Lessons from Conducting Evaluations in Afghanistan and Somalia

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Evaluation of the **Somali Joint Health and Nutrition Program**

Programme budget: USD236 million  
Programme duration: 4,5 yrs (2012-2015)  
Geographic coverage: 9 regions

Children under 5 and women out of total population of 5,9 million  
Ministry of Health on several levels  
Evaluated period: **whole duration**

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Evaluation of the **Basic Education and Gender Equality Programme in Afghanistan**

Programme budget: 140MSEK  
Programme duration: 6 yrs (2010-2016)  
Geographic coverage: 10 provinces

2,3 million students  
Ministry of Education on several levels  
Evaluated period: 3,5 yrs (2013-2016)
Evaluation conditions

Somalia
Purpose: "to provide concrete and realistic recommendations with regard to future implementation and management of the programme."

Budget: 1,5MSEK
Duration: 6 calendar months
Resources: 125 man-days

Afghanistan
Purpose: "to provide findings, conclusions and recommendations for Sida to use in the upcoming assessment of continued support"

Budget: 1,5MSEK
Duration: 6 calendar months
Resources: 153 man-days

Tight timelines
Tight human resources
Tight budgets
Broad scope
Visited 6 provinces
36 health facilities
Interviewed 408 informants

Visited 4 regions
26 schools
Interviewed 550 informants
Approach

- National partner: University & consultancy company
- National data collectors; male and female covering all local languages
- Required extensive collaboration and logistical from implementing agencies (UNICEF and JCU)
- Agreement with Ministries at every step
- Do no harm

Methods

Qualitative data collection (primary):
- Site visits and observations
- Interviews with service providers, state officials, donors, religious leaders
- Focus group interviews with service users (patients and students)

Quantitative data collection (secondary):
- Available monitoring data from programmes (3rd party)

Selection criteria: representativeness and accessibility
Internal challenges & limitations

- Lack of time and budget for preparatory visits
- Documentation of collected data (quality)
- Logistics dependency
- Managing sensitivities and behavior of team members (cultural, disregard for security)
- Recruiting evaluators and data enumerators willing to travel
- Capacity and availability of national data collectors
External challenges & limitations

Accessibility to sites and informants due to security concerns

Blockages of Government stakeholders

Stakeholder expectations

Precise data of program activities and sites
*Somalia >Afghanistan*

Dependency on the evaluated stakeholders for site selection and itinerary

High resource costs for field work limited time in the field

Everything takes much longer

Tight timeframe: lead time for planning the evaluation field work (block out periods)

Quantity of visited sites and interviewed informants less than planned
Evaluation parameters

Scope: Terms of reference

Resources: $

Time: Set dates

Evaluation Quality
Evaluation parameters in fragile contexts

Resources

Scope

Evaluation Quality

Time
Evaluation quality principles in a fragile context

- Independence
- Credibility
- Utility
Main Lessons

1. Sufficient lead time and calendar time is vital
2. Bring all stakeholders on board for realistic planning
3. Continuous transparency regarding selection bias and limitations
4. Manage expectations throughout the process