voice Programme, Nigeria; but requires investment in staff
Pluralist evaluation methods	Increased use in DFID and Bank; but challenging to change orthodox methodologies in World Bank
Payment by results	Effective if designed with a complexity and adaptation lens that focuses on outcomes; less so if focuses on outputs

Implications for Organisational Change



- More contingent policymaking
- Performance management systems that enable alternatives, learning & accountability
- Appropriate human resource policies
- Rethinking value for money definitions
- Nuanced public communication

Conclusions

– Those involved in critiquing RBM and offering alternatives:

- Draw attention to power blind RBM assumptions
- Promote useful politically and complexity informed approaches for achieving and learning about results
- Suggest an alternative management paradigm requires difficult organisational change



Implications for Policymakers?

- Be aware of RBM's strengths and weaknesses, but beware of anyone offering magic bullet alternatives!
- Support relevant research
 - e.g.:
 - Human resource policy
 - Public education on aid effectiveness

