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6. TOPICALITY VS SUSTAINABILITY

6.1 A consideration of project assessment: topicality vs sustainability
6.2 Topicality vs. sustainability in the evaluation of the South African Book Aid Project

6.1 A consideration of project assessment: topicality vs sustainability

Jeff Samuelson
Book Aid International

Sarah Harrity
Book Aid International

Jeff Samuelson and Sarah Harrity of Book Aid International (BAI) consider the debate between topicality and sustainability. In this paper, they answer the two following questions of *What outcomes do we consider when assessing impact?* and, *Does the assessment of outcomes address issues of topicality or of sustainability?*

In answering these questions, they draw on two projects with which Book Aid International (BAI) is associated. The Malawi National Library Service (MNLS) which was charged with the responsibility for developing an AIDS awareness campaign and the **South Africa Books Aid Project (SABAP),** the aim of which was to support local initiatives to improve the quality of basic education. The authors use the

above two cases to illustrate the complexity of deciding whether the assessment of outcomes addresses issues of topicality or of sustainability. They caution that the distinction is complex.

The paper agues that the evaluations of the above projects focused more on *outputs* and hence gave scant regard for questions of sustainability. They distinguish between *outputs* and *sustainability by* arguing that outputs refer to the *specific achievements* which the project design was *supposed to guarantee* whereas impact refers to the long term effects of the project.

The paper concludes with some lessons learned from the aforementioned assessments.

1 Introduction

Book Aid International is an NGO based in the North with no overseas offices but with strong links with a wide variety of educational institutions, organisations and associations in the South. Book Aid International (BAI) works in partnership with these organisations, predominantly in sub-Saharan Africa, to support literacy, education, training and publishing, by providing books and other reading materials - which help people to realise their potential and to contribute to the development of their societies.

As part of its core programmes of book provision, BAI also manages a number of projects. Brief reference will be made here to two cases which will be used later to illustrate the points under discussion.

The first example, of a project now completed, concerns the purchase and subsequent distribution in 14 countries in Africa, of a booklet entitled *Living with AIDS in the Community.* The text was written by The Aids Support

Organisation (TASO) in Uganda and was published by the World Health Organisation (WHO). The idea for this project originated with the Malawi National Library Service which was charged with the responsibility for developing an AIDS awareness campaign in Malawi through the network of libraries. The Director of the Library Service asked BAI, a long-standing partner, if it could provide appropriate materials and the project began to take shape when it rapidly became apparent that the materials produced in Britain would not be appropriate for Africa.

The second example which will be drawn upon in this paper is another project in which Book Aid International is a player, namely the South Africa Books Aid Project (SABAP), which aims to support local initiatives to improve the quality of basic education, including adult education, in three provinces. One of them is the Eastern Cape which is discussed by Cleaver Ota in the next paper.

2 Considering the distinction between

Before looking at the evaluations of these projects itself, it may be worthwhile spending just a few moments on defining specific terms and what they mean. The literature on *monitoring* and *evaluation* uses a number of terms about which there is often no universal agreement but, for reasons of clarity, it seems important at the outset to define what we mean by them for the purpose of this paper.

● Defining Impact

Impact, therefore, we shall define as the longer-term effects of a project or programme, effects which are brought about by change and which outlive the project. The evaluation of SABAP in Eastern Cape did not, by its own admission, seek to evaluate impact but focused rather on the short term achievements or outputs:

> *The domain of enduring change is a long-term process which implies that SABAP cannot be expected to produce the desired impact in the period of one year.* (SABAP: 5)

● **Defining outputs**

Although there is no final definition of "outputs" it is here argued that if an evaluation focuses more on outputs, in addresses those specific achievements which the project design was supposed to guarantee. By their nature these may be described as questions of *topicality* rather than of *sustainability.* There are good reasons for this, having happened in the SABAP evaluation – the most important being that implementation of the project had only just been completed and it was not

therefore possible at that stage to make a judgement about possible long-term effects. It was therefore a formative evaluation – a very useful one – and, to use Cleaver Ota's own words, 'it concentrated on guiding ideas, change in infrastructure, theory, methods and tools'. The purpose of the evaluation (which Book Aid International had helped to shape) was not only to find out what had happened in the SABAP project in the Eastern Cape but, just as importantly, to *learn lessons* which can be applied in the two subsequent phases of the project.

Three major implications of such an evaluation may be singled out:

● It is a health check – it provides an opportunity to assess the project in mid-stream and to see to what extent practice

conforms to the theoretical design of the project.

● It can, and should, inform subsequent phases of the project. This is particularly true in the case of SABAP where implementation is being carried out on a sequential basis - Eastern Cape in Year 1, Mpumalanga in Year 2 and so on.

● It allows scope for change, for example to alter or amend the project outputs and activities.

3 Defining sustainability

The evaluation of SABAP in Eastern Cape concentrated, as we have seen, more on outputs than on impact but the evaluator was nonetheless able to conclude that 'the

foundation of enduring change had been laid' (SABAP: viii).

This leads us to the question of sustainability and here again we attempt a definition of this concept. We believe that the meaning of sustainability comprises two aspects:

- The first is changed perceptions in individuals, the possibility of thinking differently, and perhaps more positively, about the situation that the project was designed to assist. This includes an understanding or appreciation that change and development are possible.

- The second is the extent to which the project activities will continue after the donor's financial support has been withdrawn.

The second aspect, we maintain, is impossible without the first. In other words, activities will almost certainly not

continue without changed perceptions. This may be the link between the *topical* and the *sustainable.* Enough people with altered perceptions can begin, albeit slowly, and other things being equal, to change and develop institutions whose services can then better respond to users' needs. These consequences are the *long-term effects* of the project, that is to say its impact. An example of such change is the fact that one of the organisations in Nigeria to which the AIDS awareness booklet had been distributed decided to translate it and so make its central messages more easily accessible.

4 Ensuring sustainability and measuring impact

What are the implications of trying to ensure project sustainability and measure impact?

4.1 Ensure stakeholder involvement

Firstly, is the need to ensure that all the stakeholders are

actively involved in the project from the outset; not the point at which implementation begins but at the much earlier planning and design phase. The overall assessment of the AIDS awareness project was positive but at the same time one of the conclusions of the report[1] nevertheless drew attention to the fact that 'the project and its evaluation would have benefited from more detailed consultation with partners and local participation at the project design stage'. The need for inclusivity when thinking about evaluation at the design phase is illustrated from one of the lessons learned from this project:

An important issue is the level of consultation over new initiatives and active local participation in their design and planning. Informal consultation took place during the development of the project, but the project was not discussed formally with all partners until it was due to begin. Although those organisations that became directly involved in this

project chose to participate, the origin of the project was not clear and it seems likely that many were not fully aware of what exactly would be required in its implementation and evaluation.... The lack of local ownership of the project is clearest in the evaluation, where input on the planning of the exercise was requested but very little received (Report on AIDS awareness project in Uganda).

4.2 Clarity of focus

Secondly, there should be absolute clarity about what is to be evaluated. The original intention of the evaluation of the AIDS project was to assess behaviour change as a result of the use of the booklet. However, it became clear that such an attempt (which would have been a true impact study), had to be scaled down to something more feasible but still useful. In short, a triumph of the pragmatic over the ideal. What was considered instead was the difference that the participating organisations felt the availability of the booklets had made to

what they could do.

The same consideration applies to the core book provision programmes managed by BAI. works with a great variety and number of partner organisations all of which are selected against a set of criteria that has been developed over time and which were formally written up in 1996. The criteria concern matters of need, role, mission, objectives, access and use. BAI constantly monitors the activities and outputs achieved within these partnerships and is now recommending in an internal review of its monitoring and evaluation activities that a formal evaluation by an external evaluator should be carried out with one or more of the major partners. It would be perfectly feasible to evaluate the whole process of providing books (including the vital question of whether they were the right books) to, say, the Kenya National Library Service and the effect of the programme on the services delivered by the KNLS. Such an evaluation would be a formative one but, because of the close links and the fairly

intensive monitoring activities, might not throw up many original findings.

It would be very much more difficult, time-consuming and expensive to undertake a true impact study, in other words to attempt to assess the impact of the provision of books on, say, the educational achievements of individual users of these services. One obvious difficulty, but only the first one, would be to disentangle the books provided specifically by BAI from others in the KNLS book stock. Notwithstanding these difficulties, BAI intends to attempt an evaluation that would examine not only outputs but impact as well.

4.3 The need for baseline data

Thirdly, it would seem difficult if not impossible to measure impact unless there is first a baseline study against which to measure the eventual outputs of the project The obvious implication of such an approach is that the timescale of the

project would inevitably be extended unless only the most readily available statistics were used The disadvantage of such statistics is that they are usually quantitative in nature and do not reflect the much more complex situation that the project is trying to address.

For example, the goal of the SABAP project was 'to support local initiatives to improve the *quality* of basic education' and this reflects the emphasis rightly placed in most projects now on issues of *quality* rather than quantity. An extended timescale needed to address issues of quality at the stage of the baseline study, in its turn, implies a greater overall project cost.

4.4 Conceptualise the evaluation in the design phase

Fourthly, is the need to consider from the earliest stages of the project what is to be evaluated and, at the design phase, to build in appropriate indicators that will enable the

measurement of impact All stakeholders should be involved in this process Both these factors – inclusivity (referred to in 4 1) and early planning - should help to ensure that all the stakeholders will be committed to the evaluation process and that the evaluation will be an integral part of the project and not a kind of appendix added on at the eleventh hour This will be important if, as should be the case, the evaluation is a means for all the participants to learn lessons from the exercise.

4.5 Consider other factors that might impact on the project

Fifthly, the complexity of measuring impact is increased by the necessity of evaluators gauging the extent to which the project intervention itself (as opposed to any number of external influences), has caused changes to happen The impact assessment therefore has to consider other factors including the political, social and economic context in which

the project has been operating.

This calls for a different kind of health check from that mentioned in the context of a formative evaluation A project or programme may be good, if that description is permitted, within its own terms but may have unintended and perhaps what are perceived to be negative consequences elsewhere. For example, the core book provision programmes managed by BAI are designed to meet immediate needs and, judging by the feedback, they do serve this purpose According to a report issued this year by the Malawi National Library Service, more than half of the additions to stock in 1997 originated from BAI. The negative conclusions which could be drawn from this are:

- that a dependency culture is being created

- that the provision of these books from an external source is inhibiting the development of the local

publishing industry.

The President of the Pan African Booksellers Association made exactly this point this year to Book Aid International This illustrates the clash between the *topical,* that is the provision of books to meet an immediate need, and the *sustainable,* namely sustainable book provision from within Africa.

In its reply, BAI agreed that supporting the local book supply chain was essential to sustainable book provision in Africa and highlighted some of its own work in that area At the same time it argued that books were not yet an affordable commodity in Africa and that, in order to develop a reading culture, short-term needs had to be met alongside investment in the local book industry It concluded that, at every stage, there was a need to develop imaginative and realistic ways of getting books to those who need them.

Even when the above implications of trying to ensure project sustainability and measuring impact have been taken into account, there still remains what is perhaps the greatest difficulty of all, which is knowing to what extent the project intervention itself, rather than any number of *external influences,* has caused changes to happen The impact assessment therefore has to consider other factors including the political, social and economic context in which the project has been operating A book, or the information contained in it, may be necessary to pass an exam for example, but it may not be sufficient Other factors, such as the facilities provided by the school, the quality of the teaching and the degree of parental support, might all be equally important in the process It therefore becomes extremely difficult to isolate the book itself from these other influences.

4.6 Serving multiple stakeholders

And finally, there is the extent to which possible demand for

rigour and for proof of impact is linked to accountability to the donor rather than to project or programme development In the case of the AIDS awareness project, the evaluation was donor led As we have seen, this is not the ideal way of doing things but, on the positive side, useful lessons emerged from the experience which BAI has fed into subsequent work Can an evaluation serve both the needs of the donor who wishes to be assured that the money has been well spent and those of the other stakeholders whose needs are of a different order? As things stand, it has to serve both purposes and to be not only a demonstration of the goal achieved but also a learning exercise that will illuminate future activities beyond the project's life-span and inform comparable projects elsewhere.

5 Conclusion

While assessments tend to focus on outcomes rather that impact which outlives the project life-span, it is nevertheless

possible to answer questions pertaining to issues of sustainability. The *lessons learned* as discussed in the previous section, are posed as suggestions for overcoming limitations imposed by assessments which would normally focus on the measuring of intended project outcomes.

Footnote

1. The project was evaluated with the Kenya National Library Service (KNLS), the Ghana Library Board and two local NGOs in Uganda, among others.

6.2 Topicality vs. sustainability in the evaluation of the South African Book Aid Project

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In this paper, Cleaver Ota considers the role of assessment in attaining a prognosis for project sustainability. His paper outlines the approach employed for determining the outcomes of the **South African Book Aid Project (SABAP)** and certain concerns pertaining to project sustainability. While he concludes that the project had achieved all of the outcomes defined in the project document, he points to extraneous factors which impact on these attainments. He accordingly asserts that it is not possible to assess impact or to speculate on sustainability without locating the project within its socio-economic and political context. To do so would be tantamount to decontextualising the delivery possibilities. This is because there are a number of extraneous factors which impinge on the actual implementation and which have a bearing on the potential for sustaining the project.

With regard to the **SABAP** project, he identifies two such features, namely the role of government in financing the *post-donor* phase, and the complex issue of *collaborative relations* inherent in multi-partnered project delivery. With regard to the former, he indicates that in spite of the project having achieved all the aims for current delivery, the pending *post-donor* financial squeeze will most certainly impinge on sustainability. The latter feature refers to the inherent tensions associated with the collaborative model of governance, management and delivery of education services, which, in the case of **SABAP,** might impinge on sustainability. While Ota portrays sustainability in terms of a continuation of the existing project, it could be argued that **SABAP** leaves a legacy of 'processes' and their attendant understandings of book delivery. Nevertheless, in Ota's terms, the possibilities for sustainability are limited.

To understand why Ota asserts that it is difficult to arrive at

a prognosis for sustainability, one has to have an understanding of the socio-economic context in which **SABAP** is being implemented. He elaborates on these features in this paper.

1 Introduction

The new legislation and policies in education in South Africa firmly anticipate the establishment of self-managing schools. One of the projects which has the primary objective of assisting the development of self-managing schools was the Quality Schools Project.[1]

The **South African Book Aid Project (SABAP)** was implemented in the Eastern Cape and was located in the Quality Schools Project. The strategy of **SABAP** was on whole school development. This included the establishment of school governing bodies, increased parental and community

involvement in schools, and INSET for teachers and principals. An additional feature of the project was the creation of District Education Resource Centres (DERCs), whose main function was to provide library services for the surrounding communities and schools.

SABAP, a DFID-funded project, may be distinguished by its multi-partnered implementation. In the Eastern Cape, the partnership comprised the Eastern Cape Department of Education through the Provincial Libraries, and Information Service (LIS) Directorate. The project was managed in the UK by *Book Aid International* (BAI), and was implemented by the Institute of Training and Education for Capacity-Building (ITEC). ITEC, together with Read Education Trust (READ), were responsible for the training.

This paper considers the *modus operandi* surrounding the evaluation of this multi-partnered project. It then discusses the attainment of the outcomes that were defined in the logical framework. The paper finally concludes by asking why in the face of its successful attainment of outcomes, the project's prognosis for sustainability is not very positive.

2 Purpose of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the extent to which SABAP was considered to be of value to key stakeholders and critical interest groups associated with the project. In order to do this, it was necessary to assess the extent to which **SABAP:**

- improved access to books and other materials

- provided effective training in library resource management

- created community-based structures that would be truly involved in the project

- created effective partnerships that would facilitate the transfer of relevant knowledge, skills and values.

When they conceptualised the research design, the research team found that the log frame was particularly valuable since it outlined the hierarchy of projected goals.

2.1 Assessing impact of SABAP – ways of looking

The short-term objectives of **SABAP** were to ensure that there would be:

- better equipped primary school/resource centres/community libraries

- a trained and effective staff in those libraries

- an improved community understanding of the importance of books

- an enhanced capacity in the Provincial Libraries and Information Service, a directorate in the Eastern

Cape Provincial Education Department, to manage the project after the pilot phase.[2]

The evaluation intended, in terms of this general framework (although it was not constrained thereby), to assess the following aspects within the *constraints of the context* of the project:

- the relevance and suitability of the materials provided

- accessibility of the materials, including the system for distributing materials to the cluster of schools

- the use made of the materials

- the provision of training for the setting up and maintaining of systems to ensure administrative efficiency and the effectiveness and security of the

materials

• training to stimulate an appropriate use of the materials

• the extent to which resources are shared and the community is involved in the project

• any aspect of the project that could contribute to its *sustainability.*

2.3 The evaluation process

The evaluation guidelines contained in the terms of reference suggested important considerations. These included the necessity for the evaluation team to be balanced in terms of gender, for the evaluation enterprise to contribute to the building of capacity, and for the evaluation exercise to be as participatory as possible. In addition to the criteria specified

in the terms of reference, the assessment was influenced by our understanding that an evaluation is

[It is] a type of disciplined inquiry undertaken to determine the value (merit and or worth) of some entity – evaluand – such as a treatment, program, facility, performance, and the like - in order to improve or refine the evaluand (formative evaluation) or to assess its impact (summative evaluation) (Lincoln and Guba 1989: 50).

Once they had been informed by these guidelines, it was necessary for the research team to formulate an approach according to which the above-mentioned *specific* and *related* project objectives could be assessed. The following methods were therefore used.

2.3.1 Review of documents

A vast amount of project documentation had been accumulated during the years of implementation. It was necessary to select documents which would *speak to* our evaluative questions. We were able, from the various progress reports, to gain a sense of the progress and the timing of such progress that was being made in pilot schools. In addition, the records gave an indication of the gap between targets and achievements. The documentation also provided background data which enabled the **SABAP** intervention to be located within its context.

We accessed documentation in the form of annual reports, minutes, progress reports and other literature which was relevant to the project.

A documentary study was considered to be the most appropriate way of attaining a sensitivity to the *what had happened* in the project. Thus, for example, minutes answered questions about *processes* and *functioning* while annual reports, and progress reports provided an understanding of the *changes* as they had occurred over time.

The documentation also provided an opportunity to conduct a cost analysis of the project.

2.3.2 Focus groups and one-on-one interviews

One-on-one interviews and *focus group* discussions were conducted. We selected qualitative methods

which would enable us to explore the perceptions of the various players. In particular, the focus discussions and interviews were useful in enabling us to gain insights into the participants' perceptions of *quality.* This was considered pertinent insofar as it enabled us to assess the extent to which these critical interest groups considered that the project had or had not achieved the stated objectives.

In addition, the interviews were beneficial in this evaluation since they:

- enabled the interviewer to probe for more specific answers and repeat questions where it appeared that the questions had been misunderstood

- enabled the interviewer to observe non-verbal behaviour. The paralingual cues in

the discussions often gave the researcher
an indication of other dynamics.

- facilitated spontaneous responses.

The data obtained in the interview process were
verified through the process of triangulating the
data. This facilitated our understanding of which
targets had been attained and which had not.

3 Major findings of the evaluation

The discussion which follows under the headings listed here
reveal how the findings are relevant to each of the specific
outcomes:

- Better equipped primary school/resource
centre/community libraries
- Effective training in library resources management

● Improved community understanding of the importance of books

● Enhanced Department of Education capacity for project management

Because we were able, in the evaluation, to operationalise the above criteria, the subsequent discussion comments on the extent to which the goals were achieved. The discussion also refers to incidences where the project did not achieve certain goals.

3.1 Better equipped primary school/resource centre/community libraries

The following goals and critical project assumptions were met:

● the establishment of basic working libraries and systems at the District Education Resource Centres

(DERCs)

- the purchase and delivery of books and other materials

- the establishment of effective security and maintenance systems

- the adequate and cost effective use of resources

- the achievement of reasonable borrowing levels

- the provision of relevant and suitable materials

- improved access and, in many cases, first time access to materials contributing to improved learning and teaching

- the introduction of mobile library system.

The following goals were not met:

● **Borrowing levels**
The borrowing levels could have been higher if more schools had allowed learners to take books home.

● **Access**
While, in general, resources were adequate, there was considerable variation among schools in terms of access.

● **The culture of reading**
The evidence relating to the impact of books on the culture of reading, teaching and learning was ambiguous. While the majority of teachers and principals perceived significant improvements in the culture of reading, teaching and learning, a substantial number of learners claimed that the changes had not been significant.

3.2 Effective training in library resources management

The following targets and critical assumptions were met:

- **Coverage**
The coverage of training was good.

- **Content**
The content of training programmes was sound.

- **Delivery**
The delivery of training programmes was efficient and effective.

- **Training**
The training was relevant to work situations and planned functions.

- **Staff turnover rates**

These were low.

- **Skills**

The skills gained were utilised to improve job performance.

The limitations in training programmes are reflected in the following areas:

- The completion and thoroughness of training by DERC and individuals varied.

- Due to time constraints, training manuals that would have standardised training and assured quality were not developed. It should, however, be noted that training manuals are now being prepared for phase two of the project.

- There was limited on-the-job support to ensure the

implementation of new ideas.

● Due to time constraints, the training of DERC
facilitators was restricted to library resource
management. It would appear that a broad range of
development activities is taking place in some
DERCs. This means that there is a need to extend
the training of DERC facilitators to rural education
facilitators.

**3.3 Improved community understanding of the
importance of books** The following targets and critical
assumptions were met:

● the establishment of representative community
structures
● meaningful community involvement
● community capacity building
● voluntary contributions by communities to the

project

Difficulties experienced in achieving the an improved community understanding of the importance of books were reflected in:

- the limited social marketing of the project

- resistance on the part of a few DERC facilitators to the meaningful involvement of the community

- a lack of clarity about roles and functions on the part of some community-based structures' members

3.4 Enhanced Deportment of Education capacity for project management

The following targets and critical assumptions were, on the whole, met:

● the creation of effective structures for cooperation

● the sharing knowledge, skills and competencies among the implementing and governmental agencies (this enhanced the Department's capacity to manage the project after the pilot phase)

● the establishment of mutually beneficial partnerships

Deficits in cooperation were attributable to:

● budget and time constraints
● the uncertainty resulting from the PLIS separation from the Department of Education
● communication problems caused by a lack of telephone and fax facilities in the rural schools
● a limited sense of ownership and control of the project by PLIS

5 Sustainability

While the findings outlined in the previous section speak volumes for the success of the project (insofar as it successfully achieved many of its projected goals), I nevertheless contend that it is difficult to make any prognosis about the sustainability of the project.

The issues of long-term sustainability relate first to the question of funding for the project after the donor funds have ceased to be allocated. The assumption was that the provincial government would take over the costs of running the libraries but, in the event, this did not happen. (An interesting development is that the project is now housed in one of the large teacher trade union's offices -as opposed to government offices.)

It is necessary when making a statement about project sustainability to take a variety of social, economic and

political factors into account. The need for the provincial government to take over the running costs of the SABAP project was one of the prerequisites for sustainability. But this did not happen. When linking sustainability to context, it must be noted that the Eastern Cape is regarded as the poorest South African province – a province in which vast numbers of teachers are being retrenched as part of a rationalisation process. Numerous schools lack basic infrastructural needs (such as water, lights, toilets and desks). Against this background, the implications for funding are not clear. It is, however, possible that 'nice-to-haves' like books – in a poverty-stricken province – would be an unlikely government priority.

The second issue relating to sustainability relates to resolving tensions in the collaborative model of governance, management and delivery of education services. The inherent tensions in this model are (for example):

- democracy vs. professionalism
- organisational choice vs. professional choice

The long-term sustainability of school improvement efforts such as **SABAP** and the Quality Schools Project depend on the extent to which the tensions mentioned above can be resolved.

Sustainability implies the need for agreed definitions about requisite institutional capacity and how the project itself is defined. Sustainability also implies that the interests which promote and are affected by the project must at least be of 'one mind' if the project is to be sustained in the long term. This shared vision has to carry the project forward. In the arena of evaluation, assessment must also take into account the extent to which the project is able to impact on the ideas and interests of participating institutions.

6 Conclusion

Evaluation, as I pointed out above, is about determining the value (worth and/or merit) of a programme or project. There are two critical questions that relate to assessing the value of **SABAP.** *Did SABAP do things correctly?* This refers the degree of cost efficiency that was achieved in realising the specific objectives of the project. On the basis of the performance indicators and critical assumptions, the expected outputs were not only well achieved: they were also attained at a reasonable cost. The second and more critical question is: *Did SABAP produce valued outputs?* In answer to this question, a substantial number of the stakeholders answered in the affirmative on all the four outputs.

The foundations of enduring change have been laid because **SABAP** provided guiding ideas, theories, methods and tools and because they built teams from groups of individuals. The project has, in addition, developed skills and capabilities, and stakeholders are starting to see and experience the world

differently. They are also beginning to form new beliefs and assumptions. Can this not be seen as the first step towards sustainability?

Footnote

1. It is pertinent that this paper contextualises the project being considered since the context is crucial to the question of sustainability.

2. The fourth criterion was not incorporated in the logical framework but was implied therein and has relevance for project sustainability.

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7. IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

7.1 Background to the MAPP evaluation
7.2 Sustaining Impact: the Mexican Advanced
Professionalisation Project
7.3 Assessing the impact of sector wide, institutional
and policy outcomes
7.4 Determining the unanticipated outcomes and
using these as benchmarks for future projects

7.1 Background to the MAPP evaluation

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The first paper in this section is a speech which was delivered by Carew Treffgarne, on behalf of the Latin America, Caribbean and Atlatic Department (LACAD) DFID, at various regional conferences on the impact of the professionalisation of the teaching of English in Mexico (3-11 July 1997). Her speech is included in this section because it provides a backdrop to the subsequent papers, all of which refer to the evaluation of the **Mexican Advanced Professional Programme (MAPP).** The paper also offers a rationale for the model used to determine the impact made by **MAPP** on individual teachers, institutions, and more broadly, on the sector. While Treffgarne takes an eclectic approach to the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods, she stresses the importance that the MAPP evaluation be both *formative* and *participatory.* This, she

argues, would enable the various project players to obtain insight into such evaluative processes – benefits which would be of immense value.

The papers in this section bear testimony to the benefits derived from the process described by Treffgarne. The authors of the subsequent papers include references to the way in which participants were enskilled though the evaluative process, and to the extent to which the formative nature of the assessment contributed insights which were beneficial to sustaining the project and to initiating similar projects.

1 Background to MAPP

British support for this event in Zacatecas/Pachuca/Tijuana/Merida/Monterrey today arises from our involvement in the **Advanced Professionalisation**

Programme for Mexican University teachers since 1991. The purpose of this training scheme for upgrading University teachers is capacity building in the widest sense, ie not just training of trainers, but English curriculum development and institutional development through the Schools or Departments of Languages and Language Centres in the State Universities.

It is part of the Mexican Government s commitment to raising standards in English teaching. In consequence the programme builds on the Certificate for Overseas Teachers of English (COTE) scheme, introduced by SEP in collaboration with the British Council. It is also linked to the complementary SEP/British Council programme for developing Self-Access Centres (SACs) for language teachers and students.

When I first visited the Programme 18 months ago, the evident signs of project impact exceeded our expectations.

We were encouraged to find that the Director of Higher Education, Dr Arrendondo, shared our interest in ensuring that the evaluation of this exercise should be both participatory and formative. In this way, it is hoped that the Mexican Government, the British Government and each participating University will gain in-depth insight into the value of this training from the point of view of each institution that has benefited.

For DFID the **Advanced Professionalisation programme** is unique from several stand points:

● Firstly, it represents a unique experiment in terms of scale. Five different British Universities have been involved in 9 projects on courses designed to upgrade teachers from 31 public universities. In terms of quantitative impact, there has so far been a 75% success rate with 96/124 teachers gaining their undergraduate or postgraduate qualifications.

● Secondly, holding the training programme in
Mexico represents a significant success in terms of
cost/effectiveness and cost/benefit. During the
1991/1995 phase, 78 teachers successfully followed
the MAP training programme in Mexico, whereas a
similar budget from the British Government could
only have supported 22 Mexican teachers studying
for the same qualification on a full-time basis in UK.
In cost/benefit terms 78 teachers rather than 22
teachers have successfully gained their certificates -
meaning that Mexican Universities have so far
gained 56 more qualified teachers than would have
been the case if they had gone to UK.

For us it also represents a significant experience - not only in
terms of low unit cost, but also in terms of cost sharing. The
figure used to calculate the cost/benefit of training in Mexico
versus training in UK does not take into account the financial
contribution of SEP, the participating Universities and the

individuals concerned. SEP have contributed to the participants transport and accommodation costs. The host University for each taught module has been generous in its allocation of seminar rooms and administrative support, and has contributed to the accommodation in Mexico of visiting British lecturers. And in many cases, the teachers have had additional expenses that they have met themselves. DFID paid tuition fees, book presentations, air fares for British tutors and management costs.

The fourth aspect of the programme that represents an innovation for DFID is the scope and scale of this Impact Study. The original plan was to undertake a traditional approach to evaluating the programme using a team of external consultants. However I was convinced by the presentations that I observed at Puerta Vallarta of the Western Masters and the Central Universities Diploma programmes in January 1996, that no external evaluation study could do justice to the impact of the programme in the

way that those who have directly benefited from the training can do. The survey of personal involvement in institutional change I conducted among a sample of 34 teachers (from 25 Universities) in February 1997 confirmed this conviction.

2 Assessing impact

This Impact Study is participatory because we hope that since February, the teachers in the scheme will have been engaged in researching the different areas where they think the MAP programme has affected their institution. It is participatory because the exercise should also have involved colleagues from the same Department or Language Centre (who have not necessarily undergone training).

The exercise will be formative because we anticipate that the following outcomes will emerge from the presentations:

They will demonstrate the value of what teachers have been

doing as a result of their training to their own University authorities (and to others in the region).

They will highlight the quantitative and qualitative impact of their training. We realise that it will be impossible to extrapolate the effect of the Advanced Professionalisation Programme per se. Hence the impact exercise takes into account the cumulative effect of COTE, advanced training and SAC programmes funded by SEP and the BC. Most Universities have been affected to a greater or lesser extent by all three, and some teachers have been involved in all 3 as well.

The process of researching quantitative and qualitative impact will have helped to enhance the professionalism of those involved, and will hopefully encourage the Departments or Language Centres to set up procedures and mechanisms for monitoring the impact of curriculum development and teacher training in a more systematic manner.

Our concern as a participating funding agency is that the

qualitative impact of the training is clearly demonstrated in terms of

- new teaching responsibilities and skills
- university curriculum development
- wider role as academic curriculum adviser
- new administrative responsibilities
- involvement in INSET
- involvement in autonomous learning
- new research opportunities
- wider academic exchange
- last but not least, greater professionalism

This needs to be recognised. For many teachers this means an improvement in status, and this should lead to an increase in salary. In consequence, we urge all university and ministry representatives to redouble their efforts to ensure that the British certificates awarded by the scheme are recognised in

each participating teachers place of work/host university, and of course nationally.

Impact in a programme like this can be read in four ways. In the February workshop at the British Council we explored the distinction between impact on the individual, and impact on the institution. There is also the question of impact on relations between the Universities and SEP. Finally there is the question of impact on the external funding agency, DFID.

3 Conclusion

To summarise what I have already identified as unique or innovatory, this programme demonstrates to DFID:

- the value of organising the training in Mexico (rather than in UK). I should add that, in addition to lowering the cost substantially, more women have been able to benefit;

- the value of cost sharing in order to emphasise the Mexican stake in the ownership of this project (and institutional commitment to making the most out of those cadres who have benefited from the training);

- the value of evaluation exercises/impact study conducted by the institutions themselves. This will hopefully feed into the process of qualitative change and development in each Language Department or Centre, and hence these presentations represent a first step in the on-going process of curriculum research and evaluation.

There is considerable interest in what we are doing this week in Mexico in London, because this particular approach to impact studies is in itself an innovation.

We are here to listen and learn. I am sure that we shall not be disappointed.

7.2 Sustaining Impact: the Mexican Advanced Professionalisation Project

Keith Morrow
ELT consultant

Morrow is concerned in this paper with the extent to which programmes are able to sustain the impact of their outcomes after the intervention is concluded. The paper distinguishes between *intended* and *unintended outcomes* and argues that while the former are measurable, conventional summative methods cannot evaluate the latter. The author argues that if the unintended outcomes are to be known at all, they will be known only to the individuals who are participating in the project.

The author outlines an enterprise which was undertaken to ascertain the extent of the impact on participants in the

**Mexican Advanced Professionalisation Project (MAPP).
MAPP** was designed to upgrade the professional
qualifications of teachers working in university
schools/departments of languages, and language centres. It
also incorporated the broader aim of capacity building in the
widest sense - which was defined as teachers training and
the extent and value of contributions made to institutional
development.

The paper then outlines the kind of evaluation approach
which was used to obtain a sense of the impact made by
the project as it *simultaneously contributed to the
achievement of outcomes,* especially those related to
institutional development. The kind of approach that was
used also ensures that a broader dissemination of the
information which has been obtained will be made, and that
the evaluation will play a formative part in the building of
institutional capacity. In this way, the process of evaluation

could itself contribute to the aims of the project.

1 Introduction

The Mexican Advanced Professionalisation Project (MAPP) was set up with the support of ODA/DFID in 1991 In its simplest sense, it was a scheme to upgrade the professional qualifications of teachers working in university schools/departments of languages, and language centres. It also incorporated the broader aim of capacity building in the widest sense. In this sense, Morrow understands capacity building to mean not just the training of teachers: he defines it to include English curriculum development and institutional development. From 1991 to 1997 five British universities were involved in nine separate projects which ran courses for teachers from 31 public universities.

Towards the end of the project, it became clear that many of

the intended outcomes were not susceptible to evaluation of a conventional summative nature. While certain of the outcomes (for example, the number of participants, their success rate in obtaining target qualifications and the costs incurred) could be measured in straightforward terms, it was clear that much of the impact of the project was not easy to measure since, if it was known at all, it was known only to the individuals concerned. It was in fact unlikely that even they understood the more subtle implications of the impact since they had never been accorded any formal opportunity within the framework of the project to articulate or explore what the impact on themselves might have been.

It was therefore decided, with the active encouragement of the Mexican government, to undertake a participatory evaluation which would draw directly on the experience of the participants. Furthermore, it was decided that the evaluation should be formative in nature. It was also decided that the evaluation would not only include attempts to uncover in

retrospect the impact that **MAPP** had made, but that it would also include an exploration of ways of effectively disseminating this impact in the institutions in which participants were based. It was felt that an impact evaluation of this kind would contribute to institutional development.

2 The formulation of a participatory approach

It was decided to design an approach that would enable participants to articulate the impact that the project had had on them as individuals. This impact evaluation therefore comprised the following three elements:

A workshop/seminar held in February 1997 brought together a group of representatives from participating universities.

There was a period of approximately six months during which the participants in this workshop worked with colleagues in their own university to disseminate to others, or to set up structures to disseminate to others, an understanding of the work which they had done in the workshop and the training which they had received.

A series of regional meetings was held in the summer of 1997. Senior figures from the universities and the Mexican Ministry participated in these meetings and reported back on the impact of the project and their work in dissemination.

2.1 Objectives of the participatory impact evaluation

The evaluation had three main objectives:

- Firstly, we wanted to know how the training which

participants had received in the project had brought about change for them as individuals, and how it enabled them to contribute to change in the institutions in which they worked. This was *direct* impact evaluation.

● Secondly, we wanted to establish the best possible conditions for change to continue to take place after the project had ended. This was where our evaluation focused on *sustainability.* Our fundamental aim in this area of the project was to harmonise personal and institutional agendas, and we found that we could achieve this best by allocating to participants main responsibility for *disseminating the* results of the project.

● Thirdly, we looked for ways for participants to inform colleagues both inside and outside the institution of developments which were taking place.

2.2 Contribution of the approach to sustainability

Our review of what we achieved highlighted three issues of particular relevance to the evaluation of impact.

The close interdependence of the three areas outlined above

Sustainability (which is perhaps the key issue for the funding agency) was enhanced by an impact evaluation which involved participants and helped them to articulate the changes which had taken place in their professional lives as a result of the project. This articulation is crucial since, without it, the impact of the project may have remained hidden - even to those who participated in it. We also realised that sustainability is enhanced when participants help to disseminate information about impact. But because effective dissemination requires specific skills and procedures, we realised that participants needed to be taught such skills if

they did not already have them. Far from being self-indulgent proselytising, the teaching of such skills to participants should be viewed as a crucial aspect of sustainability.

The initial workshop was therefore much more concerned with exploring ideas about change and development on both a personal and an institutional level. It was also concerned with providing a framework in terms of which participants (1) might identify changes which had taken place in their own professional context as a direct result of the training they had received or (2) be able to say how such a training had enabled them to contribute more effectively. Some general categories were developed to group the changes identified by participants. These included:

- new teaching responsibilities and skills
- university curriculum development
- the wider role as academic curriculum adviser
- new administrative responsibilities

- involvement in INSET
- greater professionalism
- new research opportunities
- wider academic interchange

Discussion about ways in which participants could become proactive in bringing about change in their work contexts was another important feature of the workshop. On one level this involves the development of dissemination and implementation skills. It also involves the identification of appropriate action areas where sustainable *local* initiatives can have important consequences in building and strengthening the institution.

Sustainability involves helping project participants to set targets for the future.

The concept of benchmarking for ensuring the achievement of outcomes and the achievement of sustainability is a crucial

one that was unfamiliar to participants. A lot of time at the initial workshop was therefore taken up in exploring the notion of target-setting, and in exploring the different ways in which targets could be identified and set for different aspects of the work of their institutions. One of the most important outcomes of the workshop was a set of benchmarks for developing the curriculum and delivering the four different types of *Licenciatura in ELT* courses.

A striking feature that emerged during this process was the degree of difference between different institutional contexts, and hence the differences in specific targets set by participants from different institutions. In spite of this, the sharing and discussion of categories within which benchmarks could be established was a major benefit of the initial workshop. This once again emphasises just how necessary the participatory approach is. Apart from being likely to be either wrong or irrelevant in content in individual settings, externally imposed global benchmarks also fail to

involve the project participants as stakeholders in their implementation.

3 The need for different documentation for different audiences

This may seem an obvious or even a trivial point, but it is extremely significant. Traditionally, the recipients of a project report are the funding agencies, and the data they require are largely global in nature. However, it is essential, in a participatory and formative evaluation, that documentation be prepared *for the participants* and that such documentation relate to their individual experiences and needs.

In the case under discussion, we prepared a report at the end of the initial workshop and we circulated this report to all participants. It was essentially an *aide-mémoire* which described the stages of the workshop, the activities which we undertook and the rationale which supported them, the

outcomes in terms of revealed impacts, and agreed benchmarks. It also suggested strategies which participants might use for working towards attaining these benchmarks in their own institutions. Although the report was compiled by the external consultant who had been leading the workshop, it was, in a sense, the property of those who had taken part in the workshop, and was meaningful to them in a way which an externally generated impact evaluation study could never be. This focus was stressed in the introduction:

The workshop we took part in was about change resulting from the training provided under the Mexican Advanced Professionalisation Scheme (MAPS):

> ● *identifying change in the knowledge, skills and attitudes which you and your colleagues now bring to your work;*

• *defining change in the areas of activity which your institution, and other similar institutions, are now able to undertake, drawing on the training which you and your colleagues have received;*

• *setting up, implementing, and monitoring change in your institution, in terms of your work, the work of your particular department and the work of the institution as a whole.*

This report is intended to help you to review some of the ideas and the material we discussed during the workshop, and to give you guidance in putting them into practice. We hope that you will be able to use the work that we did together to introduce a policy of systematic review and development into your own work and that of your colleagues and your institution (Morrow and Treffgarne1997: i).

3 Conclusion

The overall focus of the workshop, and of the three-stage evaluation framework, was to help the participants to develop the skills they needed to foster institutional growth through their own professional development. Setting up a framework which provided the opportunity for participants to carry out research into qualitative and quantitative impact (but which placed the responsibility for the research on the participants themselves), enhanced the professionalism of those involved. It was in this way that the process of evaluation contributed to the aims of the project.

7.3 Assessing the impact of sector wide, institutional and policy outcomes

Kora Basich
Universidad Autónoma de Baja California

Mexico

In this paper Kora Basich describes the way in which the **Mexican Advanced Professionalisation Project** was assessed to determine the extent of its impact. The author begins the paper with an expression of surprise at the discovery (once the impact assessment had begun) of the extent to which the project had more than achieved its initially defined outcomes. She outlines the research approach used to gather data pertaining to impact, and indicates that that approach required participants collectively to *reflect* on the personal and communal impact that the project had made on the sector and on institutional and policy outcomes.

This paper once again reiterates that the actual research process that is employed for assessing impact can

contribute to the achievement of project goals. This, the author points out, can then move the project onto a level that exceeds the achievement of the originally anticipated aims.

1. Introduction

Our university is situated in the north-western region of Mexico – in an area which, over the last twenty years, has been transformed from an agricultural to a primarily industrial zone. This relatively new socio-economic characteristic of our region, as well as its geographical location on the border with the United States, makes English Language skills an important part of any training programme.

English Language Teaching in Mexico has been enormously professionalised during the last five years. At the university where I teach, the Universidad Autónoma de Baja California in Mexico, two major ELT training programmes were offered between 1992 and 1997.

The first programme is the Bachelor in Philosophy of Education degree (B Phil Ed), which is offered by the University College of St Mark and St John (Marjons) in association with Exeter University, and in which 23 teachers participated. Eleven of these were from my own university. This programme was financed by the ODA (now DFID), which put up the finances for the College. Our travelling expenses and subsistence were funded by the Mexican Ministry of Education. The financial management of the project was undertaken by the British Council in Mexico.

The second training programme is the Certificate for Overseas Teachers of English (COTE), which is offered by Cambridge University, and which to date has trained more than fifty teachers in three state-wide programmes. The programmes were all undertaken at my University, and we received financial support (as has been mentioned) from the Mexican Ministry of Education and organisational support

from the British Council.

2. Anticipated and unanticipated benefits

When a training process begins there are some clearly defined anticipated benefits. Our institution aimed to train teachers (in both the programmes mentioned above) so that we in future would be in a position to implement an English Teaching Programme of our own with the support of graduates from the B Phil Ed ELT course. I believe that these were clear and accomplishable goals.

When we performed an assessment of impact, we were greatly surprised when we encountered a number of unexpected consequences that had arisen out of the training programmes. Although some of these had not even been anticipated even in our long-term plans, they have proved to be enormously beneficial for both our institution and our region.

3. The approach which we used in our research impact

The methodology which we utilised to identify impact was eclectic, and our aim was to gather not only quantitative results, but also qualitative data of the kind that would enable us to identify which actions had produced the greatest impact. We designed different types of research activities in order to obtain this information.

3.1 Reflection workshop

Firstly, we planned a *reflection workshop.* This was organised so that we could bring together all the individuals who had participated in the training programmes so that they could collectively reflect on the type of work they had been doing prior to the intervention. They were required to reflect on where they were working and at what level they were operating. They were also expected to reflect on the procedures which produced change. Thus, for example, they

had to think about the extent to which their work had changed and at what stage they believed these changes to have occurred.

We then asked them to reflect on what they were doing at present, how their views had changed, and what their expectations of themselves and their institution were. In the process we induced them to think about what their training and development aims were and how they were working to accomplish these aims.

This particular exercise produced a much greater quantity of useful information than we had expected. Indeed, participants used the time allocated to thinking about themselves and the opportunity to share their experiences with others so well that they identified, in the process, many of personal benefits which, until then, they had not even considered. This process actually therefore strengthened and reinforced the aims and objectives of the project. This meant that the actual research

process contributed to the enhancement of the initial project goals.

The research process empowered the further growth and development of participants both in terms of their personal roles and their personal satisfaction and gains. But it also contributed to the enhancement of institutional and regional improvement in their areas of expertise.

3.2 The use of a questionnaire

We followed this exercise by giving each participant a questionnaire to take home for one week. Once again the *length* of time given to participants to consider their responses to the issues raised provided them each with opportunities for profound reflection. We believe that these opportunities were crucial factors in reinforcing changed practice.

3.3 Documentary research

Since we had agreed that it was necessary to obtain certain baseline data, we conducted *documentary research* by going through our own institutional database in order to find changes in programmes that were offered and changes in student and teacher characteristics. At the same time we examined our own relationships with other institutions, including educational, governmental and private institutions, in order to arrive at an understanding of how our own department had changed in terms of activities and responsibilities. We also gathered data about our own responses to change, the problems which we encountered and the way in which our aims were accomplished. We consider that one of the most important benefits of the training provided is an awareness of change and how change may be managed. We had learned a good deal about how processes could be analysed by using the *Review-Plan-Act-*

Review-Plan-Act Cycle.

4. Benchmarks

Another most important benefit which accrued from the impact analysis exercise that DFID initiated early in 1997 was that it provided us with guidelines for organising planning. Once we had conducted our baseline investigations and had acquired an adequate amount of baseline information, it was then much easier for us to see where we *had been,* how training had effected or promoted certain important changes, and where we could realistically hope to go from the point at which we had arrived. The benchmarks acted as guide. They located us in a context and enabled us to plan our own future development and growth. At the same time they offered us the opportunity to control quality and implement the programmes which we had planned.

Benchmark planning was an activity that (we found) conferred

most tangible benefits.

5. Conclusion

Our University is deeply grateful for the aid which we received from the Department for International Development and for the support which was given to us by the British Council in Mexico. We are also profoundly indebted to those British universities which involved themselves so enthusiastically in the training programmes. The effort which was invested in these particular programmes has been enormously beneficial for the individuals who were trained, for their institutions and for regional development in Mexico. As I have indicated in this paper, the benefits which have accrued go far beyond what we initially anticipated. This in itself is a testimony to both the impact and to the sustainability of the project.

7.4 Determining the unanticipated outcomes and using

these as benchmarks for future projects

Jorge Anguilar Rodriguez
The Autonomous University of Sinaloa

In this paper, Jorge Anguilar Rodriguez describes the method of assessment used in the **Mexican Advanced Professionalisation Scheme (MAPS).** He indicates that although the research design utilised in this project was similar to standard research designs used elsewhere, the *emphasis* in this kind of assessment is different. The emphasis in the research design was directed at uncovering *inter alia* the *unanticipated outcomes* – and these, once discerned, played a significant role in ensuring project sustainability. In addition, he indicates that, as a by-product, these outcomes contributed to the development of new projects. The positive unanticipated outcomes were posed

as benchmarks for the continuation of the MAPS programme. The assessment also enabled researchers to *discover capacity* among teachers. Several teachers showed enthusiasm for as well the ability to train new cadres – and this contributed to sustaining MAPS.

1 Introduction

The Autonomous University of Sinaloa (hereafter referred to as UAS) is located in the state of Sinaloa in Northwest Mexico. It has a population of 95 000 students. 11 630 of those students study at the four Language Centres of UAS in Los Mochis, Guasave, Culiacan, and Mazatlan. There are two different programmes in the language centres, the regular course for young adults and adults (which has an enrolment of 8 480 students), and the Saturday Children's Programme, with an enrolment of 3 150 children with ages ranging from 8 to 14 years old.

Both the regular courses and the children's programmes offer general English courses that teach the kind of communicative competence that children need and that adults need to make them effective communicators in their personal, academic and professional lives.

Methodology

In order to ensure the success of the impact evaluation and to have a clear framework for our evaluation, we decided to conceptualise this investigation as a process consisting of the following steps:

1. **Formulation of aims**
2. **Description of practice**
3. **Focus of investigation**
4. **Research instruments/data collection**
5. **Data analysis and interpretation**
6. **Conclusions, new goals, new projects and**

benchmarks
7. Dissemination of findings

2.1 Impact assessment as contributing to project sustainability

It is significant to note that although the above outline is similar to the conventional stages of all research enterprises, it was applied in such a way that the data gathered would be useful for the enhancement of project sustainability. Because the assessment needed to give as much attention to gauging the anticipated outcomes of the project as it did to gauging the unanticipated outcomes, each stage of the research design was considered for the what it would reveal about unanticipated outcomes. Thus, for example, stage 6 of the research outline, dwells on the importance of the establishment of new goals, new benchmarks and new projects. These arise from the uncovering of unanticipated outcomes in stage 5. For the same reason, stage 5 devotes

a considerable amount of time to identifying what positive unanticipated benefits might be ascertained from project players. The subsequent phase refers to ways that such benefits could be mainstreamed so that new benchmarks might be formulated and new projects considered in stage 6.

2.2 Aims

We decided, prior to beginning the impact study, that we needed to formulate the aims of the investigation so that we could undertake more focused research. The aims specified at that time (April 1997) were:

- to investigate the extent to which individuals who have received training have contributed to the development of our institution

- to identify the expected and unexpected effects of the changes undertaken

- to identify changes in knowledge, skills and attitudes with reference to teaching, learning and language

- to become aware of our strengths and weaknesses

- to collect data that would provide us with findings which could be used to develop a plan for future development.

2.3 Description of practice and its effectiveness

After we had formulated the aims of our impact evaluation, we felt the need to describe our practice and programmes at the language centres prior to the implementation of the **Mexican Advanced Professionalisation Scheme (MAPS).** We did this so that we could familiarise ourselves with our teaching and management practices. We believed that such a

description would lend weight to the evaluation and increase its validity and reliability. A team of teachers, administrators and academic co-ordinators were therefore subsequently involved in the process of describing practices and determining how effective they might be for meeting the needs of students, teachers, the institution and the community.

2.4 Focus of investigation

In order to be properly focused and avoid generalisations, we decided to determine, by way of analysis, the key areas that needed investigation. It was decided, after analysis, that the following areas needed assessment:

(1) Knowledge, skills and attitudes
(2) Teaching, learning and language
(3) Curriculum components

- syllabus
- materials
- assessment
- goals

In addition to these, it was necessary to gauge the *expected and unexpected* benefits as well as positive and negative effects of the project. This of course had implications for the choice of the research instruments.

2.5 Research instruments

Once we had agreed on the focus of investigation, we analysed various research instruments in order to find those that would be appropriate for assessing the areas to which we had assigned priority (those listed above). We found that practical and easy-to-implement instruments seemed to us to be the most appropriate. In order to make this part of the process more *valid* and *reliable,* certain contextual factors

were taken into consideration. The research instruments which we ultimately chose were interviews, questionnaires, surveys, group activities and documentary evidence.

2.6 Data collection

We then decided to interview a few teachers on an individual basis in order to arrive at an understanding of personal involvement in institutional change. We planned, in this way, to collect data about individual and institutional change.

> • Teachers were firstly asked to comment on their performance and on how they had viewed themselves before, during and after their training. To our surprise, we found that the *unanticipated benefits* and *outcomes* of the training that teachers received seemed directly related to the degree of their involvement.

● Secondly, we involved teachers in a group activity which comprised a series of tasks which would give us information about the effects of professional and institutional change. The teachers who were thus involved stated that they were surprised to discover how they had developed as professionals. They also indicated that they were willing to help in the development of our institution - thus contributing to project sustainability. The unanticipated benefits identified in the first part of this process were reinforced and discussed by the teachers in group activities. Questionnaires and surveys were used to collect the remainder of the data.

2.7 Data analysis and interpretation

Once the data had been collected, we met to analyse and interpret all the data. We were both surprised and gratified as we identified, at the meeting, more evidence of both

anticipated and unanticipated outcomes and benefits. This process also made us more aware that we needed to create the conditions which would maximise the potential inherent in the training, attitudes and willingness of teachers to participate more actively in the development of new programmes and projects in our institution.

We may say, by way of summary, that the data analysis and interpretation stage made us aware of the hitherto unrealised potential of our situation, and this motivated us to embark upon new attempts to professionalise English language teaching. Such attempts were necessary if we hoped to improve the quality of the service given to the community - not only in our institution but also in other institutions, both public and private.

2.8 Analysis of anticipated and unanticipated benefits

The unanticipated benefits, which were discerned in the

process, were:

- greater professionalism
- better problem management/identification
- better job opportunities for women
- having more women in key positions
- institutional development
- interest in teacher training and education
- interest in postgraduate education
- more academic dialogue
- decision making that results in learner benefits
- awareness of the teachers' role in the education system
- awareness of change
- a new conceptualisation of teaching, learning and language
- learning how to learn and autonomous learning
- more learner-centred decision making more

reflective/analytical teachers
- an interest in research
- management of change

3 New goals, benchmarks and projects

The research process played an important role in identifying the benefits of both the anticipated and unanticipated outcomes. The determination of unanticipated outcomes in particular played a profoundly significant role in shaping how the programme would be conducted in the future. The positive unanticipated outcomes illuminated possible ways of taking the project forward and also suggested other, related possible projects. It was for this reason that the assessment focused heavily on the implications of the unanticipated outcomes in our context and institution as well as on what these outcomes meant for the project and for sustaining practice. The positive outcomes (both anticipated and anticipated) were treated as explicit benchmarks and goals

for our current and future projects and programmes – and hence for the sustainability and further enhancement of the project.

As a result of the identification and definition of expected and unexpected benefits, we initiated several changes in our current programmes and projects and gave every encouragement to those who would have to carry them out. All these factors had far-reaching effects on project sustainability.

4 Dissemination of findings

We then attended a conference in Tijuana, Mexico, to present, describe and share the data which we had collected, the anticipated and unanticipated benefits, and our perceptions of the impact which the changes had effected. During this same conference, representatives from universities in north-west Mexico presented the impact which

the Mexican Advanced Professionalisation Scheme has made in their institutions.

In addition, we organised a meeting in which we shared all details of our process as well as the expected and unexpected outcomes which we had identified and which are the subject of this paper.

5 Conclusion

We should like to state, in conclusion, that there are implicit and explicit benefits which arise out of impact evaluation studies. The most important of these, in my view, are the following:

- Impact studies raise awareness of the potentials and weaknesses of an institution.

- Impact studies make administrators and teachers

aware of their new knowledge and skills, and their academic potential for developmental purposes.

- Teachers become aware of their important role in the education system

- Teachers become more involved and confident, and show a willingness to support the development of English language teaching.

We have become aware that English language skills are an essential asset for the development of the Universidad Autonoma de Sinaloa and for the whole of Mexico, and that our role as teachers and/or teacher-trainers is of paramount importance for the development of these skills. Finally, we should like to affirm that the benefits of the findings for project sustainability were immeasurable.

8. ANTICIPATED/UNANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

8.1 Anticipated and unanticipated project benefits
8.2 The PROSPER Impact Study: A consideration of sector wide outcomes
8.3 Research and evaluation in DPEP: A review of current practices and future strategies in impact assessment
8.4 Concluding comments from the DFID Education Division

8.1 Anticipated and unanticipated project benefits

Mfanwenkosi Malaza
Mpumalanga Primary Schools Initiative
Mpumalanga, South Africa

In this paper, Mfanwenkosi Malaza focuses on the *types* of impact made by the **Mpumalanga Primary Schools Initiative (MPSI).** The **MPSI** was one of the first major DFID project partnerships with a provincial government in South Africa. The project was initiated shortly after the first democratic elections in 1994. The aim of the **MPSI** is to improve primary school learners' knowledge and skills in Mathematics, English Language and Science by providing integrated support for pre-service and in-service teachers' training.

In this paper, the author argues that the determination of a project's benefits is more complex than it appears at face value. He juxtaposes his discussion of project benefits against the background of the **MPSI** project. The paper begins with an elaboration of a variety of outcomes achieved by the **MPSI.** The author distinguishes between *anticipated* and *unanticipated* outcomes and argues that every project has a shade of both *intended* and *unintended* outcomes, whether they are positive or not. Very often, the impact of the unintended outcomes far outweighs the intended ones from the local people's point of view.

Anticipated outcomes, he states, are conceptualised in the project planning stage, guided by the project goal and stated in the project log-frame. These, he suggests, are best gleaned by utilising quantitative methods.

He proceeds to elaborate on the unanticipated outcomes which are not projected at the start of the intervention but

nevertheless make a significant impact. He argues that these need also to be considered when evaluating project impact. He cautions that in identifying the unanticipated benefits, it is necessary to look at the wider context of a project's operational environment in order to guard against attributing effects to the project that are incidental to it – but that may not necessarily result directly from it.

1 Introduction

An outgoing deputy minister of education was once quoted as saying to his colleague:

> *Well, the hard work is done. We have the policy passed; now all you have to do is implement it (Fullan 1991: 65).*

It may well be that hard work has, indeed, been done, but what the Honourable Deputy Minister conveniently ignored

was that the processes beyond adoption of educational change are more intricate and complicated than mere adoption because warm-blooded people are involved and real change is at stake. Implementation consists of a process of putting into practice an idea, a programme or a set of activities and structures that are new to the people who are involved or who are expected to change. According to Fullan (1991), commitment to what should be changed often varies inversely with knowledge about how to work through a process of change. In fact, he argues that strong commitment to a particular change may be a barrier to setting up an effective process of change. It is significant, therefore, to try and understand both the dynamics of change and the process by which change occurs in a school or society in order to interpret the meaning of the evaluation data.

2 Methods of measuring impact

Carol A. Carrier (1990) makes the point that, traditionally, programme evaluators in developing countries have been more effective in assessing the quality of *inputs* than of *outputs,* simply because inputs are less controversial. It is easy to count the number of textbooks supplied and the number of lessons taught or workshops given. Project evaluation has traditionally been quantitative and characterised by the development of standardised tests and questionnaires, the production of data from large samples of schools and individuals, and the analysis of these data by various statistical methods.

While, in principle, there is nothing wrong with this traditional approach to evaluating projects, there is a case to be made for using *illuminative* research methods. There is a real danger in the exclusive use of quantitative methods where either a qualitative method or a combination of the two methods might have been more appropriate. It is hard to see

how questionnaire surveys can penetrate the gap between *word and deed* in the evaluation of projects. Quantitative methods tend to concentrate only on what can be measured and only on the *intended* outcomes. Every project has a shade of both *intended* and *unintended* outcomes, whether positive or not. And, very often, the unintended outcomes far outweighs the intended ones from the local people's point of view.

Qualitative methods tend to be more illuminative and are primarily concerned with description and interpretation rather than measurement and prediction. Illuminative evaluation seeks to establish how a project operates and how it is influenced by a variety of school situations. It seeks to discern the critical project processes and the most significant features of project impact. Patton (1988) accordingly argues for a commitment to broadening the use of educational research strategies to include a full range of quantitative and
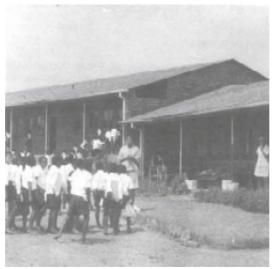
qualitative methodologies.

A good example of a balanced approach to assessing a project impact is illustrated in the case of the **Mpumalanga Primary Schools Initiative (MPSI). MPSI** implementers developed instruments that could be used in school visits to collect data through interviews and observations. The information gathered is not a product of a robust scientific investigation but is nevertheless of value and is fed back into the MPSI planning processes and clinics, which are held once a term. This feedback then informs (in a formative manner) the operations of the project.[1]

Mpumalanga is one of the nine provinces in South Africa. The **MPSI** is the first major **DFID** project with a provincial government after the 1994 general elections, which brought about democracy. The aim of the **MPSI** it to improve primary school learners' knowledge and skills in Mathematics, English

Language and Science through providing integrated support for pre-service and in-service teachers' training. In order to achieve this aim, **MPSI** utilises the expertise of Technical Co-operation Officers (TCOs), Subject Advisers, College-based Teachers' Centre Implementers, NGOs, and local and external consultants from the link institution.

The Project is being implemented in 74 schools, which are clustered into groups of between five and seven. A total of 185 primary school teachers participate in the project's activities.

3 Project outcomes

As with all projects, the **MPSI** achieved a number of
outcomes that were initially defined in the project planning
stage. These were anticipated and were guided by the goal
of the project. The project also evidenced a number of
outcomes that were not anticipated - benefits which had a

far-reaching impact on the sector.

3.1 Anticipated project outcomes

The anticipated outcomes were those which were conceptualised and envisaged prior to the start of the intervention. They were informed by the goal of the project. The following projected outcomes were incorporated in the **MPSI** logical framework:

- improved College of Education management

- enhanced knowledge, understanding and skills for primary teacher education on the part of the College of Education staff

- new professional training curricula and subject-specific syllabi for initial and continuing teacher education, conforming to the South African

Committee of Teacher Education Policy and the National Qualifications Framework guidelines, and reflecting agreed provincial Department of Education policy on teacher education

● enhanced teaching skills by intermediate phase (Grades 4 - 6) teachers of Science, Mathematics and English within school clusters linked to functioning teachers' centres

● improved teacher support services in those school clusters linked to functioning teachers' centres

● teacher understanding and implementation of the *areas of learning* curriculum for the general education intermediate phase within the school clusters linked to functioning teachers' centres

3.2 Unanticipated project outcomes

A number of outcomes were not anticipated. These non-projected outcomes were outcomes resulting from **MPSI** activities, which may can be described as stop-gap activities and which did not form part of the project's core activities. For this reason, they are, therefore, not reflected on the log-frame. Some of the most important of these are:

- the development of principals of schools participating in the **MPSI** so that they are able to the role of instructional leadership

- the establishment of a network of teachers' centres

- the evolution of a comprehensive provincial INSET strategy with a five-year development plan

4 The intended benefits of the MPSI

As indicated above, the anticipated outcomes are meant to contribute to the intended project benefits. In order to gain a sense of the benefits, the **MPSI** developed a monitoring tool that takes into account both the qualitative and the quantitative progression of the project. While the instrument measures change in teaching and learning, it nevertheless allows the intended outcomes to be expressed in a quantifiable form in accordance with the verifiable indicators outlined in the project log-frame.

It must be mentioned that, at the time of writing, the **MPSI** is yet to undergo full-scale external evaluation and that, for this reason, any opinion expressed about the project's benefits may at best be described as preliminary. More robust scientific evidence still needs to be gathered to support these pronouncements. In the interim, pronouncements are based on the evidence gathered through the internal monitoring mechanisms referred to above and also through numerous

interactions with the **MPSI** target groupings. What follows is a list of the benefits that may be attributed to the **MPSI** project.

4.1 Implementation benefits

There was a range of outcomes which pertained to the actual form of teaching and learning interaction. The most significant of these are:

- **Individualised instruction**

There is sufficient data to suggest a definite change of the teaching-learning process towards more individualised instruction and group work. One of the shortcomings of the learning environment, both at school and college of education level, was the exclusive use of a teacher-centred, whole-class teaching approach based predominantly on *chalk-and-talk.* Teachers who are participating in the

MPSI activities are experimenting with a variety of teaching methods which are discussed at workshops and further developed at the cluster group meetings.

● Experiential learning

Teachers are increasingly resorting to hands-on experiential activities based on teaching learning materials developed from cheap recyclable materials. Special attention has been paid to imparting skills for developing such learning materials. Hitherto, commercially produced learning materials were left in the storerooms because it was feared that they might either be lost or broken.

● Gaining of insight

Learners are challenged to arrive at conclusions by

logical and, wherever possible, practical means. The learning environment is becoming increasingly cooperative rather than competitive. Group work and assignments encourage learners to cooperate with one another. The rote learning of formulas and theorems is gradually giving way to gaining insight into concepts.

4.2 Impact on learners

There is sufficient evidence to suggest an improvement in learners' attitude towards schooling.

In schools where the learner-centred approach is gaining momentum, the incidence of learners dodging lessons is decreasing. The project seems to have encouraged regular school attendance either by what it does or by virtue of its presence at the *selected* schools. Regular attendance results in learners' improved scholastic performances. No attempt

has yet been made to compare scholastic performance of project schools with that of non-project schools.

4.3 Impact on teachers

There is sufficient evidence to suggest some degree of improvement in the teachers' mastery of pedagogical skills - a change which has resulted in a change in their classroom behaviour. Project teachers are becoming more open to, and comfortable with, team teaching and peer tutoring. Teacher-to-teacher relations, teacher-to-management relations and teacher-to-learner relations show some improvement. These changes may be attributed to an improvement in teacher self-confidence and self-image, which may in turn be the result of external support from the project. The fact that teachers interact with TCOs and offshore consultants, who bring with them international perspectives and experiences, serves as a major motivating factor. If one may judge from the amount of work covered with learners and attendance at workshops

and cluster meetings, there is a marked improvement in their commitment to teaching.

4.4 Impact on school

Some schools are looking into ways of improving their resource provisioning. The Department of Education has been approached with requests to have billboards for advertising erected on school premises. Advertisers will be charged a fee and the income will be used to provide or improve facilities. Although there is some indication that some schools are already replicating such initiatives, the way schools are organised is still a problem. There is a clear need for developing school principals so that they can manage schools in the manner that facilitates the new approach. Overcrowded classrooms and traditional time-tabling prove to be major constraints. These are issues that may require another kind of intervention.

5 MPSI unintended benefits

The following main unintended benefits of the **MPSI** intervention have been identified.

5.1 Improved ability to deal with change

Schools participating in the **MPSI** programme appear to be less threatened by the challenges of educational changes, which are spearheaded by the National Department of Education. The exposure to the innovative instructional approaches is strengthening the schools' ability to carry out further changes. Principals are increasingly assuming the role of instructional leaders. School management is becoming more supportive of the teachers and vice versa. Individual teachers are emerging as curriculum leaders at their schools and cluster meetings.

5.2. Reduced learner migration to more advantaged

schools

Since 1994, schools have been open to all. Wherever it was possible, learners from disadvantaged schools have left for more advantaged schools. Parents who could afford the travelling costs tended to bus their children to these schools. The **MPSI** has had the effect of reversing this learner-migration. While this reversal could be attributed to the impact of the **MPSI** programme, there are other contributory factors which could account for the reversal of migration. It would be inaccurate to attribute everything to the project as such. In the current economic climate, not all parents can afford the cost of sending their children to the former model C schools, as they are popularly known. Besides, the means of transport is not always reliable and there have been some gruesome accidents to vehicles carrying learners who travel to these schools. Whatever claim is made should be made against the background of these factors.

5.3 Willingness of schools to participate in the MPSI

Schools were keen to participate in the **MPSI.** Initially schools were not selected for participation in the **MPSI** according to specific criteria. However, due to popular demand, all schools in a particular area had to be included. The popular demand has to be seen against the background of the context of teacher development in the country. Since the introduction of performance-related payment, in principle, teacher development has become a bread and butter issue with teachers' unions which expect the **MPSI** project to level the playing field. Schools therefore had to be taken onto the project incrementally rather than selectively. This meant that all the schools in a particular area had to be drawn in. For some reason, however, schools that are already on board seem to interpret their participation in the project as an affirmation of some sort. The school governing bodies' support and commitment to their schools' success has

improved. The governing bodies are ensuring greater participation in schools' activities by the parent communities.

6 Conclusion

In conclusion, it is necessary to reiterate the purpose of this paper, which is to look specifically at the positive effects (benefits) of projects by extrapolating some lessons from the **MPSI.** It needs to be said that projects have ripple effects within their operational environment. Some of which are positive and others are not; some are immediate while others take time to appear. It is our view that the real effects of the **MPSI** (and similar projects) will show *long after* the project has run its course. This is true of all quality interventions in the classroom. It is for that reason that we emphasise the preliminary nature of the findings with regard to the **MPSI** benefits.

Nonetheless we believe that the findings give a strong

indication of what may be expected when a fully- fledged impact study is commissioned. It is necessary to examine the wider context of a project's operational environment if we hope to guard against the attribution of project effects that are merely incidental and not proven consequences. A classic example of just such a case may be found in the reversed learner-migration from the formerly disadvantaged schools discussed above. In all impact assessments, one needs to take the context of the intervention into account. By the same token, one needs to take into account the fact that schools associated with an external intervention of one kind or another tend to gain some political and social clout. This is apart from what a project may or may not do. Simply put, the determination of a project's benefits is a more complex process than prima facie it may appear to be. It is for this reason that we advocate a judicious utilisation of both qualitative and quantitative approaches in project impact studies.

Footnote

1. At the time of writing, the project yet to be
evaluated formally.

8.2 The PROSPER Impact Study: A consideration of sector wide outcomes

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Roy Cross
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This paper deals with an assessment of the impact of the
**Project for Special Purpose English in Romania
(PROSPER).**

The paper elucidates the approach employed in the evaluation intended to gauge the impact made by **PROSPER** on the ESP teaching/learning process and on the various stakeholders participating in the project. The paper outlines the underlying methodology of the impact assessment and highlights findings pertaining to the differences made by **PROSPER** to participating teachers, students, former students, managers, employers, foreign language departments and participating educational institutions from both Romania and the UK.

In addition to measuring the impact of the project, the paper makes specific reference to sectoral impact. It refers to the ways in which the *ripple* effects of **PROSPER** impacted broadly on the sector – and even on institutions which were not participating in **PROSPER.**

The first part of the paper draws attention to the methods which were used to identify areas of impact focus. It also

examines the criteria underlying the development of research instruments and makes reference to the way in which the national evaluation was administered.

The latter part outlines the findings of the investigation and the impact made – both intended and unintended – on the various stakeholders. Specific reference is also made to the significant ripple effect engendered by **PROSPER** in the broader ESP sector in both local and regional contexts.

1 PROSPER's aims and objectives

PROSPER was set up in 1991 with the expressed aim of upgrading the teaching/learning of ESP in major tertiary educational institutions in Romania. The project was seen as being indispensable to improving the English proficiency of students who would one day be members of some of the key professions in the Romanian economy, such as engineering,

economics and medicine. The design of **PROSPER** took account of prevailing conditions and the limits on resources. The project framework was developed in collaboration with a variety of stakeholders who contributed to the formulation of the project's purpose and goals as well as to the outputs necessary for their achievement. One major decision, taken at the outset, was that the project would deal with ESP on a national rather than on a regional or institutional level. It was felt that this *going-to-scale* would achieve a greater impact.

The project started by initially involving six major higher education institutions from across Romania - five Polytechnic universities and the Academy of Economic Studies in Bucharest. After 1991, the project gradually expanded to include the English departments in the faculties of economics and medicine of various universities in Romania. In total, 16 institutions participated in the programme and 124 teachers received various types of **PROSPER** training.

The project's aim was to be achieved by:

- providing UK and in-country training in communicative methodology for ESP teachers

- firstly, developing skills in ESP curriculum development, course design, materials development and, thereafter, by providing on-going support for teachers in these areas

- establishing ESP resource centres at identified institutions

- encouraging networking among ESP practitioners in Romania through the medium of national conferences and regular meetings

- encouraging networking among ESP counterparts in other countries through the medium of

international conferences and a newsletter

Although it was obvious, during the years of project implementation, that **PROSPER** was making significant achievements in a variety of areas that relate to teachers' professional expertise, it became evident that it was necessary to attempt a formal estimation of these achievements and to assess the participants' perceptions of these achievements of their own practices. It was therefore decided to embark on a full-scale impact study which would include all **PROSPER** teachers (whether respondents or researchers, or both). It is believed that an impact study of this magnitude and nature might be the first ESP evaluation of this kind in Europe. Local teachers, in consultation with Prof. Charles Alderson of the University of Lancaster, undertook to implement the investigation. Through this association, teachers were drawn into all stages of the impact study, from the actual project design stage through to the verification and final documentation of the findings.

2 Identifying areas of project impact

The collaborative group of *teacher-researchers* concurred that the impact study should be undertaken on a national scale and that it should review all the main areas of ESP. It was agreed that one of the main goals of **PROSPER** was the professionalisation[1] of teachers. It was suggested that this aim would be further enhanced if teachers were to be engaged to participate in the impact investigation.

The collection of data which would reflect the impact of **PROSPER** on all categories of stakeholders and across all the relevant project areas – including ESP teaching methods, materials development, management, and so on – was considered necessary for the national investigation. Although the impact study was designed to identify changes that were anticipated in the project document, it was also designed to

identify and document *unpredicted* and *unexpected* changes. This was to ensure that the investigation obtained evidence of impact from as many levels as possible. Its findings would thus be even more comprehensive and significant. The focus of the impact project was therefore broadened to include not only the individual participants, project classrooms and project-based institutions: in addition, it was directed to examine possible impact on the ESP sector and on the profession in general. The investigation was therefore extended to examine any *ripple effect* project might have had on other parts of society.

2.1 Defining the focus

An initial brainstorming exercise was conducted to identify the kind of impact **PROSPER** might have had and to establish which locations should be examined as sites of project impact. The brainstorming exercise was carried out with the members of the impact study team, and took account of their

own perceptions, as well as on the results of similar brainstorming exercises which they had carried out in their own departments or institutions.

PROSPER was expected to have made the following kinds of impact on the various sites or stakeholders:

Site of impact	FORMS OF IMPACT IDENTIFIED IN THE BRAINSTORM SESSIONS
Classrooms	● Teaching methods should shift to being more learner-centred ● The roles of teachers and students should become more dialogical
Teachers	● Teachers should use more communicative teaching methods ● Teachers should develop a wide range of

	professional skills • There should be increased co-operation among teachers
Students	• Student participation should increase • Students employability should be enhanced
Materials and resources	• The project should publish at least three (locally) produced textbooks
Tests	• Teachers on the project should be enabled to use *a* diversity of appropriate methods for assessing learners competencies
ESP institutions	• The status of ESP teachers within institutions should be enhanced
Creation of new institutions	• There should be an increase in the number of language centres
Other	• There should be broad dissemination of

Other projects in the region	• There should be broad dissemination of documentation pertaining to the project
	• Project achievements should be publicised
	• There should be increased interaction between local project members and their counterparts In British universities There should be broad dissemination of materials! produced by the project

It is obvious from the above list of possible areas of impact and from the diverse nature of the stakeholders, that the impact was expected to be much broader than was initially anticipated (or documented) in the original aims of **PROSPER.**

As will be discussed in section 4, the impact on stakeholders was indeed found to be much broader than was initially

anticipated. For example, if the original aim was to upgrade the teaching of English by training teachers in a communicative ESP methodology, the findings showed that the impact on teachers was much broader than that which had been suggested when the project aim had been formulated. Teachers not only improved their classroom teaching skills; they also developed a repertoire of skills which contributed to a higher level of professionalism. Teachers displayed increased accomplishments in material writing, lesson presentation, research and entrepreneurial skills. Apart from individual achievements, **PROSPER** created a sense of commitment and an awareness of a common cause among its participants. This *collectiveness* contributed to the development of a professional community of ESP teachers - a collectivity with its own identity, which was able to work towards the achievement of shared goals.

3 Research approach

When the impact assessment team designed the research approach, they found that it was necessary to make the above list of criteria operationalisable through categorising criteria and then using the resultant categories as the basis for items to be included in the various instruments. To give one example, the *Classroom Observation Chart* designed for this assessment was used to collect data about what actually happens in classes - thereby detecting trends in the teaching/learning process. This chart enabled researchers to identify those areas in which the project had made a significant impact as well as those areas in which improvement was still required. The following features of a good **PROSPER** classroom were identified (they were based on the perceptions of teachers who had been involved in the conceptualisation of the project and its accompanying philosophy):

- There is increased student involvement in

classroom decisions.

● Teachers focus more on teaching skills than on language structures.

● A wide range of learning tasks and materials which focus on communication are used.

● Increased classroom interaction is evidenced by pair and group work.

● Teachers exhibit effective classroom management skills.

● Teachers use a diverse range of techniques for the correction of errors.

● Teachers maintain a collaborative classroom atmosphere and this encourages students to take

the initiative.

These features were included in the observation instrument. In many cases, it was necessary to make the feature operationalisable by breaking down the characteristic into a checklist of types of activities which could be used to demonstrate the achievement of competence. Questions based on the observation sheet were included in the teachers' and students' questionnaires and were used as a means of triangulating the data.

In addition to the triangulation of data, the project team attempted to ensure that all findings could be compared with comparable data which was usually drawn from the baseline study or from non-project institutions.

The first set of instruments was administered across the board, both to project and non-project institutions and to respondents. These instruments included the:

• **Student questionnaire**

This was designed to explore the attitudes of students and their perceptions of changes/improvements.
It was administered to 1039 PROSPER and 449 non-PROSPER respondents

• **Teacher questionnaire**

This focused on teaching abilities and on the development of teaching skills. This was administered to 104 PROSPER and 51 non-PROSPER teachers.

• **Teacher questionnaire and focus group interviews**

These explored perceptions of the way in which

PROSPER was managed. A project management questionnaire was designed by the management team in 'conjunction with the researchers. PROSPER members were required to record their perceptions on the effectiveness of the project management. This was administered to 98 PROSPER teachers across 8 institutions

● **Classroom observation chart**

The chart contained a checklist of teaching/learning activities which could be observed.
59 PROSPER and 25 non-PROSPER classes were observed and rated in terms of the checklist.

● **Ex-student questionnaire**

This was intended to track former students and to compare their abilities and employment

opportunities with former students who were not part of the PROSPER project.
This was administered to 101 PROSPER and 51 non-PROSPER respondents.

● **Employer questionnaire**

This questionnaire was aimed at the employers of former students and was intended to ascertain their perceptions of the abilities of PROSPER students. This was administered to 46 respondents.

● **Documentary analysis of tests and materials**

It was necessary to undertake an evaluation/analysis of the various kinds of materials (including textbooks, class tests) that were used during the PROSPER programme and to compare

these with those used before the project intervention and those used by institutions not involved in the project.
A comparative analysis of 58 PROSPER, 15 pre-PROSPER and 17 non-PROSPER tests was done.
A comparative analysis of 2 PROSPER, 1 non-PROSPER and 2 pre-PROSPER textbooks was carried out.

● **Case studies**
A case study analysis aimed at tracking former students and evaluating their abilities in their places of employment.
4 PROSPER and 4 non-PROSPER cases were examined.

● **Descriptions of ripple effects and confirmation of their impact was carried out.**

6 different types of statements were analysed.
(This is discussed in more detail in section 3.1
below.)

3.1 Measuring the unintended outcomes

Since it was evident that the project had achieved many
outcomes which were not previously anticipated, it decided
that the research design should make a specific effort to
identify and measure those outcomes which had not been
anticipated at the inception of the project.

Since the ripple effects were broad and varied, the project
team conceptualised an approach which could be used to
measure and *validify* the diversity of outcomes that were
identified. It was decided that one instrument could not be
used across the spectrum of outcomes. When the
researchers identified an *unintended outcome,* they wrote a

brief description of the *outcome* and the *impact* that it might have made. This description was given to those participants who were affected by the outcome and they were required to complete, modify, confirm or disconfirm the description as they thought appropriate. The amended versions were then used as a measure of these outcomes.

It was found that this method of identifying and *measuring* the impact of unintended outcomes gave insight into the magnitude of the **PROSPER** project. The list was long and varied. Much of the information gained in this way was useful in documenting the impact and recommendations for future practice.

4. Sector wide outcomes

PROSPER was responsible for impacting on the sector in a number of different ways. The most salient of these are:

● **The impact of devolved project management**

Many of the outcomes of the project management impacted on the sector insofar as they had implications for other projects in the region and/or for the management structure of British Council projects in general. These outcomes were discerned in the process of interpreting the data collected through the various stages of the research process.

For example, the findings on the management of **PROSPER** appeared to be relevant to project institutions and to the British Council management who had been associated with **PROSPER** during its implementation. The findings thus have relevance for the management of similar projects elsewhere.

One of the notable features of management was that all project members were involved in all the

stages of project design. This meant that the implementation was based on the joint decisions of project members. The **PROSPER** experience has shown that the incorporation of this local component into the project management does much to build in a sense of ownership. As an unintended consequence, devolved decision-making seemed to extend to other projects in the region (like the Ukraine baseline studies) or to other similar projects being implemented in Russia. The local management promoted from within the *project family* maintains the sense of project ownership, and increased local ownership of project responsibilities -budgetary as well as academic.

● **The shift from outside control towards local ownership**

The idea of local control was extended beyond the

realms of the **PROSPER** project to other unrelated projects in the sector. In several cases, previously London-appointed positions were transferred to local teachers who had been empowered to fill these positions.

● **Consultative mechanisms**

One of the successful structures created by **PROSPER** for consulting its members is the annual heads of department meeting. This structure was replicated elsewhere, as, for example, by the Uni-schools project in Romania, and it has also inspired the adoption of focus groups and national consultation groups.

● **Regional networking**

The creation of a national team, which all

PROSPER teachers perceive as the main achievement of the project, has strengthened the importance of teamwork for achieving and maintaining quality standards. A regional ESP network was created and has been sustained since 1994. Different countries taking turns in organising annual meetings. Even some western countries have recently adopted the idea of regional networks. The Anti-Conference in Switzerland is one such example. The value of these networks for disseminating information and planning joint events is immense and as the feedback from participants who attend the regional meetings suggest, **PROSPER** has been a source of inspiration and an explicit model for new regional developments.

● **Materials development**

Material writing by national teams is one such

development which has inspired other projects in the region. The advisers of the ESP project in Hungary have confirmed that, in addition to using the **PROSPER** materials as a basis for teacher development, the Romanian experience has raised awareness of the feasibility and desirability of adopting a team-based approach to material development.

● **Increased professional skills**

The variety of project events and the involvement of project members in decision-making have led to the development of a whole range of professional skills. Among these is the increase in teachers' self-confidence and the development of teachers' organisational and managerial skills. These necessitate a special mention since they have implications for project sustainability.

● **The establishment of other language centres**

The Language Centres (LANGCEN) project, which was born out of **PROSPER,** has founded a group of five language centres which function as self-funding service units at different points in the country.

● **International impact**

The British institutions which have been associated with the project have also been affected by their need to respond to the requirements of **PROSPER.** The Institute for English Language Education at Lancaster University, which was involved in the design phase of the project, responded by making a number of changes to their courses. They now continually develop and adapt the courses offered to **PROSPER** teachers and take the diverse and changing needs of the five groups who attended

their courses over the project lifespan into account.

Manchester University, responsible for the delivery of a series of distance-learning modules which lead to an M Ed degree, has constantly revised its distance delivery style and the content of modules which were designed for Romania.

- **Code of project practice**

Finally, it might be argued, on the basis of the outcomes claimed by the project, that **PROSPER** made a significant, and to some extent, a global impact on project practice in the Council. One of the outcomes of this impact was that a code of practice for grant-funded project management was created.

5 Conclusion

The findings of this impact study reflect the kinds of changes that have taken place in the ESP profession in Romania through the influence of **PROSPER.** Although the study reflects the complexity of ESP teaching and learning in a particular country, it may also attain to a wider relevance by contributing to a better understanding of the project approach and to managing innovation in ELT and in education in general. The research process itself may be of relevance to teachers who are involved in educational projects and who may wish to study the effects of those projects in detail. The impact study, like many other **PROSPER** developments, calls for reflection on the nature of the teaching profession and on what seem to be false boundaries between teachers, academics, researchers, and course and materials designers. The teachers involved in educational projects and processes of innovation may (as the project shows) take on quite complex and unexpected roles.

Footnote

1. Professionalisation here refers to their ESP teaching abilities, their abilities in doing research, in materials, course and curriculum design and also to their own perceptions of being *professional* as was evidenced by their self-evaluation.

8.3 Research and evaluation in DPEP: A review of current practices and future strategies in impact assessment

Roopa Joshi
District Primary Education Programme
Government of India

In this paper, Roopa Joshi attempts to provide a review of a critical area of project management in the **District Primary**

Education Programme (DPEP), namely that of the practices and strategies employed in the assessment of project outcomes. She illuminates three issues which the assessment was intended to address:

- Firstly, it was necessary to address the question of *how* the **DPEP** impact assessment model should be designed. The *how,* she suggests, refers to the design on both a conceptual and operational level.

- Secondly, it was necessary to consider the content and range of existing **DPEP** practice as it manifested across the various states and at various levels of decision-making. In terms of this, it was pertinent to establish *how* this practice might influence the various stakeholders of the project.

- And thirdly, it is necessary to consider *what* the possible way forward might be for **DPEP** in the

arena of assessment research. Her paper
elaborates on these issues.

1 Introduction

This paper attempts to provide a review of a critical area of
project management in **DPEP,** namely that of the practices
and strategies used in the assessment of project outcomes.
It has the following three-fold focus:

> Firstly, the paper begins by highlighting how the
> issue of assessing project outcomes is
> contextualised in terms of the goals of the project.
> The analysis therefore covers key elements of
> strategy that are built into project design and that
> operationalise both on-line and intervention-specific
> project impact studies that are undertaken within
> **DPEP.**

Secondly, the paper looks at current practices in the assessment of project impact prevalent across the entire area of **DPEP's** intervention in India, and it considers whether decentralised structures have internalised project management skills intrinsic to the spirit of **DPEP.** In other words, it considers whether project management skills have been disseminated to those project managers who are involved in the decentralised structures.

Finally, the paper looks at possible alternatives for strengthening initiatives for project impact assessment.

2. Monitoring of project impact in DPEP

An integral component of the **DPEP** project design is that of research and evaluation. From the outset of the programme, research findings make an important contribution to guiding

the strategies which will be employed. This is evident right in the pre-implementation phase, in the form of baseline and social assessment studies for the project districts. Ongoing research and evaluation were also crucial during project implementation. The research and evaluation component enabled the project to:

- plan, implement and monitor initiatives for the promotion of research and evaluation at all levels (i.e. the national, district, sub-district levels) within the project as well as (perhaps more importantly) at school levels, where teachers were involved in action research

- extend support to endeavours for capacity building in training programmes which aimed to enable practitioners to do evaluation and action research, and to grasp the rudiments of research methodology

● conduct/commission specific evaluations for the requirements of project implementers

● undertake a dissemination of findings and the outcomes of research exercises

● encourage networking between the larger research community in various institutions and universities and **DPEP** so as to encourage these institutions and to provide an opportunity for researchers to carry out research in elementary education.

It should, however, be kept in mind, that the framework and areas for evaluation differed across various levels in the **DPEP** structure according to whether the focus was on a national, state, district or sub-district level.

Accordingly, the impact assessment was integrated into the

various **DPEP** project activities and was operationalised across states as well as on a national level.

2.1 Assessment at the national level

At the national level, examples of evaluation studies include the evaluation of:

- project management
- institutional development (various aspects of institutional capacity building)
- community participation
- access, enrolment and retention through periodic surveys
- teacher training
- classroom processes

2.1.1 Differentiating between different levels of impact

The expected outcomes of the evaluation studies differed according to the perceptions/requirements at different levels of project management. For instance, it is likely that an evaluation of the delivery of teacher training at a *district* level would focus on the planning, organisation and actual delivery of the training programme. It would also focus on transmission losses, teachers' perceptions, motivation, feedback and issues pertaining to the sustainability of the training programme.

An investigation into a similar project at *state* level would require that the investigation to focus on adequacy of preparation, the participation of targeted beneficiaries, the quality of the course content, the enhancement of trainees' skills, the competence of the master trainers, and so on.

At a *national* level, concerns would be differ from

those of observations conducted at state or district levels. For example, a national evaluation would be concerned with whether, or the extent to which, there had been an improvement in the learners' competencies, or on the type of corrective measures (e.g. improvements in logistics or in the curriculum) that would be required if the delivery of training programmes at all levels were to improve.

What I have said above emphasises how important it is for effective project managers to be able to adapt the use of assessment instruments for the varying situational contexts in which assessments are conducted at state or district levels. The question as to whether processes to build capacity for impact assessment (other than with on-line monitoring) have been addressed within project structures, is an important question which will be considered in the final section of this paper.

3 Current practices of project impact in DPEP

Much effort went into developing evaluation plans for assessment that were to be undertaken at national and state levels. This necessitated that consideration be given to what was currently being done in **DPEP** and (thereafter) to what should actually be evaluated. A national workshop on evaluation was held in 1995. The workshop identified the following priority areas for evaluation in **DPEP.** It also indicated which aspects should assessed.

3.1 Priority areas for assessment

Priority areas for evaluation	ASPECTS ASSESSED
Training	● The quality of teacher and instructor training. This included assessment to

	determine the extent of the dilution of the training that may have resulted from the cascade model of training.
Management training	• The training that was offered to enskill managers as well as the training which was presented to members of village education committees
Decentralised and participatory management	• The functioning of district and state programme management units
Community mobilisation and participation	• the functioning of village education committees and an assessment of the flow of information, and the way that information is used at different levels. This includes a consideration of the efficacy of the management information system.

Institutional development	• Resource institutions such as district evaluation teams and other resource and administrative institutions
School functioning and effectiveness	• The pedagogical processes as well as the supply and utilisation of materials
Access and enrolment	• These are assessed by way of an analysis of data from education management information Systems, through the use of case studies and also through an assessment of learners' achievements.

3.2 Evaluations conducted at a national level

The following list of what was evaluated a national level concurs with the above table.

What was evaluated was:

- managerial structure and processes under **DPEP**

- institutional development of State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs) and DIETs

- classroom processes

- a survey of learners' mid-term achievements

- learners' access and retention

- community participation in **DPEP**

- teacher grants and school grants

- interventions for improving the education of the *girl*

child

- the external evaluation of civil works

- in-service teacher training

3.3 Sample monitoring

Along with various monitoring and evaluation techniques employed at the national and state level, a form of sample monitoring was also conducted in three **DPEP** states. Components of the monitoring and evaluation of the sample districts included:

- a review and analysis of the information that was gathered periodically from the sample districts through the **DPEP** management information system

- a review and analysis of the quantitative studies

undertaken by the **DPEP** Bureau in the sample districts

● an intensive follow-up of the implementation of the Joint Supervision Missions' recommendations made in the sample districts

● designing a set of activities to monitor and evaluate

> (1) the techniques, measures and processes adopted by the sample districts
> (2) the process of change in classroom practices and improvements in school effectiveness

Different strands in the evaluation of **AP-DPEP** were developed with the assistance of DFID in 1996. These are the introduction of the annual *Schools and Pupils Survey, a* set of short- and long-term qualitative studies, and a set of process indicators of implementation for use in planning and evaluation for conducting fast, large-scale qualitative monitoring activities which can be aggregated across districts.

3.4 How do states address evaluation issues?

Almost all of the 14 states involved in the **DPEP** intervention have undergone an assessment of various processes which were initiated in the first three years of the implementation. This assessment occurred at the national level as well as at the level of state specific initiatives.

Positive evidence arising out of this was a heightened awareness of the importance of evaluation and project impact assessment. This was obvious from the array of interventions that were proposed and from the efforts made by some states (albeit on a limited scale) to increase their internal capacity to do evaluation.

While Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Assam, Madhya Pradesh have been shown to be initiatives which have increased the capacities of district and sub-district institutional structures, states such as Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Orissa have incorporated their state apex organisations (such as the State Councils of Educational Research and Training) into

such efforts.

The capacity for doing action research and an improved understanding of research methods was one of the outcomes of research training which was presented. This training was also presented by national apex authorities such as the NCERT and the Research and Evaluation Studies Unit of EDCIL, New Delhi.

There is no doubt that **DPEP** has provided an opportunity for generating better research activities that will eventually contribute to better programme management and implementation.

4 Future strategies *and* issues for project impact

This paper has looked at project impact assessment and evaluation in the context of **DPEP** by focusing on coverage as well and programmes designed to enhance skills. It must,

however, be remembered that the **DPEP** ethos is anchored in initiating educational reform through *process-led change,* thereby providing a platform for generating positive spin-offs for sector-wide, institutional outcomes in the country. Evidence suggests that it is equally critical that the structures in project management and implementation be sufficiently flexible and decentralised to encourage process-specific outcomes. This would in turn provide an opportunity for networking between larger subsets of stakeholders in the programme, namely teachers, institutions, community and programme implementers. It is contended that the involvement of these subsets of stakeholders would most certainly make a significant impact on the achievement of sector-specific outcomes.

Alternative approaches that might enhance the use of project impact assessment in **DPEP** could be considered. It is possible, for example, that an extension of the capacity for

research and evaluation skills to as many states as possible would increase the quality and quantity of such assessments. Another approach might involve the development of a list of priority areas and a framework for various research designs which could be conducted on a systematic basis. This might be effected by developing the skills of participants deployed in states, districts and sub-district levels with the help of research organisations. A third possibility would be to provide criteria which would ensure that project impact assessment is sustainable. This would mean that the scale of operations, particularly at the district and sub-district level, would have to be of a sufficient magnitude to allow replicable cost-effective studies to be conducted.

Project impact assessment in the context of **DPEP** would therefore need to be strengthened at all levels of project management, namely at national, state, district and sub-district levels. For this purpose external and independent assessments of evaluation would be required and there

would also be a need to draw existing institutional resources into evaluations. Because such a process would ensure that institutional structures would provide inputs for design and capacity building skills, such structures would be drawn into programme implementation on a sustained basis.

5 Conclusion

The effectiveness of **DPEP** lies in its complementary use of strategies and holistic interventions. Impact assessment is only one of the tools which enables project implementers and

stakeholders to obtain a measure of the progress of the project towards achieving its goals. If one were to consolidate the impact from a programme such as **DPEP,** it would enhance the impact that arises from participation among all stakeholders. This would be particularly true at those decentralised levels where the goals of the programme will ultimately be realised. This is a crucial aspect of **DPEP'**s mission and should not be forgotten.

8.4 Concluding comments from the DFID Education Division

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For DFID this Forum provided a welcome sharing of insider and outsider perspectives on the key questions that can arise in the planning, design, management and implementation of

impact studies. It drew attention to the hard choices that have to be addressed by the stakeholders involved in impact assessment. Issues concerning timing, time frame, availability of finance, duration, selection of impact evaluation researchers, capacity building strategy, report writing, dissemination and ownership, may lead to compromises in the organisation, scope and scale of the exercise.

The Forum provided a constructive focus for Education Advisers in DFID by emphasising some of the key elements in the Post Jomtien learning agenda, in which participatory impact assessment features prominently as a formative approach to evaluating impact. The implications for project ownership, capacity building and sustainability emerged as an underlying theme throughout the Forum. Speaking from a formative (rather than a summative) standpoint, John Shotton reminded us that the objectives of a participatory impact assessment can be:

● to gauge the extent to which a programme has led to desired changes in the target audience and field

● to determine whether or not, and to what extent, a programme might have met its objectives

● to engage local ownership and leadership within a context of decentralisation of programme management and implementation

● to enable the different perceptions and interests of stakeholders in a project to be taken into account when planning any subsequent follow-up or a new phase

● to develop capacity building skills through facilitating local applied research, which, in turn, will enhance social discourse about relevant learning centre-based issues

Although the Forum demonstrated that DFID Education Advisers have been using participatory approaches in several projects in different parts of the world, Veronica McKay's participatory action research model provided us with an expanded vision of the many potential benefits for those associated with the project. The wide range of ways in which it can be formative and capacity building through

- enabling all participants to become co-researchers
- enabling all participants to define the criteria used for assessment
- involving the participants in interpreting and authenticating the findings
- engaging the participants in the cycle of reflection/action/reflection
- enabling the poor or marginalised to impact on policy
- enabling bureaucracies to become more

participatory

provides DFID with a convincing case for using this approach for empowering project stakeholders.

At this point it may be helpful to sound a cautionary note. In using evaluation of project impact as a formative tool, we may encounter problems when we try to generate the relevant skills and enthusiasm for the exercise. It was pointed out that some people may be reluctant to take part, particularly if they have not had any previous experience of this kind of approach. Involving people from poorer, grass-roots communities may be problematic if they feel inhibited about having to work with people with whom they would not normally have had any close contact. In spite of such difficulties, DFID needs to persevere in finding culturally sensitive ways of engaging such key stakeholders in the process.

Such risks must be considered against the potential benefits. A participatory action research approach is an on-going assessment of project impact. It encourages teachers to develop the habit of continually reflecting on their effectiveness. Project players, project monitors, evaluators and learners can come together to decide what constitutes best practice. A participatory action research approach may therefore empower the evaluation in such a way that it offers enhanced project impact sustainability. The significance of participatory evaluation of programmes was reinforced by the examples Alan Peacock gave of using this approach as a means for teacher professional development in South Africa and Sri Lanka. The value of participant development of impact criteria was contrasted with the negative risks (or inappropriate dependency) that can arise from recourse to external consultants for this purpose.

One problem that emerged from several contributions to the Forum concerns the time factor. This relates to both the time-

tabling of the exercise (which may be dictated by budgetary considerations), and the actual time-schedule that is adopted for the conduct of the exercise (which may likewise be influenced by a financial imperative). The timing of any evaluation, particularly those using a participatory approach to impact assessment, may crucially affect the quality and validity of the outcome of the exercise. Given the tension between the availability of funding for an impact assessment, and the time needed for an adequate assessment to be undertaken, DFID is urged to take both aspects of the time factor into greater consideration in project planning and project design. The following conclusions became apparent:

- Unless the timing of the assessment allows an adequate period for the programme outcomes to be realised, the formative aspect of a participatory approach to the impact study may be undermined.

- Sufficient time needs to be allocated at the onset

of an impact study in order to engage all the main stakeholders and enable them to participate. Time is needed to build up trust and confidence in the exercise. Time is also needed if potential language and cultural barriers that may prevent everyone from participating fully are to be overcome.

• Time needs to be set aside for training key project personnel in participatory action research methods.

• Reporting time at the end of the exercise needs to be factored in if the various perceptions, priorities and expectations of different audiences are to be accommodated.

• The time period allocated for the impact assessment may need to be adjusted once the scope and scale of what realistically can be undertaken becomes apparent. Insufficient time

undermines the qualitative validity of the impact
assessment and also allows no margin for any
unforeseen external events that might impinge on
the exercise to be dealt with.

The conclusion drawn from the Forum is that impact studies
vary in scope, depth and scale, according to when they take
place. An impact study can be conducted during a project as
a formative means for reinforcing commitment to the
implementation of project objectives. It can also take place
towards the end of a project to demonstrate to different
stakeholders the qualitative and quantitative value of being
associated with the achievement of project outputs. In
addition, long-term project impact can be researched some
time after the end of the project as a way of examining
whether or not project outcomes have proved to be
sustainable. In DFID this last option can be adopted by the
Evaluation Department - depending on whether or not there
will be sufficient funds for following up on what the project

completion report has recommended.

The Forum was enriched by the direct experience which several participants had gained in baseline studies in very different project contexts in India, Nicaragua, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Central and Eastern Europe. According to DFID procedures, baseline studies should be factored into the project design either before, or at the start of a project if planning and/or assessing subsequent progress and impact is to be made. Carol Moloney justified her argument that 'A baseline assessment is a wondrous thing!' by listing the wide range of purposes that baseline studies fulfil. It is therefore constructive for Education Advisers to note that baseline studies can be used

● to set the scene for involving all stakeholders at the onset by ensuring that there is shared understanding of programme objectives and context.

● to provide an initial assessment mechanism (or benchmark) against which subsequent evaluations can be measured.

● to serve as an in-depth needs analysis, fine-tuning basic objectives set in log frames in the light of unforeseen issues or developments.

● to foster greater ownership of the programme through necessitating a high degree of collaboration in the baseline assessment.

● to emphasise delivery 'at the chalkface' right from the start of the programme by focusing on the school or classroom in which baseline data needs to be collected.

● to serve as a reform tool in itself by giving department officials, college lecturers and teachers

the opportunity to develop skills of assessing and supporting teachers in a shared learning environment.

The Forum concluded that sufficient time, finance and resources need to be made available for baseline studies so that a comprehensive range of initial perspectives and data from a variety of sources may be captured. It is essential to ensure that the baseline study provides an adequate benchmark for whatever evaluation may be undertaken in future (irrespective of whether this may be formative or summative, or conducted by 'insiders' or 'outsiders' to the project).

It emerged from Forum discussion that, in participatory action research, it is more appropriate to refer to stakeholder evaluation, rather than to use the outmoded terminology of the pre-Jomtien era in which donors were juxtaposed with recipients or beneficiaries. The presentation by Dermot

Murphy and Pauline Rea-Dickins defined stakeholders in terms of power differentials, such as knowledge, expertise, control, budget control, responsibility, benefits, loyalty, status and distance. The conclusion for DFID is that understanding such stakeholder perspectives will enable us to plan and organise impact studies more effectively, and will promote more and better use of their findings. It was evident that responsibility for different stages of the impact assessment needs to be placed at the appropriate level where decisions will be most effectively taken. Like any other evaluation exercise, impact assessment has to be carefully planned and managed so that it is not undermined by funding or time restrictions.

Stakeholder analysis raises the question of insider/outsider involvement in participatory evaluation. The distinction between insiders/outsiders to a project emerged from the workshop as more pertinent to impact assessment than the original distinction in our workshop programme between

national researchers and external researchers. There was consensus among workshop participants that there is no place for fly-in/fly-out (FIFO) consultants in impact studies - given that the emphasis in participatory impact assessment is on training stakeholders in the necessary research skills to investigate project impact themselves.

The question of who should be involved in impact evaluation can be both politically and culturally sensitive. Not only should the stakeholders involved reflect a cross section of those with an interest in the project's outputs, but the selection of such researchers must ultimately depend on those inside the project. Given that the nomination of those involved (and ultimately those who should represent them at any presentation of the findings) is crucial to the success of the exercise, the Forum concluded that those inside a project are better placed to make such decisions.

Identifying the level and strength of project impact calls for

qualitative as well as quantitative research methods. Participants at the Forum agreed that, in impact evaluation, the process is as important as the product of the exercise because of the enhanced role that is attributed to researchers inside the project. More emphasis needs to be placed by DFID on training trainers in participatory research methods if impact is to be evaluated effectively from an insider perspective. It is only possible to assess the long-term impact of a project after it has ended. In consequence, empowering learning communities to undertake impact research could address the option of leaving the assessment of project impact until some time after agency support has been withdrawn. For DFID, the practical conclusion is that different impacts may be experienced by different stakeholders at different points, either during or after the project cycle.

It was encouraging to note widespread acceptance of the significance of unanticipated as well as anticipated benefits.

The DFID Glossary of Aid Terms points out that "only planned, positive impacts will be included in the Logical Framework". Although DFID has to work on the assumption that planned impacts will be positive rather than negative, Education Division's experience that unplanned impacts can add an invaluable qualitative dimension to the benefits anticipated in the project logframe, was borne out by Mfanwenkosi Malaza's case study material from the Mpumamalanga Primary Schools Initiative in South Africa. Mohammed Melouk provided another dimension by referring to the different attitudinal agendas and perceptions of those involved in a project as side effects, linked to predicted and unpredicted outcomes.

Another aspect that DFID needs to take into account when identifying the key stakeholders in a project, is the question of dissemination strategy. This should be built into project or programme design. Impact studies inevitably give rise to the question of the audience for whom the findings of the

evaluation are intended. The dissemination strategy has to take into consideration who will be involved in writing the report, who will read it and to what extent it will be readily available to all stakeholders?

Clara Ines Rubiano and Dermot Murphy drew DFID's attention to the different stages at which reporting can be undertaken, as well as the multiple audiences who will require feedback from the impact study. N.V. Varghese thought that stakeholder workshops should be organised for such reporting, but reminded DFID of the importance of working out how the findings should be presented. The question of multiple audiences raises the question of whether there should be one report or several reports? DFID's conclusion is that different types of reports may be necessary when there are aspects of the impact study that some audiences may need to appreciate in greater depth or detail, in order to ensure that the outcomes can be followed up or made more sustainable. Some reporting may benefit from a comparative

framework or from a DFID/nonDFID perspective. It could be constructive to share and compare patterns emerging from impact studies - such as the implications for institutional practices.

During the Forum it was reiterated that it would be to the advantage of all stakeholders if more of the lessons which have been learned could be shared across projects. Projects and programmes would benefit from a greater cross-fertilisation of information about similar experiences. Although it was recognised that this Forum provided a useful opportunity to discuss issues arising from impact studies in a variety of different contexts, DFID was asked to concentrate more effort on sharing expertise across projects by promoting south/south collaboration and experience in impact study research. It would contribute to the demystification of impact studies if they were more readily available in the public domain.

Although the Forum covered the majority of key issues in impact evaluation, it also exposed areas that could be researched in more depth. These include the advantages and disadvantages of using project logframes, the balance between personal, institutional and sector wide outcomes, and the inter-relationship between social, educational, institutional and economic criteria in impact assessment. Mirela Bardi pointed out that there is also scope for closer examination of the instruments used in impact research, and that this is a topic that could be explored in more depth in a future workshop.

The Forum highlighted the value of impact assessment as an empowering process for stakeholders in a project or programme for whom it can be formative in a capacity building way that helps to reinforce a sense of ownership. It was realised that good communication channels between those involved in the impact assessment are essential, because information sharing and feedback fosters greater

transparency. Education Division's conviction about the value of a participatory approach to impact assessment was reinforced by the Forum. The discussion drew attention to the complexity of the process and emphasised the many benefits that it holds for funding agencies, primarily because of the way in which a formative approach to impact assessment clarifies project ownership for all parties concerned. It therefore has the potential added value of making project achievements more sustainable.

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Evaluating Impact - Education Research Paper No. 35, 1999, 262 p.

DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

EDUCATION PAPERS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Introduction

1. WHAT IS AN IMPACT STUDY AND HOW SHOULD WE DO IT?

1.1 Participatory impact assessment
1.2 Participatory action research as an approach to impact assessment
1.3 Participatory approaches to impact studies
1.4 Evaluation vs impact studies

2. THE ROLE OF BASELINE STUDIES IN IMPACT ASSESSMENT

2.1 School focused baseline assessments as a catalyst for

change

2.2 A general framework for evaluating educational programmes

2.3 Issues to consider when planning a baseline study

3. STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES

3.1 Identifying stakeholders

3.2 Considering the audience - an important phase in project evaluations

3.3 Impact studies and their audiences

4. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NATIONAL AND EXTERNAL

4.1 A note on a participatory impact study in Eritrea: exploring the relations between national and external researchers

4.2 The relationships between national researchers and external researchers

7.1 Background to the MAPP evaluation

7.2 Sustaining Impact: the Mexican Advanced Professionalisation Project

7.3 Assessing the impact of sector wide, institutional and policy outcomes

7.4 Determining the unanticipated outcomes and using these as benchmarks for future projects

8. ANTICIPATED/UNANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

8.1 Anticipated and unanticipated project benefits

8.2 The PROSPER Impact Study: A consideration of sector wide outcomes

8.3 Research and evaluation in DPEP: A review of current practices and future strategies in impact assessment

8.4 Concluding comments from the DFID Education Division

Participants at the forum on Impact Studies

List of sources consulted