

The politics of the results agenda in Sweden

EBA Seminar 13/2-2018

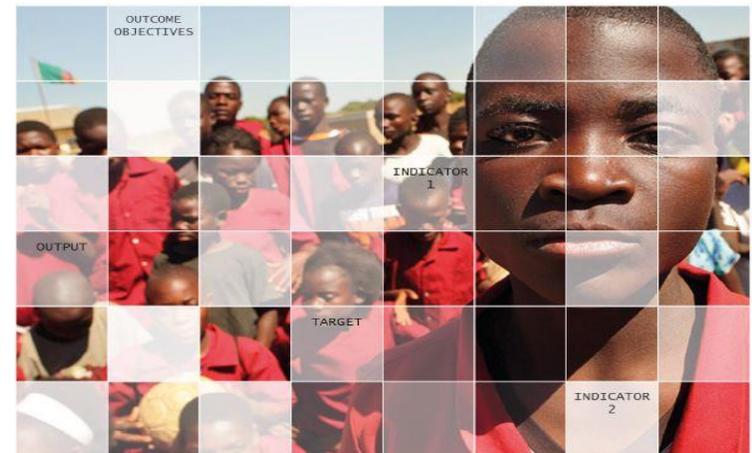
JANET VÄHÄMÄKI, (SCORE) STOCKHOLM
CENTER FOR ORGANIZATIONAL RESEARCH



Matrixing Aid

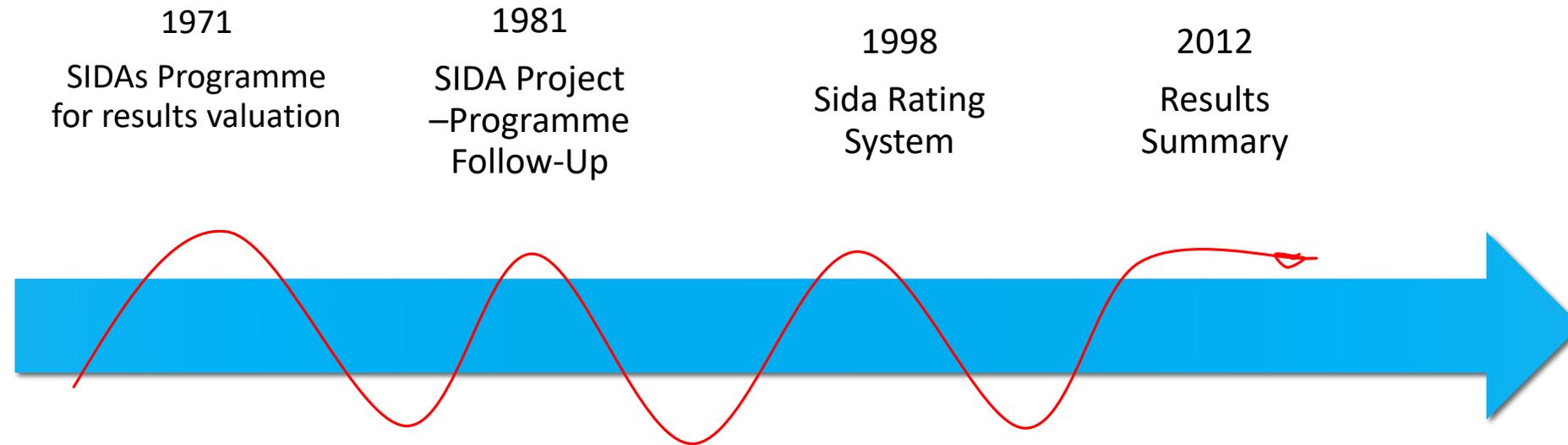
The Rise and Fall of 'Results Initiatives' in Swedish Development Aid

Janet Vähämäki



Doctoral Thesis in Business Administration at Stockholm University, Sweden 2017

Four results initiatives at Sida



Purpose: To increase our understanding of tides of reforms. Identify and discuss mechanisms that drive the rise, as well as the fall, of management reforms

Earlier literature on “tides of reform”:

- Results are needed in democracies; and results models are needed in bureaucracies (Ferlie, 2009; Brunsson, 2006; Abrahamsson, 1996)
- Reform interest is always in the future rather than in the past. Reformers ignore history. (Sundström, 2003)
- “Mechanisms of hope” and forgetfulness ensures that similar initiatives can be launched despite past failure (Brunsson, 2006; Brunsson and Olsen)
- Results reforms are launched by a fashion setting community - market mechanisms (Abrahamsson, 1996; Gill and Whittle 1993 etc).

My research questions:

The Pressure

What influences public sector aid organisations to initiative results initiatives?

Within

-What happens within the organisation when the initiatives are launched?

-What happens when the initiatives fall out of favor?

Over time

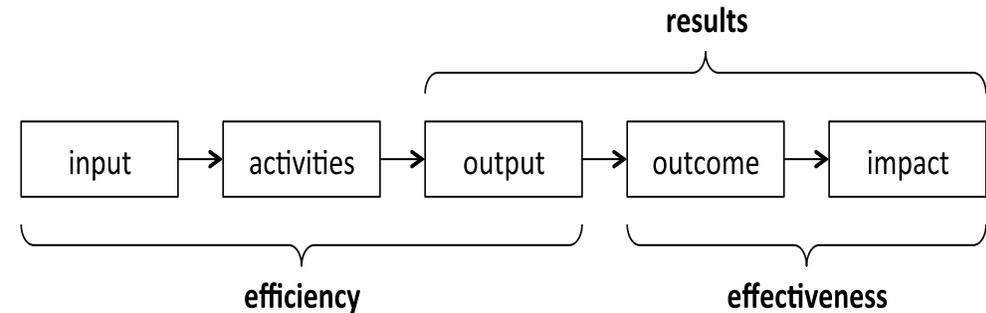
Similarities and differences with the 4 initiatives

Theoretical perspective: Organisational institutionalism

Two rationalities in aid:

Solidarity

Effectiveness



The Five Phases of the Results Initiatives

1. Pressure



2. The launch



3. Implementation



4. Re-do or die



5. Openness for something new



What drives the tides of reform?

1. Tension between the solidary and the effectiveness rationale
2. Hope, as well as fear and other emotions
3. The benefits – the results initiatives have provided the organisation with legitimacy

When do the initiatives die out?

1. When all possible ways to report on “results” has been tried out
2. When results information is not used
3. When the results initiative no longer contribute to legitimacy

What has not worked in the initiatives?

1. The initiatives have had (too) many purposes and (too) many users
2. Too complex for aid recipients to report on standard indicators
3. Too limited for aid recipients to use one format/one standardised matrix for results follow-up

What can be done differently?

1. Map information needs of different users
2. Clarify the purpose with results measurement
3. Identify and communicate what information is possible to produce
4. Measure also the effectiveness (incl costs) of the results initiatives

Where do we stand today?

