



International IDEA

The International Institute for Democracy
and Electoral Assistance

DEMOCRACY ASSISTANCE AND RESULTS: DEBATES AND CONSTRUCTIVE REFLECTION

ROUNDTABLE REPORT

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AWEPA	Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DIPD	Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy
EBA	Expert Group for Aid Studies
EEAS	European External Action Service
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (<i>German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation</i>)
Govnet	OECD/DAC Governance Network
GPG	Global Partners Governance
International IDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
INTRAC	International NGO Training and Research Centre
IPPR	Institute for Public Policy Research
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
KIC	Christian Democratic International Center, Sweden
LFA	logical framework approach
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NGO	non-governmental organization
NIMD	Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
ODI	Overseas Development Institute

OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/ Development Assistance Committee
OPIC	Olof Palme International Center, Sweden
PYPA	Program of Young Politicians in Africa
RBM	results-based management
SCORE	Stockholm Centre for Organizational Research
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDP-OGC	UNDP Oslo Governance Centre
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
V-dem	Varieties of Democracy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 23–24 June 2014, in Stockholm, Sweden, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) hosted a roundtable called ‘Democracy Assistance and Results: Debates and Constructive Reflection’ to facilitate open and forward-looking discussions on the challenges (and opportunities) of applying results-management approaches to democracy assistance, that is, support to parliamentary development, electoral processes, political parties/party systems, civil society, media development, etc.

The event was part of a project led by International IDEA’s Democracy and Development Programme, one of the objectives of which is to contribute to knowledge and debates about democracy assistance and results-management approaches.

In brief, the purpose of the roundtable was to empower and encourage participants to reflect critically on how to promote learning, as well as genuine partner ownership of democracy assistance projects and programmes.

Plenary sessions and side sessions included presentations by Thomas Carothers (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace), Marta Foresti (Overseas Development Institute), Jonas Mikkelsen (International IDEA), Hermenegildo Mulhovo (Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy), Greg Power (Global Partners Governance), Erike Tanghøj (Christian Democratic International Centre), Martin Schmidt (SPM Consultants) and Janet Vähämäki (Stockholm University).

One of the aims in organizing the roundtable was to provide an arena for open discussions among diverse stakeholders such as academia, policymakers from multilateral organizations, ministries and agencies from bilateral donors, intermediary partners and implementing partners within the democracy assistance community, based on current discourse and practice (please refer to a rich collection of further readings in Annex 1).

A list of participants can be found in Annex 2, and the agenda is in Annex 3.

During the concluding plenary session, participants had the opportunity to share lessons learned and ideas for the road ahead. Their views are briefly summarized in the following key takeaways:

- 1) Participants agreed that they can no longer continue down the same path. Results-management approaches need to be better designed and implemented in ways that truly promote ownership, flexibility, and learning, as opposed to merely control.

- 2) There is a need to promote further discussions on these topics within specific regions and sub-sectors of democracy assistance, as well as across different sectors. Regardless of the location or subject matter, more local partners need to be represented in these discussions.
- 3) It is paramount that instructive examples of innovative ways of applying results-management approaches to democracy assistance be collected and discussed in order to enable learning. Furthermore, participants agreed that they need to test new ways of planning, managing, monitoring and evaluating democracy assistance projects, with the goal of developing and applying approaches that are genuinely sensitive to partners' realities and needs.
- 4) If efforts are to lead to the developments outlined above, understanding context is of the utmost importance. Participants emphasized that the context should determine what, in terms of results, is realistic and fair to expect in each individual case, and that they should find innovative ways to communicate results to funders.

OVERVIEW

On 23–24 June 2014, in Stockholm, Sweden, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) hosted a roundtable called ‘Democracy Assistance and Results: Debates and Constructive Reflection’ to facilitate open and forward-looking discussions on the challenges (and opportunities) of applying results-management approaches to democracy assistance, that is, support to parliamentary development, electoral processes, political parties/party systems, civil society, media development, etc.

This was a follow-up event to a roundtable hosted by the United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP) Oslo Governance Centre (OGC), in partnership with International IDEA, in December 2013, called ‘Democratic Governance: Can we measure up?’¹ The purpose of that event was to reflect on how to deal with challenges related to tracking outcomes from democratic governance support, and how to measure impact. Participants agreed on four key takeaways:

- 1) It is important to unpack the complexity of democratic governance and extrapolate different perspectives;
- 2) Informal spaces and social/political accountability are particularly relevant but should not lead to essentialism about the political context;
- 3) Democratic governance outcomes should be nuanced, measurable and achievable; and
- 4) Consideration should be given to why we have measurements and who they are for.

In concluding the event, participants agreed that the discussion needed to continue, and International IDEA committed to hosting a follow-up event in mid-2014. Building on the key takeaways from the Oslo roundtable, International IDEA decided to focus on some of the specific themes and challenges discussed in order to facilitate further learning and improve the work carried out in the field of democracy assistance, as International IDEA’s mandate is in the area of democracy, rather than governance.

The fourth key takeaway was that further consideration should be given to why we have measurements, in other words, who is accountable to whom and for what? Participants in Oslo concluded that shorter implementation periods and pressure to demonstrate not only outcomes, but also impact, limit partners’ ownership and the capacity of, and space for, development agencies to venture into the political aspects of governance. It would appear that democracy support requires a more flexible approach to planning, implementation and follow-up, in which partners and development practitioners are empowered to take risks; reflect on concepts of, and research on, democratic governance

and democratization; and donor government politicians are encouraged to realize the complexities of how democratization processes develop and can be supported.

Partner countries' capacity to drive and own democratization and development is crucial. Results-management approaches can play a key role in supporting progress, particularly if applied in ways that are truly inclusive, contextualized and sensitive to partners' space for learning and internal accountability. On the other hand, there appears to be a tendency among funders to push for upward accountability and control, which in turn is driven by media scrutiny of aid funds and taxpayers' interests in how funds are spent. It thus appeared timely to explore these tensions and to try to manage them, not least as the global environment for democracy assistance is changing, which calls for even more strategic, tactical and relevant support for democratization.

For these reasons, the intention with this roundtable was to provide an opportunity for participants to discuss underlying assumptions of the most commonly used results-management approaches and explore ways of applying them that are more sensitive to partners' realities and needs. The event was part of a project led by International IDEA's Democracy and Development Programme, one of the objectives of which is to contribute to knowledge and debates about democracy assistance and results-management approaches. In brief, the purpose of the roundtable was to empower and encourage participants to reflect critically on how to promote learning, as well as genuine partner ownership of democracy assistance projects and programmes.

It goes without saying that different perspectives can be applied to these challenges. One of International IDEA's aims was thus to bring together audiences that normally do not interact by providing an arena for open discussions among political actors, partners, implementers and evaluators of democracy assistance, as well as academia and policymakers. About a third of the 36 participants had attended the first roundtable in Oslo, and participating organizations included: the Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa (AWEPA), the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Christian Democratic International Centre (KIC), Demo Finland, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), the Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy (DIPD), the European External Action Service (EEAS), the Expert Group for Aid Studies (EBA), the United Kingdom's Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), the German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation (GIZ), Global Partners Governance, InDevelop, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD), the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Olof Palme International Center (OPIC), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), SPM Consultants, Stockholm University, the United Nations Development Programme's Oslo Governance Centre (UNDP-OGC), and Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem).

In this report, you will find summaries of the presentations and discussions held during the roundtable event, as well as key takeaways to help us move forward. Among the annexes, you will also find an extensive compilation of further readings (Annex 1), along with a list of participants (Annex 2) and the agenda (Annex 3).

THE SESSIONS

The roundtable opened with introductory remarks by Keboitse Machangana, Acting Director for Global Programmes at International IDEA, and all participants took turns sharing their expectations for the event. The first presentation was then given by Thomas Carothers, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, who set the scene and provided the context for the rich discussions that followed. The morning plenary continued with Hermenegildo Mulhovo, NIMD, asking the very difficult question of whether you can educate donors about what can and cannot be measured.

To facilitate open and participatory discussions, side sessions were held for half the group at a time, two sessions in parallel, and each of these sessions was repeated so that everyone was able to attend all sessions. The first block of side sessions was hosted by Janet Vähämäki, Stockholm University, and Hermenegildo Mulhovo. Ms Vähämäki gave the participants an overview of how results-management approaches came to enter the domain of development aid, and Mr Mulhovo hosted a session intended for experience sharing and reflection on democracy and results.

The afternoon plenary included presentations by Marta Foresti, ODI, and Jonas Mikkelsen, International IDEA. Ms Foresti presented results from a survey on public attitudes toward development aid, followed by Mr Mikkelsen talking about whether a risk-management approach to results management can help mitigate adverse selection in implementation.

The second and last set of side sessions was led by Martin Schmidt, SPM Consultants, and Greg Power, Global Partners Governance. During Mr Schmidt's session, participants discussed the flexibility and adaptability of results management approaches, and Mr Power shared his thoughts on the weaknesses of the logical framework (logframe) approach and how results-management approaches incorrectly frame democracy assistance as something technical and not political. A presentation was also given by Erike Tanghøj, KIC, on efforts to develop a management method that endorses open-ended and process-oriented objectives and indicators, and relies more upon the realities and experiences expressed by target groups.

THE CHANGING ENVIRONMENT FOR DEMOCRACY ASSISTANCE

During the opening plenary, Mr Carothers, Vice-President for Studies, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, talked about the changing international environment for democracy assistance. He identified and assessed some of the factors that call into question many of the standard assumptions that democracy assistance has operated on the basis of for decades.

After the Cold War, there was generally positive support for international assistance to democracy. Today, the greater political competition between Western democracies and non-democratic powers makes the reality faced by democracy supporters much more complicated. There is now an active, often fiercely competitive marketplace of political ideas and of political influence.

Mr Carothers highlighted the complex wave of protest movements and democracy problems or reversals that have been occurring in many parts of the world, especially the sense of failure or disappointment in many quarters with Arab political change. Perceived and real weaknesses in many Western democratic systems reduce the power of the Western democratic example, and, additionally, other systems have proven to be effective in achieving peace and development, at least in a narrow sense. Some autocracies sell their systems based on their performance, while others try to sell theirs based on ideological values (e.g. Russia in claiming that being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender is Western decadence). Mr Carothers observed that it would appear that actors at all levels have become consumers of political systems, and that the consumer choice is based more on performance, such as decisiveness and debt management skills (China), than on ideology.

Mr Carothers observed how numerous countries in every part of the world, not just Western democracies, try to influence the trajectories of neighbouring countries in political flux. Major non-western democracies such as Brazil, India, Indonesia, and Turkey have gone from being subjects of outside influence to becoming generators of influence in their regions. They interpret democracy in their own ways and often do not look to partner with the West in their efforts to have pro-democratic influence in their regions. Some non-democratic governments are also working hard to exert political influence in neighbouring states. Some of them have agendas that are religious, others political, and others purely economic. Mr Carothers mentioned Myanmar as an example of a country where multiple regional neighbours, e.g. China, India, and Japan, as well as countries further afield, like the United States, Norway, and the United Kingdom, are labouring to influence the course of its attempted political transition. Egypt is also a clear example of multifaceted foreign political influences at work, with Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, the United States, and Western Europe all trying to exert influence during the last three years.

'In some contexts, I need to scratch democracy off my business card and be a governance expert instead.'¹

Mr Carothers also reflected on the continued weakening of public support for development aid, leading to strong pressures to prove the utility and impact of aid. A heightened focus on results in the field of democracy assistance has emerged over a long period of time and is now in the spotlight. There are also deeper questions about what democracy results really mean. Democratization is not just a regime transition, it is a much more complex set of interconnected processes and institutions, and as such, it is difficult to break down into clear component parts.

¹ Illustrative quotes, without attribution, from the roundtable discussions are used throughout the report.

Mr Carothers also pointed to changes in norms and expectations concerning what sorts of democracy aid governments permit in their countries. In the last few years, more than 50 countries have adopted restrictive legislation that targets civil society (e.g. Ethiopia, Hungary, Russia, and Singapore). What was earlier considered as standard democracy support is now considered too intrusive by some governments, with a resultant pushback against democracy aid. This changed context has led to different reactions within the democracy aid community. Some are trying to push harder, to be more assertive. Others are backing away, are less assertive, and are claiming that democracy support should be less political, and part of development aid in general. Similarly, while some say that there should be a clearer distinction between democracy aid and national foreign policies, others argue that democracy support should be more closely integrated into national foreign policies. This latter view would follow the trend of increasing the role of foreign ministries in development assistance, and the shrinking or disappearance of bilateral aid agencies.

‘Do not fully melt the democracy ice cube in the development water—we would lose our soul.’

Mr Carothers concluded by sharing his hopes that, although traditional development aid is probably in the process of phasing out over the next 20–30 years, the field of democracy support can and should survive, and that it can do so by emphasizing its role as a transmitter of comparative political knowledge.

CAN YOU EDUCATE DONORS ON WHAT CAN AND CANNOT BE MEASURED, AND ON HOW TO CARRY OUT SUCH MEASUREMENTS?

The morning plenary continued with Mr Mulhovo, Country Director, NIMD, Mozambique, sharing some perspectives of local partners on how to balance donors’ tendencies to demand quick and tangible impact against their own visions, missions and legitimacy vis-à-vis members or communities. Is it possible for partners in the Global South to be more proactive in carving out space and assuming greater ownership over how they would like to apply results-management approaches without risking the loss of funding? Can you really tell a donor outright that certain activities are difficult to meticulously plan, manage, and measure/monitor? Can you tell your donors that you would like to spend less time filling in matrices and drafting reports to fulfil their needs for control and more time actually carrying out your proper activities, reflecting and learning for the benefit of your vision and mission?

Mr Mulhovo talked about how the above questions are still not being addressed in discussions between partners and donors, and he emphasized that these are issues that should be discussed openly with local partners. Mr Mulhovo described, for example, how efforts to reduce poverty in Mozambique in the five years from 2003 to 2008 showed ‘no results’ according to official evaluations,² although, in Mr Mulhovo’s opinion, this was far from a comprehensive view of the situation. Authorities have defended themselves, arguing that the reports do not show the whole picture, and Mr Mulhovo noted that if reports are failing to capture the development that is happening, it appears that the measurements are being used to support a certain view.

A number of donors' requirements come as a burden, and so donors need to be more open to feedback. Who determines these requirements and how they do this is a primary issue, and, too often, no effort is made to match reporting requirements to the partners' existing capacity. Mr Mulhovo reflected on how some donors have really been very helpful, and how many projects have been successful, but that the results do not match the logframes. He agrees that results-management approaches are appropriate, but says that the problem is the way they are being implemented. There is no flexibility to adapt existing approaches to the realities faced by local partners.

Related to this issue, Mr Mulhovo also raised the question of whether donors would be willing to invest in in-depth consultations with local partners before project implementation. Consultations could be carried out, for instance, in relation to defining outcome indicators in a way that local partners deem fit, as opposed to implementing on the basis of externally generated perceptions about the context and needs of beneficiaries.

Mr Mulhovo said that there is absolute 'training fatigue', pointing out how training is not only sometimes imposed regardless of the existing capacity of implementing partners, but that it is also, at times, of dubious quality. To some partners, it appears that they are learning how to write reports instead of implementing projects. Mr Mulhovo indicated the way donors have been focusing on results rather than the process, and how this means that local partners need to show results or the donor will cut off funding. He also highlighted the issue of the legitimacy of results. What are the desired results and who wants these results? Mr Mulhovo stressed the importance of remembering that the desired result for the donor is not always the desired result for the community.

‘Sometimes progress is just a feeling, but
statisticians cannot measure feelings.’

Mr Mulhovo asked whether we have to use the same measures and indicators for all supporting activities. Can we compile different types of indicators in the same evaluations? Informal relationships between the government and citizens are difficult to encapsulate with statistics. It is easy to lose the human aspect of development, including changes in people's feelings and attitudes. Mr Mulhovo stressed once more that partners should be able to contribute *their* views regarding how to measure the results of democracy assistance. He talked about partners and donors producing joint reviews as a possible solution, where reports are based on citizens' perception of the current situation, and changes that they have noted. This serves to balance top-down input from the government and from donors. In sum, according to Mr Mulhovo, the conceptualization of development problems is a learning process for *all* actors.

HOW RESULTS MANAGEMENT APPROACHES CAME TO ENTER THE DOMAIN OF DEVELOPMENT AID

During the first set of side sessions, Ms Vähämäki, PhD Candidate, Stockholm Business School and Stockholm Centre for Organizational Research (SCORE), Stockholm University, provided participants with a brief historical overview of how results-management approaches came to enter the domain of development aid. Some of the questions asked were: Where did the ideas come from and why are they so popular in development cooperation today? Are the ideas and the methods any different from ideas

and methods used previously in history? What does the paradigm do to relations and power dynamics within and between donor governments, donor agencies, implementing partners, and their partners in the Global South? And, are they more difficult or easier to implement in different policy sectors, such as in democracy assistance efforts?

Ms Vähämäki began by describing the point of departure: that we need results. It is a ‘magic’ concept in the sense that no one is against it.

We need results:

- to know that we are doing the right things;
- to know if what we are doing is effective;
- for planning, analysis, decision-making, etc.;
- and to ensure accountability and oversight.

Ms Vähämäki continued by outlining the origins of results management, both generally and specifically in development cooperation.

Origins of Results Management	Origins of Results Management in Development Cooperation
1920s – Scientific management, developed by Robert McNamara, CEO of Ford Motor Company	1949, 1954 – UN resolution on evaluation
1950s – Results management used in the Vietnam war, Robert McNamara is defence secretary of the United States	1959 – UNESCO guidelines for evaluation
1960s – Results management used in American public administration and spreads to most public administrations in the West	1969 – The logical framework is developed within USAID
1954, 1964 – Results management is further developed by Peter Drucker	1968 – Robert McNamara becomes President of the World Bank
	1970s – Ideas spread within the World Bank, and many donor agencies start to try out new methods

Ms Vähämäki observed how results politics have been introduced during certain ‘tides of reforms’,³ and have typically been operationalized by the introduction of a certain technology, such as the logical framework.⁴ Results reforms do, however, tend to fail, which seems to be due to the fact that the results never exactly match the method. But after a while, similar reforms and technologies are reintroduced.⁵

Ms Vähämäki’s preliminary PhD thesis title is *A journey towards a ‘results-based’ mindset?* One of the questions that she addresses in her research is whether the continuous attempts to implement results management have led to people and organizations today being better prepared for the ideas of results-management approaches. Historically, blame for the failure of results reforms has often been placed on politicians not trying

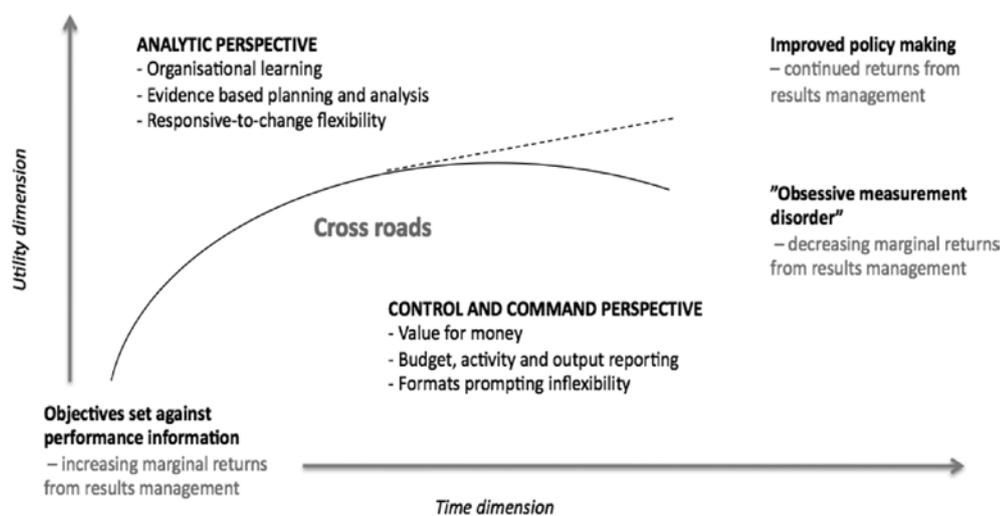
hard enough and people not being able to change their mindsets: in brief, they failed because they were never implemented properly.

Ms Vähämäki has conducted a case study on Sida and compared four similar 'results initiatives' within the agency. During the first tide of reform in 1971–4, Sida tried out an approach that, in theory, was recipient-oriented, but it failed in practice. After 1974, there was more focus on qualitative results, and the logical framework made its entry. Subsequent reforms in 1981 and 1998 had many similarities. They were driven by the 'dream of rationality' and finding the 'perfect tool', and spurred by a wish to quantify, compare and simplify a complex reality. First, there was a more quantitative push, but when met with resistance and little use, there was again more focus on the qualitative.

Regarding the discussion on whether implementation of results management is more difficult in particular sectors or areas, Ms Vähämäki reflected on the development at Sida where, during different time periods, staff have claimed that results-management approaches are more difficult to apply in, for example, public-sector support, research support, in a certain country and so on. Ms Vähämäki suggested that participants in this workshop might find it more difficult to apply results-management approaches to democracy assistance, but that plenty of other policy areas, countries, etc. make the same claim for their specific sector. Ms Vähämäki explained that, most often, organizations find similar types of difficulties when implementing results reforms. The following types of questions usually arise: What are the results? Who do the results belong to? Who are the results for? Also, one finds difficulties with predicting and following up the causal chain since reality is never like the ideal, and thus, the goal is seldom or never achieved. Another set of questions arises as to when to measure, what type of data to use and whether the data and statistics are reliable or not. Also, even if there are some performance data, it is difficult to determine what the results say in the end, and how to use that information.

Since the beginning of this century, results-management approaches have had strong support through a number of international agreements, such as the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) and the Accra Agenda for Action (2008). They are also strongly supported by other reforms, such as New Public Management, the 'audit/measurement/evaluation society', and more attention to accountability and transparency. But at the same time, the aid environment has become more complex.

Results management is no longer a sub-topic, and it has moved from being seen as something technical to something political. The rationale is to create a supply-and-demand market for aid and results. Today, at least in the case of Sida, there is political will and management support for the reform, and less resistance from employees ('You just have to do it'). This could mean that the latest reform has better possibilities of lasting. There is, however, a paradox that if striving for too much perfection, efforts can become 'counterproductive' and 'mechanical' and can make people passive. According to Ms Vähämäki, the following picture, used in the report *Review: Results Based Management in Development Cooperation*,⁶ demonstrates that results-based management (RBM) could, if used for analytic purposes in an organization, be useful in terms of improved policymaking. At some stage, however, if applying the approach merely for control and command purposes, the organization could reach a crossroads, at risk of developing 'obsessive measurement disorder',⁷ a term first coined by Andrew Natsios, former Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).



Source: *Review: Results Based Management in Development Cooperation* (Stockholm: Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, 2011), Reproduced with the kind approval of Janet Vähämäki.

In the discussion that followed Ms Vähämäki’s presentation, the issue of proving causality was a source of disagreement among participants. There were participants who felt that, in the search for causality, people seem to forget to even look for a correlation between the project and what happens later. In an exchange on attribution versus contribution, it was argued that being able to demonstrate a contribution should be considered a sufficient result in the field of democracy assistance.

‘You need methods adapted to what fits your case the best; there is no one single method that fits all sectors and countries.’

It was noted, however, that problems with documenting causation should not exempt donors or implementers from being rigorous, but the applicability of (those usually referred to as) rigorous methods was a source of further disagreement. While some rejected experimentation and randomized control trials, others demanded a genuine effort to use those innovative methods that are available, and that are already being used in academia. Their view was that this community must not neglect innovative methods but should try what is doable, should be realistic about expectations, and should report on the reliability of results. Those who rejected these methods argued that you would need extraordinary amounts of resources to track correlations properly with randomized control trials, and the question was raised as to whether there is a middle way, a way of doing this at a level that is more affordable.

Another topic that led to a discussion was the resources spent trying to measure informal activities through formal means, which most participants agreed is not feasible. It was noted that the demand for results has been pushed down on local partners, that they are the ones who mainly deal with these problems. Participants also discussed the history of democracy movements, typically growing from the inside, and what implications this has for the applicability of results-management approaches in the field of democracy assistance.

‘Aid is subject to much more scrutiny than other public sectors. Why? How can you, for instance, justify the military in a country that has had peace [in recent] decades? Is such a country peaceful thanks to the military? The push for causation is going way too far. We should push back and defend our non-material values and norms, and accept some risks.’

EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES—SPACE FOR REFLECTION

The purpose of this session was to provide an opportunity for participants to share, discuss and reflect on challenges and opportunities related to learning, accountability and context when using different types of results-management approaches. The discussion was rich, and here follows a summary of some of the topics covered:

- **Ownership** features in the Paris, Accra and Busan declarations on aid effectiveness, but what can be done to hold donors to account with respect to these declarations?
- **Planning** or programme design is essential to allow for learning and measurement. However, it is always easier to set things in motion than actually learning from previous actions, and to truly integrate and apply this new knowledge.
- There is a need for increased focus on **evaluation**. What matters is not only if the indicator is measurable, but also *how* we measure, in particular when trying to capture ongoing changes, such as the dynamics of democratization processes. In such cases, end-term evaluations may be less suitable.
- Planning and evaluation should be two sides of the same coin. If you **identify** in your plan what you will base your evaluation on, it is easier to evaluate, and probably also to implement, and there will be better opportunities for learning.
- It is up to all of us, including local partners, to be creative and come up with alternatives, and avoid always ‘blaming the donors’. There are donors who support **innovative** ways of carrying out monitoring and evaluation.
- **Timescale issues**: it takes time to plan properly in order to facilitate genuine ownership. Measurability is proportional to the length of projects.
- The contested **concept of democracy** is an issue. What is democracy assistance? What are we trying to measure?
- **Unintended outcomes** can make you start working on things you had not thought of, and they can also cause you to stop working on something that you had high expectations for. In either case, such outcomes should be reported. Some organizations have even introduced instructive ‘failures reports’.

‘The logic of large bureaucracies is that of oil tankers. [They] cannot be stopped, but can [only] change direction, albeit...slowly.’

- **Start small**, and then continue supporting the projects that produce interesting outcomes.
- The demand for results makes **donors and implementing partners choose projects based on the measurability of the intended project results**, and not what they believe could have the greatest impact.
- If you are **realistic** and put realistic objectives into a matrix, you may have a hard time ‘selling’ the project. Funders might find your objectives insufficient.
- To ministers and parliaments, the question is simple: **has our money changed anything?** However difficult to measure, they need the numbers, or can they perhaps be convinced by strong narratives?
- There is a need for increased **flexibility**. Logframes easily become obsolete, and contexts change fast. It makes it difficult to take advantage of opportunities that arise. However, not all governance/democracy sub-sectors require the same degree of flexibility.
- A disproportionate amount of time is invested in **training** as an activity within democracy assistance, possibly as training sessions are easier to plan, implement and follow up than other types of activities.
- Donors need to manage their **expectations** and be more realistic as to what can actually happen within a short period of time and in different contexts.
- When using **outcome mapping**, you agree with your partners on what type of change you would *like* to see at different levels, and what you would *love* to see. Then you can ‘harvest’ and discuss with your partner what is actually happening. However, this is a time-consuming method.
- Develop good **baselines** and carry out periodic tracking of results. This will shed light on/reveal change. Good baselines require a lot of honesty: **trust** is key.

‘One organization in Afghanistan had to spend eight months learning to fill out the required templates of their main donors. ... It really would be better to allow for partner ownership and then use innovative methods to track what happens.’

PUBLIC ATTITUDES TO AID AND DEVELOPMENT

Ms Foresti, Head of the Politics and Governance Program at ODI, opened the afternoon plenary with a presentation on public attitudes to aid and development. Ms Foresti noted that the political leaders of donor governments often refer to taxpayers/public opinion and their interest in knowing if aid delivers. There is, however, emerging

research that suggests that public opinion might actually be more nuanced than first thought. According to ODI and the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), citizens across the United Kingdom are actually starting to reject simplistic aid messages (e.g. ‘spending money saves lives’) and instead recognize that change in developing countries is likely to be much more messy and complicated.⁸ ODI notes that ‘clearly, taxpayers in the UK and elsewhere are unlikely to support the idea of unstructured and open-ended funding, but these findings suggest there may be scope to communicate more effectively about some of the complexities and tradeoffs of development assistance, and greater openness to approaches that recognize and respond to failures through learning approaches rather than presenting a “perfect” aid model’.⁹

The research carried out by ODI and IPPR¹⁰ is based on four deliberative workshops held in London, Newcastle, Edinburgh and Evesham (February–March 2012). The workshops entailed in-depth discussions with members of the public not strongly pro or against development and aid—rather representing a middle ground. Discussions were stimulated by, for example, open-ended questions and prompts. Some of the key findings were:

- Moral views underpin attitudes:
 - General recognition of the moral case for supporting those in developing countries
 - Issues of fairness came up repeatedly, much more than arguments of self-interest
- But there were calls to prioritize dealing with poverty in the United Kingdom:
 - The opinion that ‘charity should begin at home’ was expressed in all the workshops, along with calls to prioritize people who are poor in the United Kingdom
 - The impact of the financial crisis was mentioned in most sessions, that it is harder to make the case for development spending in an era of austerity

Another finding shared by Ms Foresti was that participants saw international development and aid differently. Development was seen more positively, while aid was seen more negatively. There were concerns about waste and inefficiency, and a sense of little substantive change over the last two decades.

Ms Foresti also talked about how defensiveness and distancing in the way people talk about aid may erode long-term support. Images of poverty and hardship reinforce simplistic understandings, and scepticism towards aid may be reinforced by some campaign/fundraising tactics. She argued that the problem is how aid is conceived—rich countries giving money to poor countries. During the deliberative workshops, there were calls for more nuanced narratives and images of people’s lives in developing countries. Participants showed a strong appetite for stories of process and progress, and many wanted to know more about how and why change was possible. There were also requests for a better understanding of what exit strategies for aid might look like, driven by a desire to reduce aid spending *and* from a sense that dependency relationships can be detrimental. Ms Foresti thus noted that international aid is under threat, with or without results.

CAN A RISK-MANAGEMENT APPROACH TO RESULTS MANAGEMENT HELP MITIGATE ADVERSE SELECTION IN IMPLEMENTATION?

Mr Mikkelsen, Head of Strategic Planning and Results-Based Management, International IDEA, continued the afternoon session with a presentation on how a risk-management approach to results management can help to improve implementation of results-management approaches in the field of democracy assistance. Some of the main points from Mr Mikkelsen's presentation were as follows:

In times where public expenditure is under intense scrutiny, any kind of expenditure that does not produce a tangible output at the lowest possible cost to the constituents poses a political risk to governments. Implementers inherit this transferred risk downstream, and the result is sometimes, unfortunately, adverse selection in the results approach with a focus on short-term (and low-value) rather than long-term (and high-value) results.

When donors focus on overheads rather than insistence on good management, it opens up avenues for an increased risk of corruption. A structured and time-bound approach to risk management along the results chain could help mitigate adverse selection through risk sharing rather than risk transfer.

RESULTS-MANAGEMENT APPROACHES, CONTEXT AND FLEXIBILITY: DO THEY GO TOGETHER?

Martin Schmidt, Managing Partner, SPM Consultants, hosted a side session where the topic of discussion was if and how results-management approaches can be relevant to development aid, and democracy support in particular. His perspective is that of an evaluator and adviser on development of partner-country performance assessment and planning frameworks.

Mr Schmidt's answer to the title question is 'yes'. He is a proponent of the results-management perspective, but not of its current predominant application in development aid. This is because, currently, the approach is associated with accountability requirements and rigid reporting frameworks that, according to Mr Schmidt, are far removed from the original intentions of the RBM perspective. By contrast, results-oriented approaches to management are centred on the adaptability and continuous learning capacities of successful managers. In line with this thinking, development aid managers should not despair over the faults of the RBM perspective, but rather over the interpretation that it is only a question of stringent reporting according to an unalterable matrix. To illustrate the idea, the group's attention was turned to a standard definition of RBM employed by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (see below).

Werner Meier's definition¹¹ of RBM for consideration by the OECD/DAC in 2003:

'Results-Based Management (RBM) is a management strategy aimed at achieving important changes in the way organisations operate, with improving performance in terms of results as the central orientation. RBM provides the management framework with tools for strategic planning, risk management, performance monitoring and evaluation. Its primary purpose is to improve efficiency and effectiveness through organisational *learning*, and secondly to fulfil accountability obligations through *performance reporting*.'

Mr Schmidt observed that two purposes dominate existing definitions of RBM. The first is the *learning* objective, and the second is the *accountability* objective. He argued that in development aid practices since about the time of the DAC high-level roundtables on results (Washington and Marrakesh in 2002 and 2004, respectively), far too much emphasis has been put on the second objective. In an article published in 2010, as mentioned before, Andrew Natsios, former USAID Administrator, coined the term ‘obsessive measurement disorder’.

In fact, according to Mr Schmidt, the first objective, learning, seems to be largely misunderstood or disregarded in the development community. What is implied by the learning objective is that, for results management to be an active practice, performance information should be used in real planning and as part of the basis for strategic priorities and decision-making.

Mr Schmidt provided the roundtable participants with some conclusions ‘from the evaluator’s point of view’:

- Donor agencies have been preoccupied with the demonstration of results (accountability), and have disregarded the need to change planning practices (including a stronger element of performance assessment and analysis as a basis for real decisions).
- Support to partner-country planning frameworks is too rare despite the explicit intentions of the Paris Declaration.¹²
- Results matrices are unhelpful with respect to sound results-management practices when applied under an accountability agenda. One reason is that they inject a measure of inflexibility into a learning approach that in fact embraces flexibility and changes in behaviour, targets and means as a consequence of changing contextual conditions (an ability to adapt to changing conditions is considered a strength from a planning perspective).
- Adopting a results-management approach means introducing performance information into the planning framework of all actors: donors, implementers and partners.
- When performance information is used in actual planning, the planning often takes on an outcome-oriented shape as opposed to the activity-output-oriented and quantitative character of the obligatory results matrices.
- In democracy assistance, this practice would, in general, be no more difficult than in other sectors/areas. However, it is suggested that the framework is less visible in democracy support than in some other areas such as education, health or agriculture.

During the discussion that followed Mr Schmidt’s presentation, there was again agreement that time frames are a real concern, both from the perspective of not having sufficient time to benefit from the information available from previous evaluations, reviews at too early a stage of a project (pressure to demonstrate results too soon), and lack of time to gather and share the information that, for example, staff in the field have in their heads. Information was another topic that led to a discussion. Opinions diverged over whether all of the information that is needed is already available but has not been gathered, whether smaller actors have the capacity to make use of the information (there

was agreement that analysis is key), and whether data on democracy are simply too subjective. Mr Schmidt shared his view that information is flawed, but that when you start to use information systematically, for real purposes, in real planning, one does get a more solid foundation to build on.

Quotes from the discussions:

‘Why are we not learning? Learning really is the forgotten part of RBM. It is always annually, or every third year, that you are required to evaluate and report, but learning can be something so much more informal.’

‘We should talk more about the learning of our partners, and not just our own learning, as donors. That is an important distinction to make. ... There are very few incentives to follow up and learn amongst donors as the staff turnover is so high.’

‘Within my own agency, it seems like you make a career from managing successful programmes, meaning that there are few incentives to learn from mistakes. ... We look for results that confirm our assumptions, rather than what actually happens.’

‘We only do half circles. We push partners to do this/do that, but then we do not follow up our own input into steering and planning. We simply do not seem to care/ have the capacity to receive and make use of what comes out at the other end.’

‘A ministry in country X had to deal with a matrix of 147 indicators. Everyone expected a clear and succinct report, but not a single donor/creditor was willing to support the planning or M&E unit in the ministry.’

‘There is a results-based “market” where donors come and “buy” certain results and partners “sell” certain commitments.’

‘One of the real drawbacks of focusing on accountability and control (rather than learning) is the tendency to view the logical framework approach in a very inflexible way ... while the environment in which you [are working] is very volatile. This is particularly challenging in democracy assistance. If you stick to a matrix that was created several years ago, you are going to be hopelessly lost.’

‘More projects are actually adjusted along the way nowadays. You can reassess things, and objectives are not set in stone. We always ask partners to share results that were not expected, but welcome.’

‘The flexibility of taking higher risks seems to generate more discretion—and more results.’

Mr Schmidt concluded by highlighting that learning should be about strengthening planning processes, whether of the partner or the donor. He urged participants to support the planning units of partners.

IT'S ALL ABOUT BEHAVIOUR: WHAT LOGICAL FRAMEWORKS DON'T MEASURE, AND WHY IT MATTERS

One of the side sessions was led by Greg Power, Director, Global Partners Governance (GPG), who talked about weaknesses of the logical framework, behavioural change as the overarching goal of governance support, the mixing of quantitative and qualitative measurements to capture progress, and a few football analogies. According to Mr Power, the way governance support projects are planned, managed and evaluated needs to change, and this was the starting point of his presentation. Mr Power read three quotes from practitioners in the field of governance support:

What we need is less money and more time.

Our agency is more interested in doing things the right way than in doing the right things.

The best projects are those that deviate the most from the original project document.

In a paper produced by GPG based on this presentation, the problem is briefly summarized as logframes, at present, being asked to carry a load they were not designed to bear.¹³ Mr Power covered the standard complaints about logframes: that they are based on predetermined assumptions of progress; they depend on politics staying static for the duration of the project; and that the initial analysis in a logframe often comes from a scoping mission that is unrealistically expected to include all relevant information for the project lifespan. In short, complaints revolve around linearity, rigidity and predictability.

Logframes ask implementers to guess at outputs, outcomes and indicators. Project success is then effectively measured on whether those initial guesses were correct. ... While logframes do have certain benefits, the assumption of linearity and the rigid application of its contents runs counter to all that we know about how politics works in practice. And, in using the logframe to measure progress against indicators dreamt up at the beginning of the project, it tells donor agencies about an implementer's prescience, but not necessarily their effectiveness.¹⁴

Mr Power also talked about how indicators are being confused with targets. An indicator should indicate that change is occurring, a target is something that you need to work towards, and with the wrong targets you end up doing the wrong things. Mr Power observed that project delivery is often judged against its ability to deliver to the logframe, and an assumption of linear progress. In this sense, according to Mr Power, theories of change are merely 'logframes on steroids'. Mr Power argued that logframes should instead provide general direction and create a coherent plan, similar to a game plan in football, instead of drawing straight lines that development never follows. According to Mr Power, the logic of football can very well be applied to governance projects:

Logframe linearity assumes a “route-one” style of play, or at least something similar to it, where the ball is kicked forward and forward again, and then inevitably into the net (the goal). ... In reality a football will go in many different directions before it ends up in the goal—if indeed it does. The ball will be passed sideways, backwards and forwards. Players will be tackled, possibly fouled, driven off their original direction and lose the ball. ... As opponents start to disrupt progress, so the supporters need to change tactics and style of play, perhaps making the occasional substitution to counter the effects of the opposition. ...

In football, as in politics, there will also be a huge amount of activity during a match that does not directly affect the progress towards a specific goal. Working out what activity is relevant will emerge only as the game progresses. At the start, it is impossible to identify how each of the 22 players will behave during ninety minutes. And yet, the current application of logframes means that we are essentially being asked to predict the entire passage of the match—and the actions of both supporters and opponents.

Worse than this, that guesswork is then used to create the indicators of success. Projects are measured against an ability to predict, reasonably precisely, how a goal will be scored before the match has started. Without taking into account the opposing side, the conditions or the fitness of your players. The bigger danger is then one of simply following a preset plan, regardless. If you know you’re going to be measured against the activities you said you were going to do, then you will do your damndest to make sure you stick to them, ignoring whether they are actually working or not.¹⁵

He argued that while the overarching goal should be clear, we must be prepared to change everything else. The strategy he suggests is to start with the people, not the structures, since reforming institutions is about *changing behaviour* more than *changing rules*. According to Mr Power, when working with altering institutional structures or providing resources, what is most important is how these changes will subsequently shape behaviour.¹⁶ Understanding why people are behaving in a certain way, how to motivate them to behave differently and to recognize the capacity of people to *prevent* change is essential. Mr Power mentioned that interesting work has been done by the Behavioural Insights Team,¹⁷ formerly a government institution in the United Kingdom dedicated to the application of behavioural sciences, and today a social purpose company that helps organizations apply insights from academic research in behavioural economics and psychology in their work.

Mr Power concluded by stating that donors, of course, need indicators to measure against. But once indicators are established, all project activity is geared towards making sure you hit them. And with the wrong indicators, as with the wrong targets, you end up doing the wrong things. Rather than simply pointing to the weaknesses of logframes, the emphasis is now on implementing agencies to come up with an alternative. Implementers have a huge amount of expertise on the ground and need to help donor agencies measure impact more effectively. A system that is better at measuring progress would help donors, implementers and, ultimately, the people whose lives such programmes are designed to improve.

To move towards action-oriented discussions, Erike Tanghøj, who is currently working as a business developer at the Christian Democratic International Centre (KIC), a Swedish political party foundation, was asked to share her experience of results-management methods in working with the Program of Young Politicians in Africa (PYPA).

‘With the wrong indicators, you end up doing the wrong things.’

PYPA is a multi-party youth political capacity-strengthening programme with the aim of grooming democratic leaders and increasing youth political participation. Ms Tanghøj described how the grooming of a democratic leadership is about changing behaviour, attitudes and values, and that increased participation of a marginalized group is about questioning and challenging traditional power structures. According to Ms Tanghøj, conventional results-management methods, such as the logical framework approach and results-based management, are rather unsuitable for revealing the dynamics of these processes.

Ms Tanghøj talked about the need for a paradigm shift: to change our way of thinking about *who* gets to define results and *who* donors relate to when they evaluate the successes and failures of a programme. She spoke of how staff at the PYPA programme try to explore, develop and put into practice a less positivistic management method that endorses open-ended and process-oriented objectives and indicators, and relies more upon the realities and experiences expressed by the target group. They use different tools of results management and not only one single results matrix or model.

Ms Tanghøj stressed that we need to look into *who* gets to define *what* the results are and *whether* they are adequate. In the PYPA management model, the target group owns the right to define and present the results of the programme. If the results are unsatisfactory, changes are made according to the recommendations of the target group. As such, management is carried out *by* the participants through the extensive evaluative measures and learning loops employed by the programme.

Ms Tanghøj also pointed out that, in this process, the use of ongoing external evaluations is crucial. The evaluators are the guardians of the programmatic interests of the target group. They provide independent expert analysis of the data provided by the participants. They follow, register, and analyse the changes and developments, as well as social interactions, of the participants and donors/practitioners. According to Ms Tanghøj, ongoing evaluations, compared to traditional end evaluations, succeed with both the accountability aspect and the learning aspect of evaluation to a greater extent. In Ms Tanghøj’s view, ongoing evaluation leads to lessons being learned *during*, not *after*, projects, and hence enables constructive changes as projects proceed. Apart from detecting results, ongoing evaluation puts emphasis on why and how those results were achieved, feeding into the general learning loop and making the programming more relevant and effective.

In the ensuing discussion, several participants stressed that there is no single results-management approach that is suitable for all projects. One participant also pointed out that we need to differentiate between how to *plan, implement and monitor* projects, and

how to *communicate* results to funders. Opinions were expressed that logframes should be used in a more flexible way, for learning and adaptation, and some participants questioned why we should keep logframes at all, considering the arguments put forward against them. One topic that led to a discussion was whether all partners have the capacity to implement the methods favoured by donors, and it was suggested that ‘story telling’¹⁸ could be explored as a method for demonstrating complex change. Finally, there was agreement that we need to combine quantitative and qualitative measures, as well as change the role of project implementers from controlling and overseeing to giving advice and guidance.

CONCLUDING ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

The concluding session of the roundtable was devoted to sharing lessons learned and thoughts on what the next steps should be. All participants agreed that discussions had been very rich, but they also agreed that the operationalization of roundtable discussions, that is, how to practically move forward, partly remains to be worked out. Below follows a compilation of topics raised, arguments put forward and suggestions for future actions.

‘We need to make [an] impact outside the
logframes.’

As in earlier discussions, a source of disagreement was whether the application of results-management approaches is more difficult in the field of democracy assistance than in other sectors of international development assistance. Participants observed that the field is constantly and rapidly changing, and views were expressed that this makes the job of results managers more difficult. Several participants said that when dealing with complex issues, programmes need to be planned in a different way, and they claimed that the struggle with measurements and communication of results is a never-ending story. The question was also asked whether we really understand the context we are working in, as regards behaviour, values and norms. Other participants were of the opinion that, although it could be the case that, for example, relationships with implementing partners are more difficult in the field of democracy assistance than in other, less political sectors of international development, we need to stop comparing levels of complexity. Beliefs were shared that the donor-country taxpayers still have an appetite for democracy support, but that it needs to be communicated in the right way and not only be focused on the achievement of, or failure to achieve, predetermined results.

Many participants stressed that ownership is a key challenge when applying results-management approaches in the field of democracy assistance, and that partners need to be involved to a higher degree at all stages of future projects. One participant observed that, despite all the talk about ownership, donors are still supply-driven instead of demand-driven. Opinions were expressed that, without ownership, there is no legitimacy of results, and that it is important to involve partners when looking for ways to measure results, namely, donors have the responsibility to not just pass measurements down to their partners. Views were expressed that democracy assistance providers should give local partners the tools to work out their own objectives, that it has to be driven from partners towards donors. One roundtable participant said that

partners need to understand not only the political context but also who the donor is and who within the donor agency they can turn to with concerns.

‘When we actually got results was when we did not use RBM but rather communicated, listened and interacted with the communities.’

Participants also talked about the importance of trust. One participant claimed that the private sector has virtually abandoned results-management approaches and instead focuses on trust management—building trustful relations and contacts. It was said that businesses get results when they learn and dare to trust each other, and that learning itself requires a level of trust. Several participants stressed that trust is crucial when working with democracy assistance, partly because trust makes it OK to say: ‘We need to do things differently.’ Other participants had concerns regarding whether trust-based management is compatible with standard results-management approaches.

Some statements concerned the need to shift focus from monitoring and evaluation for control and accountability towards learning and strengthening the planning capacities of the actors involved. Participants talked about bringing back learning in results management, as defined by Werner Meier,¹⁹ but also raised concerns about the time, resources and capacity needed to turn performance data/information into learning and planning for continued and future projects. Several participants expressed the notion that information and context analysis is needed, but that resources for internal reflection are diminishing. It was suggested that one should think of what the results are needed for—is it for planning or for measuring whether people are doing their jobs?—and only gather performance information that can be used for planning purposes. Participants did, however, have different perceptions as to whether the information that is needed is available and just needs to be used more intelligently or whether gathering information itself is also an issue.

‘Think about what you need your results for.’

Another view that was expressed during the concluding plenary session was that the best programmes are the more flexible ones that do not fit very well into matrices. Many participants expressed the need to use standard results-management approaches in more flexible ways. As one participant put it, countries look very different, meaning that results management instruments need to look very different and be very flexible. Another participant expressed it as a need to be able to measure beyond the logframes and that, once again, time and resources are key if programmes are to be more flexible. Others reiterated the view that standard results-management approaches, such as RBM, are more flexible than many people give them credit for, and that the problem rather lies in the implementation.

As for the next steps, there seems to be unanimous support for continued exchanges, although different ideas were expressed as to which topics to discuss and in what forums. According to one participant, the first thing we need to do is to discuss and decide on a definition of democracy assistance if we are to be able to evaluate our performance in the future. Another participant argued that, given that democracy assistance is

inherently political, any definition will be ideologically biased, but that we can get a lot further in recognizing the various ideologically based interpretations and their effects on our priorities in this work area. This participant argued that, for instance, proponents of a liberal democracy definition tend not to recognize outcomes in terms of realization of social and economic rights, while one could claim that a substantive or social definition of democracy would encompass all human rights. The use of just these two different definitions could have substantive effects on what you will work on, how you will prioritize your work and, consequently, what you consider to be results.

Many participants suggested discussions in particular sub-sectors of democracy assistance and in specific regions since contextual differences imply that challenges (and opportunities) of applying results-management approaches also differ. NIMD expressed interest in hosting a similar meeting to this roundtable, but at the regional level, and co-hosting that event with local partners. Several participants also argued that the issues and the needs of organizations of different levels differ (e.g. multilateral organizations, national development aid agencies, country offices and implementing partners of different capacities) and might need to be discussed separately. Whatever proposals the participants presented, everyone seemed to agree on the importance of engaging more with local partners, shifting focus to local contexts and jointly deciding on practical solutions.

‘Rather than asking “Would I put my own money in this?” I think we should turn the question around and ask “Would my partner miss me if I were not here tomorrow?”’

Some of the more concrete suggestions for continued exchanges were:

- Smaller, more focused working groups made up of practitioners meeting and sharing experiences
- Discussions with a diverse group of actors working on different levels within the same sector/region
- Discuss pros and cons of different methods and where they would be more useful/less useful
- Sessions for presenting and discussing experimental designs
- Discussions that focus on specific challenges of democracy assistance, such as non-tangible phenomena (values, norms)—the deliberative aspects of democracy

Participants also talked about being more proactive in putting concrete and workable methods on the table, and to avoid developing sophisticated methods that are not actionable. Participants said that it is important to internalize feedback from staff in the field about approaches that are difficult to implement, and to stop trying to adjust and mend things that are thrown at the community of democracy assistance providers from the political level. Some saw this unwillingness to change the status quo as the biggest barrier to improvement, and therefore suggested efforts to identify incentives/disincentives for change as the next step. A joint position paper on the challenges

discussed during the roundtable, drafted by actors such as those who participated in the event, was also suggested.

‘There is still a lot of talk about problems instead of solutions. Talking about solutions generates a different kind of energy.’

One participant argued that we must incorporate a human rights based approach to results-management approaches. Most importantly, this participant argued, we need to take responsibility within our own organizations and be more explicit towards senior management about not only what can and cannot be done, but also what issues there are, and what the consequences could be if what can be done is implemented.

Another participant stated that understanding the environment we work in is a different challenge than understanding what we can actually contribute. This participant stressed that democracy assistance providers are not driving the agenda, and that it is tremendously important to be realistic about what we can and cannot do, and to find that space if we want to monitor results.

It was also observed that there are very few applications of innovative and experimental methods of monitoring and evaluation in the field of democracy assistance, and some argued that this is something to change, or that we at least should compile what has been done so far to enable learning from successful attempts.

While one participant pointed out that the problem with results in development aid has been present since the 1960s, others saw progress in the fact that policymakers and practitioners are asking themselves harder questions, and that evaluations of different results-management approaches are being conducted by a plurality of organizations and governmental agencies. For example, the OECD is doing a study on results-based approaches in the public sector and another on innovation in public-sector reform. Now, rough ideas for solutions need to be tested, and it is time to determine whether new ways of measuring are helpful to the sector of democracy assistance.

‘We will never find a tool that is perfect and [that] will solve all our problems. But we could identify a number of tools and measurements that are a better fit in different contexts.’

KEY TAKEAWAYS AND THE ROAD AHEAD

During the roundtable's concluding plenary session, participants had the opportunity to share lessons learned and ideas for the future. Their views are briefly summarized in four key takeaways and a discussion on the road ahead.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1) Participants agreed that they can no longer continue down the same path. Results-management approaches need to be better designed and implemented in ways that truly promote ownership, flexibility, and learning, as opposed to merely control.
 - Local partners need to own projects and the targets of those projects for the results to be legitimate and for democracy assistance to be carried out democratically. This requires lines of communication to be established/improved, trustful relationships to be built and the internalization of feedback from local partners. The Paris Declaration identifies ownership as the first out of five fundamental principles for making aid more effective, and that declaration needs to be properly implemented.
 - Results-management approaches must promote organizational learning, which means providing sufficient time and resources to reflect on and reconsider the current approach. It also means that performance information must be collected for the purpose of being used in future planning and not just for upward accountability and control. This could also lighten the burden of actors that struggle with monitoring and reporting results, since only information that can be used for real purposes will be collected.
 - To be able to adjust to ever-changing political and social contexts, as well as uncertain funding, unintended results and discovering what actually works, the methods of management, monitoring and evaluation must be flexible. When applied in non-flexible ways, logframes can become a straightjacket, limiting the choice of projects to fund and implement to the ones generating easily measurable results. Honesty should be encouraged: it must be OK to say what is not working and what is working but not generating quantifiable results.
- 2) There is a need to promote further discussions on these topics within specific regions and sub-sectors of democracy assistance, as well as across different sectors. Regardless of the location or subject matter, more local partners need to be represented in these discussions.

- Practical solutions need to be discussed, incentives/disincentives for change identified, pros and cons of different methods evaluated, and local partners need to be represented in larger numbers in these forums. To enable in-depth discussions about challenges and solutions, it would be useful to have these discussions in several regions, and within the communities of specific sub-sectors of democracy assistance, divided on the basis of working methods and target groups. Organizing meetings at the regional level would also secure the attendance of more local partners—who otherwise might not be able to cover the travel expenditures—thus enabling local partners’ participation in the development of general working methods, and not solely methods applied in a specific project.
- 3) It is paramount that instructive examples of innovative ways of applying results management approaches to democracy assistance be collected and discussed in order to enable learning. Furthermore, participants agreed that they need to test new ways of planning, managing, monitoring and evaluating democracy assistance projects, with the goal of developing and applying approaches that are genuinely sensitive to partners’ realities and needs.
- New ideas need to be developed and tested, and examples of ideas that have been tested successfully (as well as unsuccessful ones) need to be compiled and disseminated, as such collections appear to be missing today. New approaches to planning, managing, monitoring and evaluating projects, including experimental ones, also need to be documented, along with their usefulness for different purposes and in different sub-sectors of democracy assistance. It is important to internalize feedback from staff in the field about approaches that are difficult to implement, and, to the extent possible, to stop trying to adjust and mend things that trickle down to the community of democracy assistance providers from political levels.
- 4) If efforts are to lead to the developments outlined above, understanding context is of the utmost importance. Participants emphasized that the context should determine what, in terms of results, is realistic and fair to expect in each individual case, and that they should find innovative ways to communicate results to funders.
- It is essential to recognize how thoroughly political this work area is. There is a strong need to grasp the larger context of power relations and politics, as well as the social context in which democracy assistance takes place. Results-measurement mechanisms need to be simplified, and our understanding of results broadened, accordingly. Moreover, participants recognized the need to allow for more process-oriented, as opposed to progress-oriented, result agendas. If targets are not adjusted to context, then results will be out of reach. Finally, more efforts at innovative ways of communicating results to funders and political actors are clearly needed.

THE ROAD AHEAD

As for the road ahead, International IDEA may consider hosting a follow-up event next year that will focus on practical solutions to the challenges discussed during the roundtable and, if so, will be very much open to different ways of doing so, including

with possible co-hosts. The presence of more local partners, including beneficiaries, would be very valuable, as would be representatives of additional sub-sectors of democracy assistance. Tentatively, the idea would be to invite participants to share real-life experiences of various innovative solutions to applying results-management approaches in democracy assistance, including the application of methods such as outcome harvesting, most significant change, or ongoing external evaluations. Others, however, noted that if the next step is to find solutions, discussions should take place at the sub-sector level. Moreover, it would also be useful to find examples where a donor agency and a partner jointly present the achievements of, and challenges faced, in joint projects. NIMD expressed interest in hosting a similar meeting to this roundtable, but at the regional level, and co-hosting that event with local partners, such as public institutions and civil society organizations. UNDP-OGC suggested that a future event include role-playing exercises based on a series of case studies on democracy assistance, without the actual ending, to facilitate discussions among participants about what they would do if they were in the shoes of the partners/project managers. Further, the Political Party Peer Network, which has a dedicated sub-group working on these issues, suggested that the next step could be to move these debates into the network, partly to benefit from its online knowledge platform.

One study being produced by the OECD/DAC Governance Network (GovNet) centres on results-based approaches in the public sector, and another on innovation in public-sector reform, in collaboration with the OECD observatory of public-sector innovations. DFID was just about to conclude a note on parliament and parties, including support to women in parliament, and IPU was working on a set of common principles for parliamentary support. One participant suggested producing a type of 'do no harm' joint position paper on the challenges discussed during the roundtable, drafted by actors such as those who participated in the event. GPG was working on its own methodology for delivering projects and measuring progress (under the acronyms KAPE and README), which was just about to be published. The methodology builds on a results-chain approach, combining qualitative and quantitative measures, that encourages new patterns of behaviour.

'If we work in this sector not just to have a job but because we believe in making change somewhere down the line, I think we should properly acknowledge the sector's structural weaknesses, and use this as a starting point for change and improvement.'

To sum up, the roundtable showed that democracy assistance and results management approaches are considered important topics for continued work, and that future events need to focus more squarely on how to move forward in *practice*. New approaches to planning, managing, monitoring and evaluating democracy support projects need to be developed, and existing approaches need to be implemented in ways that promote local ownership, as well as organizational learning and flexibility to adjust to ever-changing political and social contexts.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ 'Draft Outcome Report: Democratic Governance: Can we measure up?', a roundtable event hosted by UNDP's Oslo Governance Centre in partnership with International IDEA, Oslo, 5-6 December 2013, available at <http://www.idea.int/development/upload/Democratic-Governance-Can-we-measure-up_Published-Version_7-3-14.pdf>, accessed 17 October 2014.
- ² Instituto Nacional de Estatística [National Statistics Institute], *Inquérito Sobre Orçamento Familiar 2008/09* [Family Budget Survey 2008/09] (Maputo: Instituto Nacional de Estatística, 2010), or Van Den Boom, Bart, 'Analysis of poverty in Mozambique: Household poverty status, child malnutrition and other indicators 1997, 2003, 2009', 2011, available at: <<http://www.sow.vu.nl/pdf/Mozambique/Analysis%20of%20Poverty%20in%20Moz%20March%202011%20ENG.pdf>>, accessed 9 October 2014.
- ³ Talbot, Colin, 'Performance Management' in Ewan Ferlie et al. (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Public Management* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
- ⁴ Miller, Peter and Rose, Nikolas, *Governing the Present: Administering Economic, Social and Personal Life* (Cambridge: Polity, 2008).
- ⁵ Brunsson, Nils, *Mechanisms of Hope: Maintaining the Dream of the Rational Organization* (Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School Press, 2006).
- ⁶ Vähämäki, Janet, Schmidt, Martin and Molander, Joakim, *Review: Results Based Management in Development Cooperation* (Stockholm: Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, 2011), available at <<http://www.seachangecop.org/sites/default/files/documents/2011%2011%20RBM%20in%20development%20cooperaton.pdf>>, accessed 3 October 2014.
- ⁷ Natsios, Andrew, *The Clash of Counter-Bureaucracy and Development* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Global Development, 2010).
- ⁸ Glennie, Alex, Straw, Will and Wild, Leni, *Understanding public attitudes to aid and development* (London: Institute for Public Policy Research and Overseas Development Institute, 2012), available at <<http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/7708.pdf>>, accessed 9 October 2014.
- ⁹ Wild, Leni and Foresti, Marta, 'Working with the politics: how to improve public services for the poor, Overseas Development Institute, London 2013, available at <<http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8587.pdf>>, accessed 9 October 2014.
- ¹⁰ Glennie et al., op. cit., note 8.
- ¹¹ Meier, Werner, 'Results-Based Management: Towards A Common Understanding Among Development Cooperation Agencies', Discussion paper for consideration by the DAC Working Party on Aid Effectiveness and Harmonization, Canadian Development Agency, Quebec, 2003.
- ¹² The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, 2005; Statement of Resolve, point 3 (and throughout the five principles of the Declaration).
- ¹³ Global Partners Governance, 'The Logframe and the Beautiful Game: Project Logic v Football Logic' Global Partners Governance, London, 2014, available at <<http://www.gpgovernance.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Politically-Agile-Programming-paper-1.pdf>>, accessed 15 October 2014.
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁷ See the website of the Behavioural Insights Team at <http://www.behaviouralinsights.co.uk/>, accessed 9 October 2014.
- ¹⁸ See the GlobalGiving Storytelling Project: <http://www.globalgiving.org/stories/>, accessed 9 October 2014.
- ¹⁹ Meier et al., op. cit., note 11.

ANNEX 1. FURTHER READINGS

Agrawal, Rashmi, 'Results in Evaluations – Some Practical Issues', *Norrag News*, 47 (2012), pp. 98–9, available at <http://norrage.t3dev1.cross-agency.ch/fileadmin/Full_Versions/NN47.pdf#page=33>, accessed 3 October 2014

'In the recent past, there had been a growing interest and increased emphasis upon impact of various developmental interventions across the globe leading to a change in conception of evaluations of such interventions both in terms of evaluation philosophy as well as practice. The present discussion raises some practical issues linked with impact evaluations in terms of methodology, ethics, the intention and compulsions of end users, and problems of developing economies. It argues that while impact evaluations are the need of the time, a flexible approach is needed.'

Bakewell, Oliver and Garbutt, Anne, *The Use and Abuse of the Logical Framework Approach* (Stockholm: Sida, 2005), available at <<http://www.intrac.org/data/files/resources/518/The-Use-and-Abuse-of-the-Logical-Framework-Approach.pdf>>, accessed 15 October 2014

'The logical framework approach (LFA) has come to play a central role in the planning and management of development interventions over the last twenty years. Although the logical framework has become universally known, it is far from universally liked. It has been the subject of much criticism over the years, concerning both the theoretical basis of the approach, and the way it is applied in practice. In this review, we have attempted to take stock of the current views of international development NGOs on the LFA and the ways in which they use it.'

Barder, Owen, 'Evidence-Based, Politically Savvy Ways of Doing Development Aid', *Norrag News*, 47 (2012), pp. 25–30, available at <http://norrage.t3dev1.cross-agency.ch/fileadmin/Full_Versions/NN47.pdf#page=33>, accessed 3 October 2014

'This piece identifies four good reasons why it is important to get better at measuring results, seven common criticisms of the so-called "results agenda", and proposes steps to resolve the tension between its proponents and critics.'

Bester, Angela, *Results-Based Management in the United Nations Development System: Progress and Challenges* (New York: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2012), available at <http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/pdf/rbm_report_10_july.pdf>, accessed 17 October 2014

'The application of results-based management in the development field has gained currency and national governments and public institutions increasingly are adopting this approach. Further impetus for improving results-based management comes from demands from both programme and donor countries for the United Nations development system to demonstrate that it is achieving its objectives, that it does so efficiently and that its activities are relevant to the needs and priorities of programme countries and contribute to improved and sustainable development outcomes.'

The Big Push Forward, ‘The Politics of Evidence Conference Report’, Brighton, 23-24 April 2013, available at <<http://bigpushforward.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/BPF-PoE-conference-report.pdf>>, accessed 3 October 2014

‘Trying to generate and understand cost-effectiveness and demonstrate results over-rides questioning why development efforts were initiated and whom these were intended for. Losing sight of the critical questions is compounded by the tendency of people to latch onto specific favoured tools. Uncritical use of preferred tools can short-circuit thinking and obscure the lack of clarity of what exactly it is you are trying to understand.’

Carden, Fred, ‘Whose Development Results Count?’, *Norrag News*, 47 (2012), pp. 59–60, available at <http://norrag.t3dev1.cross-agency.ch/fileadmin/Full_Versions/NN47.pdf#page=33>, accessed 3 October 2014

‘The unit of analysis in development programming should not be the aid program or aid effectiveness, but development itself, that is improving the lives of all people in a society and doing so in as equitable a manner as possible. To do this, we must learn and track the values and socio-political interests of both those who make decisions and those who live with the consequences of decisions taken.’

Carothers, Thomas and Brechenmacher, Saskia, *Closing Space: Democracy and Human Rights Support Under Fire* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2014), available at <http://carnegieendowment.org/files/closing_space.pdf>, accessed 17 October 2014

‘After decades of growing global reach, the field of international support for democracy and human rights faces a worrisome trend: widening and increasingly assertive pushback around the developing and postcommunist worlds. Governments are erecting legal and logistical barriers to externally sponsored democracy and rights programs they deem too politically intrusive, publicly vilifying international aid groups engaged in democracy and rights work as well as their local partners, and harassing or expelling such international groups altogether. Of particular concern to many national and international democracy and rights activists is the viral-like spread of new laws restricting foreign funding for domestic nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). ... This report examines the closing space challenge to international support for democracy and rights.’

Carothers, Thomas and de Gramont, Diane, *Aiding Governance in Developing Countries: Progress Amid Uncertainties* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2011), available at <http://carnegieendowment.org/files/aiding_governance.pdf>, accessed 17 October 2014

‘Even as governance assistance progresses, it struggles with several continuing uncertainties. The empirical case that improved governance is necessary for development progress is less straightforward than many aid practitioners would wish. The increasing pressure faced by most aid organizations for rapid, clearly measurable results sometimes works against sophisticated governance assistance. Larger international aid trends, especially the rise of new donors with other priorities, threaten to weaken the governance agenda. Fully operationalizing these insights and overcoming the uncertainties will be hard. But the central promise of governance assistance—finally getting to the heart of the development challenge—is great enough to justify the effort and to ensure that even partial success will be worthwhile.’

Carothers, Thomas and de Gramont, Diane, *Development Aid Confronts Politics: The Almost Revolution* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2013), chapter 1, available at <http://carnegieendowment.org/files/development_aid_politics_ch_1.pdf>, accessed 17 October 2014

‘This book seeks to explain and assess the unfolding movement in development aid to think and act more politically. We aim to clarify what these changes consist of, why they are occurring, and what their implications are for aid providers and recipients alike. The title gives away at least part of our conclusion—the revolution is not complete. But it leaves open many questions that we believe deserve close attention and that we try to answer, including how far mainstream aid providers have come in integrating political goals and methods into their work, why they have met with resistance, and whether this agenda is likely to continue moving forward or instead stagnate or retreat.’

Conlin, Sean and Stirrat, Roderick L., ‘Current Challenges in Development *Evaluation*’, *Evaluation*, 14/2 (2008), pp. 193–208, available at <http://www.wmich.edu/evalphd/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/Current_Challenges_in_Development_Evaluation.pdf>, accessed 3 October 2014

‘Over the past 20 years, the development industry has changed rapidly and now presents evaluators with a series of new challenges. This article considers this process of change. It argues that there has been a move away from a “project-based” approach to a broader vision of development centred on the Millennium Development Goals, which has led to a change of the evaluation approach: from an assessment of outputs to an evaluation of results. Furthermore, the increasing complexity of ways in which the development process is conceptualized demands increasingly sophisticated and interpretive approaches to evaluation. Whilst there will remain space for positivist approaches in certain sectors of the industry, it is increasingly likely that other approaches will become more dominant.’

Crawford, Gordon and Kearton, Iain, ‘Evaluating Democracy and Governance Assistance’, ESCOR Research Report No. 7894, December 2001, available at <http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/PDF/Outputs/Mis_SPC/R7894-FinRep.pdf>, accessed 3 October 2014

‘This research sought to stress the inappropriate nature of logframe-related evaluation in the political aid field. Aside from the inadequate nature of quantitative indicators and the ‘softness’ of data in a sphere in which institutional relationships and culture are the subject of reform, one key criticism has concerned the inability of a logframe approach to impart or to take into account the political context in which DG projects and programmes are embedded. LFA is inward-orientated, inverting evaluation towards achievement (or not) of pre-determined project objectives, whereas evaluation of DG assistance requires an outward orientation, able to capture the dynamic political context of which it is part.’

Crawford, Gordon, ‘Promoting Democracy From Without – Learning From Within (Part I)’, *Democratization*, 10/1 (2003), pp. 77–98, available at <<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/714000115>>, accessed 3 October 2014

‘Part I examines how international development agencies have tackled the methodological problems, focusing on a recent spate of evaluation studies. It is concluded that the application of conventional evaluation methodology in this field, notably the logical framework approach, suffers from a number of deficiencies and limitations, while attempts at country impact evaluation have not adequately addressed the inherent difficulties. Additionally, it is felt that

conventional evaluation reproduces a negative feature of democracy assistance itself – it is externally led and controlled, with limited input from local actors.’

Crawford, Gordon, ‘Promoting Democracy From Without – Learning From Within (Part II)’, *Democratization*, 10/2 (2003), pp. 1–20, available at <<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/714000119>>, accessed 3 October 2014

‘Part II of this article puts forward an alternative methodology, based on a participatory political process, as a means to conduct impact evaluation at country level. A “genuinely” participatory approach is advocated, in which informed national actors control the evaluation process and provide the key input of local knowledge and analysis. It is asserted that positive outcomes can include a more critical appraisal of international donor activities, greater internal authorship over external democracy assistance, and a strengthening of local action for democratic change. In this way, the act of evaluation can become an act of democratization.’

Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy (DIPD), *Study on Results Frameworks: Political Party Assistance* (Copenhagen: Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy, 2013), available at <<http://dipd.dk/wp-content/uploads/Resultsframeworks-Political-Party-Assistance.pdf>>, accessed 3 October 2014

‘This study was identified as needed by the Global Political Party Assistance Providers Peer Network and initiated and produced by DIPD. The study set out to review how result frameworks are designed and used by the party assistance community, and to identify the primary programme areas (i.e. multiparty dialogue, policy development, women’s empowerment, among others) from both a party system and individual party level perspective. To the extent possible, the study also sought to identify common trends associated with the frameworks, and offer recommendations to the community on moving forward in this area.’

Ellerman, David, ‘Do we Need an Institute for the Study of Development Fads?’, *Norrag News*, 47 (2012), pp. 30–2, available at <[http://norrag.t3dev1.cross-agency.ch/fileadmin/Full Versions/NN47.pdf#page=33](http://norrag.t3dev1.cross-agency.ch/fileadmin/Full%20Versions/NN47.pdf#page=33)>, accessed 3 October 2014

‘As we think about value for in the development business, we should keep in mind how this impacts on the extrinsic and intrinsic motivations of giving aid.’

Eyben, Rosalind, ‘The Risks of a Results Agenda’, *Norrag News*, 47 (2012), pp. 47–8, available at <[http://norrag.t3dev1.cross-agency.ch/fileadmin/Full Versions/NN47.pdf#page=33](http://norrag.t3dev1.cross-agency.ch/fileadmin/Full%20Versions/NN47.pdf#page=33)>, accessed 3 October 2014

‘Aspirations to use development financing for transformative change in the lives of people in poverty are put at risk by the current push to deliver results in relation to narrow and mechanistic Value for Money criteria.’

Eyben, Rosalind, ‘Uncovering the Politics of “Evidence” and “Results”: A Framing Paper for Development Practitioners’, background paper to the Big Push Forward conference ‘Politics of Evidence’, Brighton, 23-24 April 2013, available at <<http://bigpushforward.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Uncovering-the-Politics-of-Evidence-and-Results-by-Rosalind-Eyben.pdf>>, accessed 3 October 2014

‘Hard evidence, rigorous data, tangible results, value for money – all are tantalising terms promising clarity for the international development sector. Yet, behind these terms lie definitional tussles, vested interests and contested world views that this background paper to the Politics of Evidence Conference aims to make explicit and question. The aim is to encourage development practitioners to strategize in expanding the politico-bureaucratic space to make room for flexible and creative support of locally-generated and transformative change.’

Glennie, Alex, Straw, Will and Wild, Leni, *Understanding public attitudes to aid and development* (London: Institute for Public Policy Research and Overseas Development Institute, 2012), available at <<http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/7708.pdf>>, accessed 9 October 2014

‘Encouragingly, the discussions across all the deliberative workshops conducted for this project revealed considerable appetite for greater understanding of development and for more complex stories of how change and progress happens. Instead of a simple reassurance that “aid works”, people would like to hear about how and why it works, why it doesn’t always work and the reasons aid alone cannot achieve development targets. Process and progress stories will both be core to winning sustainable public support for aid and development in the future.’

Global Partners Governance, ‘The Logframe and the Beautiful Game: Project Logic v Football Logic’ Global Partners Governance, London, 2014, available at <<http://www.gpgovernance.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Politically-Agile-Programming-paper-1.pdf>>, accessed 15 October 2014

‘[T]he problems of the logframe are less about inherent strengths or weaknesses, than the way they are currently being used. Logframes can describe a project logic and theory of change, but they are terrible as a measurement of progress or project effectiveness. At present, logframes are being asked to carry a load they were not designed to bear. Project implementers need to be more creative in their arguments, providing new ways of helping donor agencies to interpret logframes and providing measures of progress that combine both quantitative and qualitative indicators, so that donors do not turn to logframes as a default option simply because there is an absence of any other, more suitable means of measuring project impact.’

Hayman, Rachel, ‘The Impact Agenda and NGOs: Results for Whom and for What?’, *Norrag News*, 47 (2012), pp. 84–5, available at <[http://norrage.t3dev1.cross-agency.ch/fileadmin/Full Versions/NN47.pdf#page=33](http://norrage.t3dev1.cross-agency.ch/fileadmin/Full%20Versions/NN47.pdf#page=33)>, accessed 3 October 2014

‘INTRAC (the International NGO Training and Research Centre) works with hundreds of large and small NGOs and civil society organisations around the world. For twenty years the organisation has trained and advised NGOs on their monitoring and evaluation systems. This article reflects on the changing expectations and demands regarding results which we see emerging amongst civil society organisations.’

Hughes, Karl, ‘NGOs and the Results Agenda: Unrealistic Expectations or a Blessing in Disguise?’, *Norrag News*, 47 (2012), pp. 80–2, available at <[http://norrage.t3dev1.cross-agency.ch/fileadmin/Full Versions/NN47.pdf#page=33](http://norrage.t3dev1.cross-agency.ch/fileadmin/Full%20Versions/NN47.pdf#page=33)>, accessed 3 October 2014

‘The latest wave of enthusiasm for results and “Value for Money” is pushing international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) like Oxfam GB to significantly up their game in both understanding and demonstrating their impact. Whilst this is, in itself, a good thing, it is quite challenging to successfully implement in practice. There is a danger that it could lead to a situation where we are praised and reinforced for doing mediocre and even wrong things really well.’

International IDEA and Sida, *Evaluating Democracy Support: Methods and Experiences* (Stockholm: International IDEA and Sida, 2007), available at <http://www.idea.int/publications/evaluating_democracy_support/upload/evaluating_democracy_support_cropped.pdf>, accessed 3 October 2014

‘This book is based on the proceedings of a workshop on Methods and experiences of Evaluating Democracy Support. The main aim of the workshop was to explore ways in which existing methods and techniques of evaluating democracy support deal with the most important problems, such as the challenges of causality and attribution. This book is nowhere near providing answers to all these questions, nor is it intended to. Rather, it aims to share the main deliberations of the workshop and stimulate further debate. Most importantly, the book shares new conceptualizations of methods and techniques for evaluating democracy support and points the way forward to potentially promising new developments.’

Jones, Harry and Hearn, Simon, *Outcome Mapping: A Realistic Alternative for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation* (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2009), available for download at <<http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?ots591=0c54e3b3-1e9c-be1e-2c24-a6a8c7060233&lng=en&id=108752>>, accessed 3 October 2014

‘Despite the dominance of the logical framework approach (LFA) in international development for structuring the planning, monitoring and evaluation (PME) of projects and programmes, it has significant limitations (Bakewell and Garbutt, 2005). There are a growing number of alternatives ... Many could be more appropriate than LFA approaches in many development and social change situations. This paper reviews Outcome Mapping principles to guide donors considering support for projects using OM, and other decision-makers seeking methods to improve the effectiveness of aid policies and practice.’

Kasongi, Donald, ‘Impact of Agency Results Policies on Research Priorities’, *Norrag News*, 47 (2012), pp. 96–7, available at <[http://norrag.t3dev1.cross-agency.ch/fileadmin/Full Versions/NN47.pdf#page=33](http://norrag.t3dev1.cross-agency.ch/fileadmin/Full%20Versions/NN47.pdf#page=33)>, accessed 3 October 2014

‘This piece comments on what impact the (new) Value for Money focus may have on research priorities.’

Klingebiel, Stephan, ‘Results Based Aid – a New Aid Label or Potential for More Impact’, *Norrag News*, 47 (2012), pp. 76–8, available at <[http://norrag.t3dev1.cross-agency.ch/fileadmin/Full Versions/NN47.pdf#page=33](http://norrag.t3dev1.cross-agency.ch/fileadmin/Full%20Versions/NN47.pdf#page=33)>, accessed 3 October 2014

‘Results based aid aims to identify development outputs or outcomes that can be measured and quantified. Proponents of the concept can point out the potential benefits; although there are a number of limitations and disadvantages.’

Klingebiel, Stephan, *Results-Based Aid (RBA): New aid approaches, limitations and the application to promote good governance* (Bonn: German Development Institute, 2012), available at <http://www.die-gdi.de/uploads/media/DP_14.2012.pdf>, accessed 3 October 2014

‘Possibilities for identifying measurable and quantifiable results are rather good in social sectors and several (basic) infrastructure-related topics. The governance sector is, in general terms, less favourable in this regard. “Political governance” issues such as political freedom or human rights do not seem to be suitable for RBA approaches. However, some other governance areas have the potential to be included; this applies especially to public financial management and fiscal decentralisation.’

Kumar, Krishna, *Evaluating Democracy Assistance* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2013), chapter 1, available at <<http://www.rienner.com/uploads/50994856e32fd.pdf>>, accessed 3 October 2014

‘The underlying premise of the book is that caution is necessary in applying to the democracy domain the evaluation concepts, models, and approaches that have paid rich dividends in the evaluation of development programs. There are significant differences between development and democracy programming. While these differences are of degrees—it is a matter of lighter versus darker gray—they are nonetheless significant and should not be ignored.’

Leroy, Marcus, ‘The Aid Industry is Threatening Partner Countries with its ROD... Results Obsession Disorder’, *Norrag News*, 47 (2012), pp. 55–6, available at <http://norrage.t3dev1.cross-agency.ch/fileadmin/Full_Versions/NN47.pdf#page=33>, accessed 3 October 2014

‘By excessively focusing on measurable results, the aid industry ignores the essence of the development process and thus undercuts the very objectives it pretends to pursue: ownership, accountability and participation.’

Maxwell, Simon, ‘Results and Value-for-Money: from Results 1.0 to Results 2.0’, *Norrag News*, 47 (2012), pp. 52–4, available at <http://norrage.t3dev1.cross-agency.ch/fileadmin/Full_Versions/NN47.pdf#page=33>, accessed 3 October 2014

‘Focusing on the results of aid is a political and operational imperative. However, a narrow interpretation of results can over-simplify, and misdirect resources. Better is an approach which is country-led, recognizes the need to invest in institutions, and looks at the programmatic impact of all national and donor contributions taken together. This is Results 2.0.’

Minato, Naonobu, ‘Rethinking Aid Evaluation’, *Norrag News*, 47 (2012), p. 22, available at <http://norrage.t3dev1.cross-agency.ch/fileadmin/Full_Versions/NN47.pdf#page=33>, accessed 3 October 2014

‘Aid receivers know what kinds of goods/services were actually received, but less about how much money was paid. Donors know more about the money that was spent but less about the goods/services actually delivered. Assessing the Value for Money of aid means that participatory assessments are required.’

Power, Greg and Coleman, Oliver, *The Challenges of Political Programming* (Stockholm: International IDEA, 2011), available at <<http://www.gpgovernance.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Challenges-of-political-programming1.pdf>>, accessed 15 October 2014

‘If [donors] are serious about achieving meaningful political change projects should be driven by outcomes rather than process. Programmes need to adapt to changing political circumstances and implementers need to be astute enough to identify the synergies between party and parliamentary support. A flexible and genuinely outcome-oriented form of programming would mean that donors take greater responsibility for the results of their interventions, but ultimately exercise less control over the way they are implemented.’

Power, Greg, *The Politics of Parliamentary Strengthening: Understanding political incentives and institutional behaviour in parliamentary support strategies* (London: Westminster Foundation for Democracy and Global Partners & Associates, 2011), available at <<http://www.gpgovernance.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Politics-of-Parliamentary-Strengthening.pdf>>, accessed 15 October 2014

‘The ultimate purpose of parliamentary support work should not just be to change the structure of the institution, but to change the behaviour of the politicians within it. The technical approach is based on the assumption that given the

right structure and resources politicians will automatically behave in a way that ensures an effective parliamentary democracy. ... In practice, this rarely occurs. Programmes need to understand how parliaments operate in practice, and why a gap exists between the formal powers that the institution holds and how they are used in reality. In short, they need a rounder analysis of the factors influencing political behaviour. The next two chapters provide the basis for analysing these, by looking at institutional dynamics and incentive structures.'

Pritchett, Lant, Samji, Salimah and Hammer, Jeffrey, 'It's All About MeE: Using Structured Experiential Learning ("e") to Crawl the Design Space', Center for Global Development, Working Paper 322 (2013), available at <http://international.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/its-all-about-mee_1.pdf>, accessed 9 October 2014

'Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) has always been an element of the accountability of implementing organizations to their funders. There has been a recent trend towards much greater rigor in evaluations to isolate causal impacts of projects and programs and more 'evidence-based' approaches to accountability and budget allocations. Here we extend the basic idea of rigorous impact evaluation—the use of a valid counterfactual to make judgments about causality—to emphasize that the techniques of impact evaluation can be directly useful to implementing organizations (as opposed to impact evaluation being seen by implementing organizations as only an external threat to their funding). We introduce structured experiential learning (which we add to M&E to get MeE) which allows implementing agencies to actively and rigorously search across alternative project designs using the monitoring data that provides real-time performance information with direct feedback into the decision loops of project design and implementation.'

Ramalingam, Ben, *Aid on the Edge of Chaos: Rethinking International Cooperation in a Complex World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), chapter 1, available at <http://fdslive.oup.com/www.oup.com/academic/pdf/13/9780199578023_chapter1.pdf>, accessed 3 October 2014

'Many thinkers and practitioners in science, economics, business, and public policy have started to embrace more "ecologically literate" approaches to guide both thinking and action, informed by ideas from the "new science" of complex adaptive systems. Inspired by these efforts, there is an emerging network of aid practitioners, researchers, and policy makers who are experimenting with complexity-informed responses to development and humanitarian challenges. This book showcases the insights, experiences, and often remarkable results from these efforts.'

UNDP, 'Discussion Paper: Innovations in Monitoring & Evaluating Results', UNDP, 30 September 2013, available at <<http://www.nec2013.org/documents/papers/Innovations-in-mande.pdf>>, accessed 3 October 2014

'Countries are increasingly using innovative approaches to manage the performance of public policies, programmes and service delivery. These approaches are fostering more inclusive, collaborative and responsive processes across the development cycle: from planning, to implementation, to monitoring and evaluation.'

Vähämäki, Janet, Schmidt, Martin and Molander, Joakim, *Review: Results Based Management in Development Cooperation* (Stockholm: Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, 2011), available at <<http://www.seachangecop.org/sites/default/files/documents/2011%2011%20RBM%20in%20development%20cooperaton.pdf>>, accessed 3 October 2014

‘The paper provides a brief historical overview of where and when Results based management was introduced to development cooperation, some lessons and experiences that can be drawn from evaluations and reviews on challenges and successes in its implementation, as well as a synopsis of the global initiatives that have arisen during the latest years in support of or as a response to the agenda.’

White, Howard, ‘Beyond Results to Impact’, *Norrag News*, 47 (2012), pp. 23–4, available at <[http://norrage.t3dev1.cross-agency.ch/fileadmin/Full Versions/NN47.pdf#page=33](http://norrage.t3dev1.cross-agency.ch/fileadmin/Full_Versions/NN47.pdf#page=33)>, accessed 3 October 2014

‘Demonstrating results means we need a larger number of rigorous impact evaluations in a wider range of contexts.’

Whitty, Brendan, ‘Experiences of the Results Agenda: Draft Findings for Discussion from the Crowd-Sourcing Survey’, background paper to the Big Push Forward conference ‘Politics of Evidence’, Brighton, 23-24 April 2013, available at <<http://bigpushforward.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Experiences-of-the-Results-Agenda-by-Brendan-Whitty.pdf>>, accessed 3 October 2014

‘The study discusses the day-to-day practice of small-e evidence – results and targets in management of specific projects – rather than large-E evidence of establishing theories of change or broader development policies. The stories are about the nuts and bolts of the development processes and artefacts - the theories of change, results frameworks, reporting requirements and value for money rubrics. It is about what ‘e’ is being collected, how it is used, and to what effect.’

Wild, Leni and Foresti, Marta, *Working with the politics: how to improve public services for the poor* (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2013), available at <<http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8587.pdf>>, accessed 9 October 2014

‘Rather than relying on well-established and seemingly “tried and tested” ways of working, there is a need to venture into the unknown and accept more open-ended, flexible, adaptive and ultimately messy processes. This is challenging for conventional aid agencies – particularly bilateral aid agencies – which face pressures to spend and disburse, to demonstrate value for money and to monitor results closely. This is often translated into a “projectised” approach, which closely specifies design, implementation and evaluation activities from the start. Recognising many of the dynamics set out above, however, requires a process of on-going testing of assumptions and of choices on interventions themselves – and may involve stopping investments or doing things differently mid-way in response to what is revealed by this continuous testing.’

Wilson-Grau, Ricardo and Britt, Heather, *Outcome Harvesting* (Cairo: Ford Foundation, 2012), available at <http://www.outcomemapping.ca/download.php?file=/resource/files/wilsongrau_en_Outome Harvesting Brief_revised Nov 2013.pdf>, accessed 3 October 2014

‘Outcome Harvesting is a utilisation-focused, highly participatory tool that enables evaluators, grant makers, and managers to identify, formulate, verify, and make sense of outcomes they have influenced when relationships of cause-effect are unknown. Unlike some evaluation methods, Outcome Harvesting does not measure progress towards predetermined outcomes or objectives, but rather collects evidence of what has been achieved, and works backward to determine whether and how the project or intervention contributed to the change.’

Wong, Ging, 'Creating Democratic Value: Evaluating Efforts to Promote Democracy Abroad—Approaches to the Evaluation of International Democracy Assistance, Queen's University Centre for the Study of Democracy, 21 March 2008, available at <[http://dspace.cigilibrary.org/jspui/bitstream/123456789/27531/1/Approaches to the Evaluation of International Democracy Assistance.pdf?1](http://dspace.cigilibrary.org/jspui/bitstream/123456789/27531/1/Approaches%20to%20the%20Evaluation%20of%20International%20Democracy%20Assistance.pdf?1)>, accessed 3 October 2014

'This paper addresses the central question of evaluation of international democracy assistance. Its contribution is twofold. First, it is an update and extension of the critical literature on the evaluation effort on democracy promotion. As such, it attempts a "state of art" assessment of the progress that evaluation has made in this field to date, including a discussion of: the growing importance of evaluation in this area, the present demand for and uses of evaluation, the challenges of conducting impact evaluations that reasonably satisfy professional standards, and persistent knowledge gaps.'

Woolcock, Michael, 'Using case studies to explore the external validity of "complex" development interventions', UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research, WIDER Working Paper No. 2013/096, October 2013, available at <http://www.wider.unu.edu/publications/working-papers/2013/en_GB/wp2013-096/_files/90513411817668621/default/WP2013-096.pdf>, accessed 9 October 2014

'Rising standards for accurately inferring the impact of development projects has not been matched by equivalently rigorous procedures for guiding decisions about whether and how similar results might be expected elsewhere. These "external validity" concerns are especially pressing for "complex" development interventions, in which the explicit purpose is often to adapt projects to local contextual realities and where high quality implementation is paramount to success. A basic analytical framework is provided for assessing the external validity of complex development interventions.'

ANNEX 2. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Ref. 34-12/136

**ROUND TABLE ON ‘DEMOCRACY ASSISTANCE AND RESULTS:
DEBATES AND CONSTRUCTIVE REFLECTION’
23–24 JUNE 2014
INTERNATIONAL IDEA HQ, STOCKHOLM**

Name	Organization/Workplace
Holger Gustafsson	Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa (AWEPA)
Loïc Whitmore	Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa (AWEPA)
Shelly Sayagh	Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa (AWEPA)
Thomas Carothers	Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
Erike Tanghøj	Christian Democratic International Center (KIC)
Tiina Kukkamaa-Bah	Demo Finland
Aislin Baker	UK Department for International Development (DfID)
Bjørn Førde	Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy (DIPD)
Simon Tordjman	European Endowment for Democracy (EED)
Ingrid Wetterqvist	European External Action Service (EEAS)
Emma Öståker	Expert Group for Aid Studies (EBA)
Sophie Wood	Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)
Sonja Taylor	German International Development Cooperation (GIZ)
Greg Power	Global Partners Governance
Joakim Anger	InDevelop
Norah Babic	Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)
Ivan Doherty	National Democratic Institute (NDI)

Anne-Mieke van Breukelen	Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD)
Hermenegildo Mulhovo	Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD)
Kristin Hauge	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD)
Petter Skjæveland	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD)
Marta Foresti	Overseas Development Institute (ODI)
Eduardo Gonzalez	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
Ulrika Lång	Olof Palme International Center (OPIC)
Per Nordlund	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)
Martin Schmidt	SPM Consultants (SPM)
Janet Vähämäki	Stockholm Business School and Stockholm Centre for Organizational Research
Jamshed Kazi	UNDP Oslo Governance Centre (UNDP-OGC)
Staffan I. Lindberg	Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem)
Alberto Fernandez	International IDEA
Frank Kayitare	International IDEA
Helena Bjuremalm	International IDEA
Jenefrieda Isberg	International IDEA
Jonas Mikkelsen	International IDEA
Jorge Valladares	International IDEA
Malin Stjernström	International IDEA
Mikael Fridell	International IDEA

ANNEX 3. ROUNDTABLE AGENDA

Ref. 34-12/136

**ROUND TABLE ON ‘DEMOCRACY ASSISTANCE AND RESULTS:
DEBATES AND CONSTRUCTIVE REFLECTION’
23–24 JUNE 2014
INTERNATIONAL IDEA HQ, STOCKHOLM**

Day 1, 23 June, Monday	
09:30 – 10:00	<i>Coffee/Tea</i>
10:00 – 10:20	Presentations and introductory remarks
10:20 – 11:20	Plenary session: Thomas Carothers <i>The Changing Environment for Democracy Assistance</i> Hermenegildo Mulhovo <i>Can you educate donors on what can and what cannot be measured, and how?</i>
11:20 – 11:30	Janet Vähämäki, Martin Schmidt, Greg Power and Hermenegildo Mulhovo introduce the side sessions
11:40 – 12:30	Side sessions – Block 1 Group A: Hermenegildo Mulhovo <i>Exchange of experiences – space for reflection</i> Group B: Janet Vähämäki <i>How results management approaches came to enter the domain of development aid</i>
12:30 – 13:30	<i>Lunch</i>
13:30 – 14:20	Side sessions – Block 2 Group A: Janet Vähämäki <i>How results management approaches came to enter the domain of development aid</i> Group B: Hermenegildo Mulhovo <i>Exchange of experiences – space for reflection</i>

14:30 – 15:10	Plenary session: Marta Foresti <i>Public attitudes to aid and development</i> Jonas Mikkelsen <i>Can a risk management approach to results management help mitigate adverse selection in implementation?</i>
15:10 – 15:40	Coffee/Tea
15:40 – 16:30	Side sessions – Block 3 Group A: Martin Schmidt <i>Results management approaches, context and flexibility – do they go together?</i> Group B: Greg Power <i>It's all about behaviour. What logframes don't measure, and why it matters</i>
16:40 – 17:10	End-of-day plenary session: Lessons learned and questions raised <i>Roundtable discussions will continue over dinner at approximately 18:00 hrs.</i>
Day 2, 24 June, Tuesday	
09:00 – 09:20	Morning plenary session: Recap and continuation
09:30 – 10:20	Side sessions – Block 4 Group A: Greg Power <i>It's all about behaviour. What logframes don't measure, and why it matters</i> Group B: Martin Schmidt <i>Results management approaches, context and flexibility – do they go together?</i>
10:20 – 10:50	Coffee/Tea
10:50 – 12:30	Concluding plenary session: Summing up - <i>Key takeaways</i> - <i>How do we proceed?</i> - <i>Concluding remarks</i>
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch

ABOUT INTERNATIONAL IDEA

International IDEA is an intergovernmental organization that supports sustainable democracy worldwide. International IDEA's mission is to support sustainable democratic change by providing comparative knowledge, and assisting in democratic reform, and influencing policies and politics.

WHAT DOES INTERNATIONAL IDEA DO?

In the field of elections, constitution building, political parties, gender in democracy and women's political empowerment, democracy self-assessments, and democracy and development, we undertake our work through three activity areas:

- providing comparative knowledge derived from practical experience on democracy building processes from diverse contexts around the world;
- assisting political actors in reforming democratic institutions and processes, and engaging in political processes when invited to do so; and
- influencing democracy building policies through the provision of our comparative knowledge resources and assistance to political actors.

WHERE DOES INTERNATIONAL IDEA WORK?

International IDEA works worldwide. Based in Stockholm, Sweden, it has offices in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

MEMBER STATES

The Institute's member states are all democracies and provide both political and financial support to its work. They are: Australia, Barbados, Belgium, Botswana, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, Costa Rica, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Finland, Germany, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Namibia, the Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Uruguay. Japan has an observer status.

GOVERNANCE

International IDEA is governed by a Council composed of its Member States assisted by a Board of Advisers. Mr. Yves Leterme, former Prime Minister of Belgium, is the Secretary-General.



INTERNATIONAL IDEA
SE -103 34 Stockholm
Sweden
Phone + 46 8 698 37 00
Fax + 46 8 20 24 22
E-mail: info@idea.int
Website: <http://www.idea.int>