

# TANZANIA: THE IMPORTANCE OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION IN ACHIEVING NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES' TARGETS

**BY E KINGO MAGEMBE**

Poverty Monitoring Officer, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit,  
Ministry of Finance

**AND RAFAEL WAIDA**

Deputy Director, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit,  
Presidents' Office–Public Service Management

## INTRODUCTION

The primary driver of poverty monitoring and evaluation in Tanzania is the Monitoring and Evaluation section in the Ministry of Finance. This section is one of two that form the Division of Poverty Eradication (the other section is Poverty Research and Analysis). This division was re-established as a full-fledged department in 2000 in order to monitor and evaluate all poverty alleviation strategies and initiatives in the country. Since then, it has produced reports for stimulating dialogue and informing policy-making processes.

While the words 'monitoring' and 'evaluation' are sometimes used interchangeably, the two functions are quite different. Monitoring is a continuous process that systematically collects data on specific indicators. Analysis of this data provides management, policy makers, legislators and citizens—the main stakeholders of development—with feedback on how the allocation of resources and priorities is related to the progress towards and achievement of policy and programme objectives. In contrast, evaluation is the systematic and objective assessment of the design, implementation and results of ongoing or completed projects, programmes or policies.

In recent years, demand for monitoring and evaluation activities in Tanzania has been increasing. This demand emerged after the inception of Tanzania Development Vision 2025, the 2000 poverty reduction strategy paper and the Joint Assistance Strategy for Tanzania.

## EVOLUTION OF POVERTY MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Soon after attaining independence, Tanzania started implementing programmes and policies aimed at addressing three issues: poverty, ignorance and disease.

Monitoring and evaluation of poverty-related interventions were largely uncoordinated and *ad hoc* until the mid-1990s. There was also poor communication between data producers and users. However, a number of initiatives to establish an integrated poverty monitoring system emerged in the late 1990s, motivated by the ascendancy of the Tanzania Assistance Strategy, the Public Expenditure Review and the poverty reduction strategy paper. In addition, developing a list of Poverty and Welfare Monitoring Indicators created a strong ground for a more systematic approach to poverty monitoring.

## RECENT EXPERIENCE IN POVERTY MONITORING AND EVALUATION

In 2001, the government developed a comprehensive Poverty Monitoring System. The system provided guidance for systematic data and information collection, research and analysis. Surveys, censuses and research were guided by a poverty reduction agenda through a set of consultatively developed indicators. The Poverty Monitoring System coordinated community-based organizations and research and academic institutions.

The 'Poverty and Human Development Report' is an innovative and coordinating instrument for research and analytical work from both academic and applied research and is a key output of the Poverty Monitoring System. Other outputs include household budget surveys, the Tanzania Demographic and Health Surveys, 'Views of the People' reports, annual reports and Millennium Development Goals reports.

The research findings provided considerable and instructive input to formulating the 'National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty'. Findings from the Household Budget Survey helped establish a poverty baseline for 2000–2001, and for the first time in a decade informed the government about changes in overall poverty levels and regional trends for many poverty indicators.

The 2005 poverty mapping down to the district level utilized findings from both the 2002 national Population and Housing Census and the Household Budget Survey. The district-level analysis addressed many poverty-related indicators, including basic needs and foods, primary school enrolment, infant and child health, literacy rates and water and sanitation. This analysis provided statistical evidence to policy makers on variations in development across Tanzania, and thus facilitated evidence-based development planning at national and local levels. The findings also significantly facilitated resource allocations using a formula-based system for local government authorities.

Analytical monitoring and evaluation work continues to raise and mainstream important facts and issues of concern. In the health sector, for example, findings from the 2004–2005 Tanzania Demographic and Health Survey show impressive improvements in mortality rates for infants (from 68 per 1,000 live births in 2004–2005 to 51 in 2009–2010) and children (from 112 per 1,000 live births in 2004–2005 to 81 in 2009–2010). The survey also demonstrated a significant improvement in access to reproductive health care, as measured by the proportion of births attended by skilled professionals. Although the number of attended births

increased from 36 percent in 1999 to 46 percent in 2004, it still falls short of the poverty reduction strategy paper target of 80 percent by 2010. These and other findings are playing an important role in policy formulation and decision-making processes and have catalysed progress in health services.

Monitoring activities have increasingly informed policy-making on important poverty-related issues, such as improving agricultural productivity and access to credit. Findings from the '2002–2003 Agricultural Sample Census Survey' revealed that only 3 percent of total smallholder area was under irrigation, and only 3 percent of smallholders had access to formal credit for agricultural purposes. In light of this evidence, various policy and programmatic interventions to improve the performance of the agricultural sector have been put in place. These include the expansion of irrigation schemes and provision of agricultural credit and inputs to smallholders.

Findings from studies, research and surveys, underpinned by credible monitoring and evaluation activities, have influenced policy formulation processes, including planning, budgeting and implementation systems. Findings from monitoring and evaluation activities have also significantly improved decision-making on national resource allocations, particularly related to the contributions of development partners in the General Budget Support since 2000. Currently, most development partners are channelling their support directly to the national budget; such confidence stems from improved monitoring and evaluation functions, which have enabled timely identification of gaps and implementation of correction measures.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION INITIATIVES IN OTHER GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

In 2005, the Government of Tanzania realized that it needed to harmonize planning, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting for all government institutions. At the time, several reporting formats<sup>22</sup> and monitoring and evaluation systems were used by varying government institutions, which was found to be challenging and a waste of resources. For example, reporting requirements existed for the 'National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty', the 'Performance Assessment Framework Matrix' and the 'Ruling Party Election Manifesto'. The idea was to harmonize all such requirements into one format.

Such harmonization involved a review of government institutions' monitoring and evaluation systems in order to recognize and develop best practices. This exercise resulted in the 'Medium-Term Strategic Planning and Budgeting Manual', intended to provide guidance to regional and local government ministries, departments, agencies and authorities on how to prepare Strategic Plans and the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, and on how to monitor and report on them. The manual also provides a set of instructions and processes on how to better implement directives found in the 'Medium-Term Plan and Budget Framework Guidelines for the Preparation of Medium-Term Plan and Budget Framework'. The strategic

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22 Reporting is linked to monitoring and evaluation, given that once these functions are undertaken they need to be documented.

FIGURE 1. STRATEGIC PLANNING CYCLE



planning cycle is shown in Figure 1.

The 'Medium-Term Strategic Planning and Budgeting Manual' is a working document and a reference guide for the Tanzania Budget Guideline Committee when it reviews and produces the 'Guidelines' on an annual basis. The manual presents a full, detailed chapter on monitoring, evaluation and reporting that includes information on requirements by ministry, department and agency. The next stage, which the government has begun, is to finalize the manual and harmonize computerized monitoring and evaluation system to be used by all government institutions.

In addition to the initiatives that established poverty monitoring under the 'National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty' and monitoring system-related achievements, there have been several other endeavours that have strengthened government institutions' monitoring and evaluation systems. These initiatives included establishing monitoring and evaluation sections under the policy and planning divisions in all government institutions. This went hand-in-hand with a capacity-building effort of training the staff responsible for and in charge of monitoring and evaluation functions.

## CHALLENGES AND THE WAY FORWARD

- Lack of staff capacity to undertake monitoring and evaluation functions is still a major challenge in almost all government institutions. The government needs to enhance its institutions' monitoring and evaluation capacity with qualified staff, support to monitoring and evaluation systems and working tools. The government also needs to fill gaps in institutions that have not yet filled monitoring and evaluation positions.

- Lack of an independent national evaluation institution to build the capacities of government staff or help the government employ evaluation as a learning process hampers efforts to strengthen monitoring and evaluation functions and uses. While evaluation in Tanzania is used to draw lessons for policies, programmes and projects, it is done by consultancy firms and research institutions. There is a critical need to establish a government institution to undertake evaluation functions.
- Finalizing the national monitoring and evaluation framework—an initiative that started over five years ago—is an important aspect that needs immediate action. Finalizing the framework will enhance monitoring and evaluation improvements across the Government of Tanzania.

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