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HUMAN RIGHTS INDICATORS
AT PROGRAMME AND PROJECT LEVEL

GUIDELINES FOR DEFINING INDICATORS
MONITORING AND EVALUATION

THE DANISH INSTITUTE
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS



**Human Rights Indicators at Programme and Project level
- Guidelines for Defining Indicators, Monitoring and Evaluation**

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The rhino on the front page alludes to the power and energy contained in indicators; the pointed horn indicates that you are on the right track.



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**Erik André Andersen and Hans-Otto Sano
The Danish Institute for Human Rights
Copenhagen 2006**

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1 Introduction

The objective of this manual is to provide human rights workers with a set of tools by which to plan, monitor and evaluate human rights projects. The manual contains three types of information: 1) a presentation and discussion of basic concepts concerning indicators as well as monitoring and evaluation, 2) suggestions for monitoring procedures at the Danish Institute for Human Rights, and 3) a discussion of relevant human rights indicators applicable to the design and implementation of human rights programmes and projects.

While indicators can be used for different purposes such as assessing the human rights situation in a given country or for the purpose of diagnosing appropriate strategies, the purpose of this manual is mainly to discuss how indicators can be used to design and implement programmes and projects. Its purpose is therefore to provide methodological tools for the definition of human rights indicators, but also to inspire more consistent practices as regards assessment of the human rights impact of development programmes. As the manual will focus mainly on the planning and assessment of development programmes and projects, its operational departure will concentrate on indicators used in the context of logical framework planning.

The manual places a certain emphasis on indicators as the manual project was originally defined as an indicator project. However, it should be stressed that indicators are only important if they are actually used - and that the use of indicators is one of the most important tools in planning, monitoring and evaluation practices. The manual is therefore not only presenting a set of indicators, but is also discussing the methodology of underpinning their use. The authors wish to thank Lisbeth Garly Andersen for highly useful cooperation, especially as regards the section on monitoring.

2 Indicators: Use and Definition

Indicators are planning tools, but they are also tools that aid communication. Indicators need to be defined precisely, yet they reflect more than just what they measure. They can be seen as windows into a wider universe, thus reflecting a broader perspective than their immediate focus. Indicators are quantitative and measurable, yet they may also be employed to reflect processes and qualitative interpretations.

The definition of indicators may therefore have many stakeholders because the indicators can have many uses. Currently, there is a growing interest, if not fascination, with indicators and measurements in the human rights field. This interest seems to derive from three different quarters. First, human rights assistance in the developing world has increased tremendously over the last decade. There is a justifiable reason to assess and measure this assistance and its impact. Secondly, there is also an ongoing and internationally unresolved issue of human rights conditionality and sanctions: human rights indicators are therefore seen as instruments within a debate of sanctions. Thirdly, indicators are also used in assessments of human rights situations: what are the human rights needs and priorities of development, what problems exist in each case? In these cases, indicators provide guidelines for human rights development interventions.

Caution is a good thing to keep in mind when employing human rights indicators, not only because of the close association between political interests and development interventions with human rights indicators, but also because of the imprecision of the measurements involved.

The purpose of this manual is indicator development at programme and project level. The risk of a strong association with a politicized field of intervention is therefore less pronounced than if the indicators were intended as tools of country assessments. However, associating project indicators with a violation-based approach to development may in itself be politically sensitive.¹ The work at project level is therefore not free of political implications.

Indicators can be used to describe and compare situations that exist; they may therefore be used as early warning-instruments, but they can also be used as a means to identify change. In the context of a programme or project, they can be employed to define operational goals and may therefore

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1 The purpose of violation-based approach to development is to focus on the nature of violations and on those accountable for human rights violations.

be linked to the setting of development priorities. Finally, indicators are used as a means to identify and count human rights violations.

In the current context, we are mostly concerned with indicators as instruments of project planning and implementation. The examples of indicators, which have been included in the final chapter, are meant to be an inspirational tool for the further definition of operational goals, but also as a means to establish a more consistent framework of monitoring and evaluation in the project contexts in which we work at the Danish Institute for Human Rights.

2.1 Defining indicators

OECD/DAC (and Danida) define indicators as:

“Indicator: Quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect the changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of a development actor.”

OECD/DAC: *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management, Evaluation and Aid Effectiveness*, Development Assistance Committee, OECD/DAC 2002, p. 25; Danida: *Monitoring at Programme and Project Level – General Issues*, Technical note, Danida 2006a, p. 3-5.

This definition explains that indicators may describe situations as well as possibly be used to measure changes but also that indicators can be both quantitative and qualitative statements.

In what sense are indicators qualitative statements? Between 1998 and 1999, Danida revised its indicator manual with the result that the qualitative indicators originally proposed in 1998 were left out in the 1999 edition. The tendency is that system indicators are rarely qualitative; they may be based on qualitative data, but systems approaches and needs will tend to transform qualitative statements into a comparative and quantitative indicator.

Indicators may address questions of behaviour, attitude, values and perceptions and can therefore be qualitative statements, but the framework within which these questions are addressed will often be a standardized or structured one allowing for comparison and for quantitative interpretation. This is the way in which Transparency International defines the indicators relating to perceptions of corruption. However, while indicators might show the general perceptions of the customers with regard to the corruption of

the judicial services, it may be justified to back up such general information with questions, quantifying the size of bribes paid, or questions, which produce standardized answers concerning the impartiality of judges.

There are three points to make in relation to the issue of qualitative indicators: 1. Measuring values and perceptions will be relevant in a number of cases because the legitimacy of, and trust in, the system of justice is a question, which must naturally concern human rights work. 2. In practice, the most common way to work with qualitative data related to indicators is to quantify them. 3. Undertaking surveys which deal with prevailing perceptions, values, and attitudes is generally a very costly exercise which donor agencies are rarely prepared to shoulder. Such tasks will often fall back on research institutions.

Alternative indicator definitions, which are also relevant, are:

“Indicators are pieces of information that provide insight into matters of larger significance and make perceptible trends that are not immediately detectable.” (In J. Abbot and I. Gujit: “*Changing views on change: participatory approaches to monitoring the environment*,” International Institute for Environment and Development, *SARL Discussion Paper 254*, 1998, p. 40.)

“Indicators are bits of information that highlight what is happening in a large system. They are small windows that provide a glimpse of the big picture.” (In Abbot and Gujit, 1998, p. 40.)

“Technically speaking, an indicator refers to a set of statistics that can serve as a proxy or a metaphor for phenomena that are not directly measurable. However, the term is often used less precisely to mean any data pertaining to social conditions.” (In M. Green: *What we Talk about when we Talk about Indicators: Current approaches to Human Rights Measurement*, UNDP, International Anti-Poverty Law Center, 1999.)

“Indicator: Quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, reflect changes connected to an intervention, or help assess the performance of a development actor. [So far identical with the OECD/DAC definition] Indicators are proxies used to indicate the characteristics of a state of affairs and to measure change. For example, the height of a child would be an indicator of growth (a quantitative indicator). The possibility of sleeping in a different room than the farm animals would be an indicator of well-being in some societies (a qualitative indicator). Indicators can be combined into composite indicators, e.g. the Human Development Index, composed of life expectancy at birth, adult literacy rate, combined first-, second- and third-level gross enrolment ratio and GDP per capita. There are indicators of objectives, of process, of achievement, of outcomes, of performance, of impact. Ideally indicators should be SMART.” (Britha Mikkelsen: *Methods for Development Work and Research. A New Guide for Practitioners*, SAGE Publications, New Delhi, Thousand Oaks, London 2005, p. 347.)

Indicators: “The aggregated and combined summaries of facts, as ‘signposts’ for what a situation is and how it is developing. For example the existence of freely operating political parties and of major newspapers that are not controlled by the state is an indicator of the observance of civil liberties. Indicators may be strictly quantitative (such as the UNDP Human Development Index), largely qualitative, or a mix of both.” (M. Radstaake and D. Bronkhorst: *Matching Practice with Principles. Human Rights Impact Assessment: EU Opportunities*, HOM, Utrecht, 2002, p. 2, and “Appendix 2: The Use of Indicators”, p. 47-48.)

“Indicator: A device for providing specific information on the state or condition of something.” (UNDP: *Indicators for Human Rights Based Approaches to Development in UNDP Programming: A User’s Guide*, UNDP, New York, 2006, p. 21.)

All of these different definitions share one common feature: they point to indicators as windows opening onto a larger reality or to the metaphorical nature of indicators. This does not necessarily mean that indicators do not measure what they say they measure, but rather they are seen to capture more than one trait of a particular social reality, and appear to be measuring more than what they say they measure. Income per capita measures average income, for instance, but it also measures social capabilities, and is thus one of the indicators used by UNDP in the Human Development Index.²

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2 The Human Development Index is based upon 1) Life expectancy at birth, 2) Adult literacy rate (with two-thirds weight) and the combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio (with one-third weight), and 3) GDP per capita (PPP USD).

Human rights indicators such as violations of freedom of speech or the right to assembly, or violations of the prohibition against torture and ill-treatment, provide information on a given society, but they may also be seen to be important components in defining a system as authoritarian or repressive.

Thus, in this paper, the OECD/DAC definition may suffice because it provides four essential characteristics of an indicator, i.e., it may be quantitative or qualitative in nature, and it can be used for situational descriptions, but also comparisons over time. However, in addition we may add that indicators are also pieces of information that provide insight into matters of larger significance. In this case, they may be seen as small windows that provide a glimpse of a bigger picture. The definition used in this paper is therefore:

Indicators are data used by analysts or institutions and organizations to describe situations that exist or to measure changes or trends over a period of time. They are communicative descriptions of conditions or of performance that may provide insights into matters of larger significance beyond that which is actually measured.

This definition indicates firstly that what turns data into indicators is institutional or analytical ownership. Indicators do not emerge out of the blue; they are defined by institutions or by research. According to the definition, indicators are also communicative instruments used by organizations in order to facilitate certification and quality control. Finally, according to the definition, indicators are also employed to measure change.

The last qualification in this definition partly describes what indicators are used for and why they function as sensitive instruments. Indicators can be used as proxy descriptions of a wider reality. As descriptive metaphors of existing situations, change and development they summarize complex realities into single statements.

This definition also provides some quality criteria for indicators, i.e., they have to be descriptive of situations, they must be measurable, and they must be insightful. These criteria will be dealt with in the following chapter.

2.2 When should Indicators satisfy SMART Criteria?

An often-quoted criterion is that indicators must be SMART, i.e., they must be

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Relevant, and
- Time-framed.³

In the human rights field, where there is no particular tradition of working with indicators, the problem is often a) that indicators are not attainable simply because indicator frameworks have not been established, b) indicators are not measurable because quantification was not intended, and c) indicators are not time-framed, i.e., they are not defined in a way intended for comparison over time. However, the question remains, whether indicators should always be verifiable, and how this should be understood. In addition, the question, should indicators always satisfy SMART criteria?

The SMART criteria, i.e., which insist that indicators should be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound, put some restrictions on the definition of indicators. This definition should be examined more closely for the simple reason that these requirements are not always respected in practice, and with good reason in some cases. However, a good standard of indicator determination is needed.

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3 In ITAD: *Monitoring and the Use of Indicators*. Consultancy Report to DG VIII, European Commission, Brussels 1996, the term Trackable is used instead of Time-framed. However, the use of the term Time-framed has recently become more widespread. According to different traditions, there are a variety of alternative terms related to some of the other SMART-letters as well. Thus, while M nearly always stand for Measurable, S can also stand for Significant or Simple, A can stand for Acceptable, Achievable or Action-oriented, and R can stand for Realistic or Result-oriented. In certain contexts, the acronym SMART does not refer to the criteria for defining indicators, but to the criteria defining SMART goals.

Table 1

| Applying SMART Criteria to Indicators | |
|--|--|
| Goal Hierarchy | Requirements on indicators |
| Development objective | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific, yes mostly, but research processes and qualitative assessment might be required • Measurable, not always as qualitative assessment may apply • Attainable, but as part of a process involving other actors than DIHR • Relevant, always • Time-framed, not necessarily |
| Immediate objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific, mostly, but qualitative assessment might apply • Measurable, often, but qualitative assessment might be used especially by project evaluators • Attainable, always • Relevant, always • Time-framed, mostly |
| Outputs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific, always • Measurable, in by far the most cases • Attainable, always • Relevant, always • Time-framed, always |

The logical framework (LFA) hierarchy of objectives and outputs that indicators relate to is important in this context because some restrictions are more important as regards output indicators than development indicators. Generally, the SMART criteria are more applicable as regards output indicators and project monitoring indicators than indicators of development objectives.

Similarly, accepting that indicators can also be of a qualitative nature in some cases will imply a less restrictive criterion of measurement and specificity than a quantifiable indicator. For instance, one indicator pertaining to an immediate objective of advocacy strength in Civil Society, namely “the clarity of a political agenda as expressed in the goals and performance of the organization” is qualitative and leaves the issue of assessing “clarity” to the evaluators. The objective is specific in the sense that it provides a specific means of verification (“goals and performance of the organization”), but it is not immediately measurable as a concrete measurement relates to an assessment of the strategy of the organization as documented, for instance, in its reporting. The point is that assessments of institutions will often contain qualitative elements where indicators will depend on the specific criteria of evaluation that evaluation teams define as part of their comparative methodology.

Thus, according to table 1, only output indicators can be expected to strictly follow the SMART criteria.

Another important conclusion that can be derived from the table is that indicators must always be attainable and relevant. “Relevant” means that the indicators must be relevant in relation to the specific goals of the project (and that these goals must be relevant to the partner). “Attainable” means that the indicators must relate to a realistic goal or condition. In most cases, indicators must be “specific” which means that there must be a method of verifying them. This process of verification must be simple when it comes to monitoring of outputs and even immediate objectives, while it can be more complex, even involving research, when it comes to development objectives.

2.3 Other criteria

One of the good things about the SMART criteria is that they are easy to remember and therefore can be recommended to people and organizations not familiar with the use of indicators. However, other attempts such as the checklist of the Vera Institute have also been made in order to improve the criteria for good indicators.

2.3.1 The Vera Institute checklist

A checklist for indicator development as regards performance in the justice sector has been elaborated by the Vera Institute of Justice (2003).⁴ According to the list, indicators should be:

- Valid – measure what they purport to measure
- Balanced – reducing ambiguity of measurement
- Sensitive – sensitive towards desired changes and towards specific groups
- Motivating – induce intended performance
- Practical – affordable, accurate and available
- Owned – legitimate in the eyes of those who are affected by them
- Clear – are target groups likely to understand them?

Although there is a certain overlap between this list and the SMART-criteria (the criterion “balanced”, for instance, resembles the SMART criterion

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4 Vera Institute of Justice: *Measuring Progress toward Safety and Justice: A Global Guide to the Design of Performance Indicator across the Justice Sector*, Vera Institute of Justice, New York, November 2003 (slightly modified by the authors).

“specific”), the Vera list introduces new and perhaps more demanding qualities for the indicators. Thus, the stipulation that indicators should be motivational represent an additional dimension in what is basically a tool for measurement. However, it seems to be a good idea to underline ownership as one criterion. But here it can be added that not only should the indicators be legitimate in the eyes of those who are formulating them, but also in the eyes of those who are affected by them.

2.3.2 The Danida suggestions

In the publication *Monitoring at Programme and Project Level – General Issues*, Danida has produced the following list of suggestions as to what constitute good and relevant indicators:⁵

- Valid – Does the indicator directly represent the result it is intended to measure?
- Objective – Is the definition precise and unambiguous about what is to be measured?
- Reliable – Is the data consistent or comparable over time?
- Practical – Can data be collected easily, on a timely basis and at reasonable costs?
- Useful – Will the data be useful for decision-making and learning?
- Owned – Do partners and stakeholders agree that this indicator makes sense?

This list resembles the Vera Institute checklist, in so far as three of the criteria are identical (i.e. valid, practical and owned).

2.3.3 The HOM criteria

The Humanist Committee on Human Rights in the Netherlands (Humanistisch Overleg Mensenrechten, HOM) has contributed the following list, stating that, “Human rights indicators refer to subjects of conflicting interests. Human rights criteria are not neutral in a specific country situation.”⁶ Thus, in order to be considered as a valid and useful tool, indicators should be:

- Verifiable and based on reliable information
- Highly significant in terms of the right in question
- Replaceable (when data on indicators are being collected by another

5 Danida: *Monitoring at Programme and Project Level – General Issues*, Technical Advisory Service, Danida, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Copenhagen April 2006a.

6 Marike Radstaake and Daan Bronkhorst: *Matching Practice with Principles. Human Rights Impact Assessment: EU Opportunities*, HOM, Utrecht, 2002, p. 47.

- actor, would they yield the same information?)
- Valid (does it measure what it should be measuring?)
- Based on reliable and available information
- Preferably be developed and agreed upon at the outset of a policy/ project

In addition to criteria with which we are already familiar, HOM suggests that human rights indicators should cover the substantive contents of rights (“highly significant in terms of the right in question”). However, in the context of programs and projects, it should be recognized that many indicators will not be rights specific. Output indicators especially (what is often termed performance indicators) will often relate more to e.g., training or capacity-building, than to substantive rights issues. Hence, in the program and project context, this requirement can only be justified in some cases, and mostly as regards result indicators and not performance indicators.⁷ In many cases the performance of an organization can be measured adequately and accurately whether it is a human rights organization or not. Another suggestion is that indicators should be replaceable, but it appears not to be an extra quality of the indicator itself that is not already mentioned, for instance that the indicator shall be so specific that it cannot be mixed up with other things.⁸ On this condition it ought not to be a problem who collects the data, and if it is nevertheless a problem, the problem is of another nature and not linked with the indicator. However, as a means of mind setting the specificity of an indicator by using another word, replaceable may be such a word.

2.3.4 A strong indicator

Britha Mikkelsen has pointed to another quality of an indicator, namely that it must be “clear”.⁹ In order to identify a “clear” indicator several helpful criteria are suggested. A clear indicator is composed of the following elements:

- Specified target group to which the indicator will be applied
- Specific unit(s) of measurement to be used for the indicator
- Specific time-frame over which it will be monitored

.....
 7 Result indicators measure the result of the project and are divided into effect indicators (short term) and impact indicators (long term). Performance indicators measure the performance of the project, i.e. the output or the delivery of the project.

8 In another context, the word “reliability” is used. Britha Mikkelsen defines reliability in the following way: “Consistency or dependability of data and judgements, with reference to the quality of instruments, procedures and analyses to collect and interpret data. Information is reliable when repeated observations using the same instrument under identical conditions produce similar results.” B. Mikkelsen: 2005, p. 348.

9 B. Mikkelsen, 2005, p. 292-293.

- Reference to a baseline/benchmark for comparison
- Defined qualities, e.g., what is meant by “adequate”, effective, successful, etc., as a qualification of an indicator?

By using these criteria it should be possible to distinguish a strong indicator from a weak one.

A variant of Mikkelsen’s distinction involves the distinction between direct and proxy indicators.¹⁰ While direct indicators give a direct measurement of, for instance, the expected results of the project, the proxy indicators measure something different which, however, is accepted to give a reasonable good picture of the expected results. The use of proxy indicators may be a pragmatic and acceptable solution when direct measurement is too difficult or too expensive to carry out.

2.3.5 Partnership

Furthermore, it can be mentioned that a brief notion about performance indicators appears in the report *Thematic Review of Partnership*, prepared by Danida consultants in 2005.¹¹ It states: “For any performance indicator to be effective it must be measurable, clear, precise, and appropriate to the context in which it is being used.”¹² And then comes an important additional specification: “*But experience also suggests that their effectiveness also depends on the degree to which these indicators are the product of a participatory process and have been mutually agreed by all the partners.*”¹³ We shall return to the topic of partnership in chapters 4.2 – 4.4.

2.3.6 Targets and indicators

Currently, there is a trend among donors to define indicators as targets. The term “target” is not included in the DAC Glossary,¹⁴ but it is defined by Danida. According to Danida, a target “*signifies the value that an indicator is supposed to attain at a given point in time.*”¹⁵ Danida gives the

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10 Danida, 2006a, p. 11.

11 Danida, *Danish Institute for Human Rights – Thematic Review of Partnership*, Final Report, Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Copenhagen December 2005.

12 Danida, 2005, p. 26.

13 Danida, 2005, p. 26.

14 OECD/DAC: *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management, Evaluation and Aid Effectiveness*, Development Assistance Committee (DAC), OECD Publications, Paris 2002.

15 Danida, 2006a, p. 4.

following example. Indicator: “*Number of classrooms built*” and target: “*33 classrooms by the end of 2007.*”¹⁶

According to this definition, which distinguishes between an indicator and a target, an indicator is not something that lives up to, for instance, the SMART criteria. Instead, indicators are supposed to refer to the measurement of objectives, but without being specific or time-bound. The target serves the latter purpose by setting deadlines. A natural question would then be: why introduce a new concept with a meaning that is already contained within another concept? One argument is that targets, being specific, timebound and quantifiable, are easier to remember and to control and therefore better communicative and management instruments than normal indicators.

The introduction of targets has the advantage of providing rapid tools for assessing achievements, but it also raises two problems. First, targets do not necessarily provide substantive information. While targets are useful in terms of control, they are perhaps less so in terms of learning about substance. There is a risk of becoming too mechanical. Secondly, who defines the targets? Specific targets may look very impressive, but they are perhaps formulated by persons not involved in the project; in that case the appearance of precise planning may be based on artificial premises.

2.4 The Purpose of Indicators in the Human Rights Field

What is the purpose of human rights indicators? Since indicators are used at different levels and since human rights indicators are not necessarily as systematically defined as for instance development indicators where the World Bank and the UNDP have a long tradition developed over decades of working with indicators, it may be useful to reflect on the different purposes of indicators.

In table 2, different concepts, their meaning, use and origins have been outlined. They are not necessarily exhaustive, but it may be useful to stretch out different approaches to indicator definitions in use.

In the human rights field, there is often a distinction between *indicators of conduct* and *indicators of result*. This distinction refers to human rights assessment, which emphasises, respectively, duty-bearers and their compliance with human rights obligations, and rights holders and their enjoyment of human rights. The obligation of conduct requires action

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¹⁶ Danida, 2006a, p. 4, note 4.

reasonably calculated to realise the enjoyment of a particular right. The obligation of result requires the state to achieve specific targets to satisfy a detailed substantive standard.¹⁷ Whereas indicators of conduct focus on commitment and compliance by duty-bearers, indicators of result focus either on the enjoyment by rights holders or on the failure of duty-bearers to respect and fulfil the rights to which they are obliged. Indicators of result may therefore invoke an assessment of actual enjoyment or they may invoke an assessment of enjoyment that relates to the performance of duty-holders. In a simplified interpretation, it may be said that indicators of conduct focus on states and their behaviour, whereas indicators of result focus on individuals and groups, possibly related to the behaviour of duty-holders.

Table 2

| Category and Use of Indicators | | |
|--|---|--|
| Category | Explanation | Use |
| Indicators of result | Measuring conditions which exist as regards individuals or groups at a point in time | Human rights terminology often contrasted with indicators of conduct |
| Indicators of conduct | Measuring commitment or compliance of duty-holders, e.g. states | Human rights terminology often contrasted with indicators of result |
| Performance indicators | Indicators of project performance in fields where project management remains in control | Terminology used e.g. in strategic framework planning |
| Indicators of milestones | Measuring performance in relation to planned targets and standards | Development and human rights terminology used in order to take stock of planned achievements (“milestones”) |
| Indicators of effect and impact | Measuring results of project or programme interventions | Development terminology, used for instance in log frame project planning. Whereas effect indicators measure immediate results, impact indicators measure longer term results |
| Indicators of output | Measuring results of project or programme activities | Development terminology used in log frame planning to measure results of individual activities |

While indicators of conduct and result are often applied in country-

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 17 Theo Van Boven et al. (eds.): *The Maastricht Guidelines on Violations of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, Studie- en Informatiecentrum Mensenrechten, Netherlands Institute of Human Rights, Utrecht 1998, p. 7.

wide assessments of the human rights situation and of compliance with human rights, the next four indicator examples in table 2: indicators of performance, milestones, effect/impact, and output all refer to planning schedules.

Performance indicators are indicators measuring processes of implementation as regards activities where management remains in control, i.e. such indicators may be used to assess management performance.

*According to Danida, "a process indicator relates to the implementation process rather than to its results. Therefore, it primarily concerns the input and the activity levels, sometimes also the output level (...). Often, however, process indicators are formulated in order to monitor processes which are not specified as programme inputs/activities/outputs, but which rather relates to routine activities and processes in an organisation (...). Such activities may well be essential for the efficiency and effectiveness of organisations (and programmes), but they tend to be merely assumed to function. Examples might be the time needed to process an application, the regularity of staff meetings, the timeliness of internal information flows, the actual compliance with laid-down financial procedures, etc. An organisation (and/or its donors) may wish to focus attention on a number of such routines – considered as bottlenecks in the working of the organisation – and to formulate indicators and set targets in order to monitor improvement."*¹⁸

Milestones relate to planned mid-term or intermediary targets.¹⁹ As DIHR projects are mostly of shorter duration, such mid-term targets have rarely been used. Indicators of output, effect and impact are logical framework tools, which are employed to measure how activities translate into the realization of a hierarchy of short term and longer-term goals.

2.5 Use of Indicators in DIHR Projects

Table 2 includes logical framework defined output and effect/impact indicators in the last two rows. These indicators are the three main indicator types in use in DIHR project or programme interventions. Thus, indicators are used at DIHR to define and measure the results of project interventions in a general development framework, which is also used by Danida.

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18 Danida, 2006a, p. 12.

19 The term milestone is often confused with the term benchmark, but they are not the same. According to the DAC Glossary, a benchmark is a "Reference point or standard against which performance or achievements can be assessed," and the following note is added: "A benchmark refers to the performance that has been achieved in the recent past by other comparable organizations, or what can be reasonably be inferred to have been achieved in the circumstances." OECD/DAC, 2002, p. 18.

2.5.1 Output indicators

Output indicators are used to define and measure the results of individual project activities, in, for instance, training, strategy planning, legal aid, or capacity building. Output indicators should be defined within a SMART framework as indicated previously.

2.5.2 Effect and impact indicators

Effect indicators are used to define and assess the results of the entire project intervention just before or immediately after project completion, i.e. the perspective of measuring effect is relatively short. Project or programme effects are often termed outcomes. Evaluations of DIHR projects have not been very elaborate as regards their longer term impact as the projects have only been running for a limited period and because they are relatively small. Methodologically, it can be difficult to attribute social change to DIHR funded projects in isolation. Hence, evaluations have mainly been concerned with immediate project outcomes and with whether the project had the intended result: effect indicators are the pertinent terminology under this scenario.

However, impact measurements are not only distinct from effect measurements as regards the temporal perspective. Impact measurements relate to the intended or unintended longer-term outcome of the intervention. This means that impact measurements relate to the potential negative result of the intervention. While impact indicators are defined positively (as no one plans a negative outcome), impact evaluations must consider the potential negative outcome of the intervention.

In order to illustrate the difference between effect and impact, Danida's Evaluation Guidelines can serve as a useful illustration, as indicated in table 3.

With regard to defining indicators, it is important to note in particular, the three top distinctions between effectiveness and impact because they indicate, as far as the measurement of effectiveness is concerned, how small scale human rights projects will be evaluated, i.e., with a focus on achievement of planned objectives and on target group achievements. However, this does not preclude efforts to evaluate how individual projects may contribute to broader societal development goals such as the strengthening of the rule of law.

Table 3

| Distinguishing effect from impact measurement | | |
|--|--|---|
| | Measuring effect | Measuring impact |
| What to measure | Achievement of objectives | Intended and unintended negative and positive results |
| Whose perspective | The target group (or institutional change) | The society and the target group |
| Point of reference | Agreed objectives | Status of affected parties prior to intervention |
| Methodological challenge | Unclear, multiple or confounding objectives | Lack of information about affected parties Cause and effect linkages |
| Key questions | To what extent have agreed objectives been reached? Are activities sufficient to realise agreed objectives? | What are the positive and negative effects? Do positive effects outweigh negative effects? |

Source: Danida: *Evaluation Guidelines*, Danida, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Copenhagen 1999, pp. 55 and 57.

2.5.3 Impact

As previously mentioned, the results of a certain project or programme can be divided into short term effects and long term (positive or negative) impacts. Thus, impacts refer to the cumulative results (positive or negative) of an intervention. Impact measurements will therefore potentially provide a deeper or broader understanding of change compared to measurements of effectiveness. Impact measurement is concerned with target group results, for instance, but also with processes where the target groups in question employ new knowledge and experiences gained in the course of the project; such new practices create in turn new processes of change. This is what is defined as impact.

The chief difficulty of estimating impact, not to speak of a more precise measurement of impact, is to determine what has caused the impact, i.e. to provide an answer to questions of the type: Why has the situation altered from the way it was before to the way it is now? And furthermore: how much change has been caused by this particular project or programme, and how much has been caused by other factors? Thus, one of the key problems associated with impact measurement is the problem of *attribution*:

“An important methodological problem in aid impact studies is the problem of attribution. We can register that certain events take place, for example that some inputs are provided and some outputs are produced, and we can observe that important changes occur. But to what extent the changes are a

result of the project intervention will always to some extent be a matter for interpretation or even conjecture. There are always other factors at play, for example, other interventions in the same area."²⁰

In the context of relatively small-scale projects or programmes, such as those DIHR is normally involved with, it is particularly difficult to trace impacts, because not only is the input rather small, but also because many other actors are engaged in the process.

In a recently published book, *Aid Impact and Poverty Reduction*, Folke and Nielsen make a distinction between three different types of impact studies:²¹

- The classical effect evaluations
- Participatory impact assessments
- Wider (broader/deeper) impact studies

Classical effect evaluations are normally carried out within a positivist scientific tradition, inspired by the natural and medical sciences, and they make use of a quasi-experimental survey design in order to objectively assess the relationship between intervention and effect. In order to do so, evaluations must normally be based on *ceteris paribus* assumptions (all other things being equal, or unchanged), so that the effect of the studied intervention can be isolated and measured. There are two ways by which such studies can be undertaken, either as a before/after study or as a with/without study. In the first instance the situation in the project area before the intervention is compared with the situation after the intervention, and thus the changes in relation to the project's objectives can be observed and the effect measured. This method normally presupposes a baseline study in order to define the situation before the intervention. If, however, a baseline study has not been made, the other method (with/without) can be used. In this case a comparison is made between a project area with an intervention and another area, very similar to the first area, but without an intervention. Thus, if we speak of a group of people, the first group is the project's target group, while the other group resembles what in medical sciences is called the control group. The chief difficulty is to find a control group that is very similar to the target group, so what may be a useful methodology, such as scientific research on the effects of various medical treatments, may not be so useful when it comes to social processes with many influential external factors. Nevertheless, the aim to make objective assessments is a positive

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20 Steen Folke and Henrik Nielsen (eds.): *Aid Impact and Poverty Reduction*, Palgrave MacMillan, New York 2006, p. 14.

21 Folke and Nielsen, 2006, p. 14-16.

aspect with this type of evaluation, but since the *ceteris paribus* assumptions are normally not valid in real life some kind of caution must be taken against the asserted objectivity of the evaluation.

The chief advantage of participatory impact assessments is their ability to focus on the views of people working with the project and the intended beneficiaries who are supposed to know better than anyone else if and how a project has benefited them. It is part of a wider trend that has introduced participatory methods in all parts of the project cycle. Despite its strong points, this procedure also has several weak points, for instance, the gap between rhetoric and reality. Thus, it can be questioned whether the procedure is really participatory. According to Folke and Nielsen very few truly participatory impact assessments have actually been carried out.²² Another weakness is that the people whose opinions have been studied generally express their views subjectively. It may also be unclear whether people are expressing their own views or those they believe the donor would like to hear.

The participatory impact assessment can probably best be seen as a supplement to traditional evaluations:

*"I cannot see how the participatory approach can entirely replace traditional evaluation, if only because of the accountability imperative, but there can be no doubt that only if some kind of participatory methods are used can there be any prospects of getting really useful feedback about what makes for success or failure in people-centred projects (...) even if participatory methods are used there will still need to be some element of objectivity if possible ..."*²³

A qualitative baseline study based on participatory assessments may be used as an intermediate step between the positivist and participatory impact assessments. The study could be repeated several years later, thus giving a before/after dimension to the assessment.

Wider impact studies are normally research-based studies involving extensive fieldwork. The two previously mentioned types of assessment normally focus on interventions and downplay the societal and/or natural environment. Furthermore they have a tendency to stress project objectives and thereby, perhaps, overlook non-intended impacts. In contrast, the wider impact studies tend to emphasize analysis of the context and regard the

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22 Folke and Nielsen, 2006, p. 15.

23 Basil Edward Cracknell, quoted from B. Mikkelsen, 2005, p. 280.

interventions as just one of several factors resulting in a given development. Apart from that, there is no recipe for wider impact studies, because the whole point of such studies is that they are contextualized and tailor-made for each project in a given societal context. Since these kinds of research-based impact studies normally require far more resources than are available in the framework of DIHR's projects and programmes, we will not expand further on this issue in the given context.²⁴

2.5.4 The Most Significant Change Approach

Among the participatory impact assessments, one can be singled out due to its simple format (*"keep it simple"*) and its practical potential. It is described by Mikkelsen²⁵ and called the Most Significant Change Approach (MSC); it is meant as an alternative to the sometimes rigid formalities of the LFA, that has been criticised for leaving *"everyone being extremely busy with the collection of all kinds of fragmented monitoring data [that] was rarely used in the analysis of effects and impacts; neither was it stored for future use."*²⁶

The idea of MSC is to ask people to identify positive or negative changes observed over a period of time within a given domain of interest. The same people are then asked which change they find the most important, and why they have chosen it as the most significant change. As a result, a number of stories about change will appear.

The advantage of MSC is that it allows important information to be gathered in a very simple manner. Thus, it is:

- Time-saving, as one does not have to agree on pre-constructed, quantitative indicators;
- Involving and participatory and suits a partnership-based organization well;
- Transparent and free from pseudo-objectivity;
- Demystifying monitoring and is better in line with the epic tradition of many non-Western cultures;
- Suited to make use of information which is already generated, for instance in partnership review workshops;
- Demanding that the information be used at all levels, i.e. beneficiary, partner-organization and at country programme level; and finally

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24 For further reading about research-based impact studies, see B. Mikkelsen, 2005; Folke and Nielsen, 2005.

25 B. Mikkelsen, 2005, p. 297-299.

26 B. Mikkelsen, 2005, p. 299.

- Serving as a supplement to already functioning parts of traditional monitoring and evaluation systems.

However, despite these positive aspects, one should also take into consideration that there are certain limitations to this approach and a need for careful planning. Thus, somebody has to formulate the domains of interest, and these may correspond with a pre-established hierarchy. There may also be need of guidelines to conduct the dialogue. Furthermore, interviewees need to be selected, the dialogue must be facilitated and the stories have to be verified.

Mikkelsen refers to a pilot test of the MSC, where the following methodological lessons were learned:

“1) the MSC system is only partially participatory. Domains of interest (...) are centrally decided and the sorting of stories according to significance is hierarchic, 2) most participants easily fell to talking at length about activities conducted. This also applied to the interviewers, who had difficulties in grasping the idea; they did not always probe; did not ask for examples and sometimes even put the answer into the mouth of the respondents, 3) although the MSC approach follows the principle “keep it simple”, training on MSC use is obviously required.”²⁷

From this she concludes, that *“A recognized limitation is that the MSC is not suited as a stand alone approach for ex-post, objectives based evaluation. But the data collected and insight gained through MSC can feed well into an evaluation.”²⁸*

2.5.5 Indirect measurement

Indirect measurement of impact (or, perhaps, better termed impact by implication) is mentioned in the *Thematic Review of Partnership* (about DIHR), prepared by Danida consultants in 2005. Since DIHR normally works in partnership with other organisations, the review states that *“it is hard to attribute any direct improvement to the human rights environment in a particular country or other long-term impacts to a specific DIHR intervention.”²⁹* Nevertheless, most partners interviewed by the review team *“consider DIHR’s capacity building work has had a lasting and beneficial impact on the way they work. It is therefore justifiable to assume that the Institute’s efforts to develop the capacity and capability of human*

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27 B. Mikkelsen, 2005, p. 299.

28 B. Mikkelsen, 2005, p. 299.

29 Danida, 2005, p. 27.

rights organisations will have had a positive effect on the rule of law or access to justice.”³⁰ Small-scale projects with small interventions can have a cumulative effect and may influence, for instance, the thinking of the judiciary, facilitate access to information, and so generate greater confidence in the system.

Another example of assessing potential impact is to use “reputational indicators”, which refer to proxy measures of an organisation’s reputation among its peers or key stake holders. In this context, DIHR’s interventions “*appeared to have had a genuine impact on improving the rule of law, access to justice and information, and generally promoting human rights issues in the countries in which it worked.*”³¹

Thus, in the examples given on indirect measurement, the methods are 1. the assumption that small interventions will have a cumulative effect, 2. the use of assessments by other organizations and stake holders operating in the field.

2.5.6 How should DIHR deal with impact?

It can be asserted that research-based impact studies are in most cases difficult to carry out on a practical basis due to the limited size of projects and resources. Nevertheless, impact studies may be considered in the following cases:

1. in the context of large programmes with a broader view and supported by sufficient financial resources;
2. with regard to new project types and activities, where there is a strategic need for impact research;
3. when impact investigations are already being implemented, cf. the examples from the previous section (about indirect measurement).

2.6 Who Defines the Indicators?

Project documents are often written in a hurry in order to meet the deadlines of funding institutions. Under such stressful circumstances, indicators are dependent on the creativity of the author of the project or programme document. However, while this description may apply to some preparatory processes, there are also examples of well-prepared strategies. To an increasing degree, DIHR indicators are elaborated in workshops where

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30 Danida, 2005, p. 27.

31 Danida, 2005, p. 28

partners and project managers conceive and develop programme and project goals. As indicators are tools for monitoring and assessment, it is crucial that a common understanding with regard to their use is established. Thus, even if partners have not been involved actively in the original definition of indicators, it is a *sine qua non* that a common process of reassessment of the indicators takes place as early as possible - preferably before the project starts.

2.7 Specific Category of Human Rights Indicators?

Can a separate category of human rights indicators be established? There are at least two ways in which answers to this question can be fleshed out. First, in the human rights community, i.e., within the UN, the treaty body committees, among researchers and NGOs, a discourse on indicators has developed during the last decade.³² There are many dimensions to this discourse, but there are certain perennial elements that are important to the way in which indicators are often defined, at least at the theoretical or general level. Secondly, in the practical field of implementation, human rights indicators are often defined in a context involving both governance and human rights concerns. The issue of human rights may reflect the fact that the objective of donors are sometimes somewhat diffuse as regards a specific reinforcement of human rights, but the incorporation of governance concerns also reflects a sensible approach to institutional development and accountability which is highly relevant to human rights implementation.

To illustrate some of the central concerns of the human rights community as far as indicators are concerned, reference can be made to the previously mentioned distinction between obligations of conduct and obligations of result (see chapter 2.4). Obligations of conduct refer to the type of “*action reasonably calculated to realise the enjoyment of a particular right,*” i.e., obligations of conduct imply a planning or a remedial action carried out by duty-holders aimed at realizing human rights. Obligations of result “*require states to achieve specific targets to satisfy a detailed substantive standard.*” Obligations of result are therefore distinct from obligations of conduct inasmuch as they refer to specific substantive enjoyment of rights. It can be said that whereas obligations of conduct presuppose processes of implementation, obligations of result measure the actual enjoyment of specific standards.³³

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32 United Nations: *Report on indicators for monitoring compliance with international human rights instruments*, United Nations, Human Rights Instruments, HRI/MC/2006/7, Geneva 11 May 2006.

33 For further elaboration, see Van Boven, 1998.

The discussions about rights-based development practices have been an important source of inspiration for indicator development and definition. The principles of Accountability, Empowerment, Participation, and Non-discrimination are often associated with a rights-based approach.³⁴ In table 4, these principles have been used as a means to check indicators from a human rights perspective. Using such a checklist may be the most practical way to apply rights-based thinking to the formulation of indicators.

Table 4

| Checking Indicators from a Human Rights Perspective | |
|--|--|
| Express linkage to rights | Do the indicators relate to specific human rights? |
| Accountability, duty bearer conduct | Do the indicators measure duty-bearer obligations following the tripartite division respect, protect or fulfil? Respect: The obligations of duty-bearers to refrain from violating or interfering with enjoyment of human rights? Protect: The obligation of duty-bearers to regulate the behaviour of third parties with respect to precluding the possibility that private persons, acting within the private domain, can violate these rights Fulfil: The obligation of duty-bearers to devote the maximum of available resources towards the progressive realization of rights, including measures of legal promotion, provision of budgetary and institutional structures and the building of capacity to sustain human rights implementation. |
| Empowerment | Do the indicators measure outcome or processes of rights-holder human rights based empowerment? |
| Participation | Do the indicators measure processes and procedures of consultation or decision-making between duty-bearers and rights-holders as far as human rights implementation and enforcement is concerned? |
| Non-Discrimination /Vulnerable groups | Do the indicators relate to outcomes or processes of non-discrimination of groups in general, or of vulnerable groups? |

Source: Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR): *Human Rights Indicators. Assessing Opportunities in a World Bank Context*. Draft Report, DIHR, Copenhagen 2006b, p. 14.

.....
34 United Nations Development Program (UNDP): *Report. The Second Interagency Workshop on Implementing a Human Rights-based Approach in the Context of UN Reform*, Stanford, USA, 5-7 May 2003.

Table 5 illustrates the various types of indicators, which are often used in a human rights context.

Table 5

| Types of Indicators | | |
|---|--|--|
| Type | Example | Remark |
| <p>Indicators summarizing a social situation The image of a wider social reality. What is the state of affairs? Purpose: Diagnosis rather than action – baseline study</p> | <p>Human Development Index: Summarizing “Human Development” by using a three factor composite index</p> | <p>Often a need for comparative frameworks. This is “an indicator of result” in the sense that the indicator reflects on a given state of affairs, rather than on a process. Format: Index data</p> |
| <p>Benchmark indicators Measuring against a standard Purpose: Assessing achievements. Action implied, but not defined by indicators</p> | <p>Millennium Development Goals: “There should be universal primary education in all countries by 2015.” Project intermediate targets of longer term goals: “By project year two, 50 pct. of all police districts have received training at level xx.”</p> | <p>In the case of the millennium development goals, the comparative framework is obvious, whereas concerning project goals and benchmarks, they are rarely comparative. Format: Target data, sometimes defined in a comparative framework</p> |
| <p>Indicators measuring conduct, compliance or commitment Measuring accountability. Does the state respect or fulfill its obligations? Purpose: Diagnosis of policy, not necessarily action</p> | <p>HR Commitment Index: - Indicators measuring the respect for (non-violation of) civil and political rights - Indicators measuring progressive realization of a social right.</p> | <p>Conduct, compliance or commitment indicators are mostly used in assessing policy implementation and outcomes. Taken together such analyses measure process as well as outcomes. Format: Comparative frameworks</p> |
| <p>“Check” indicators Measuring accountability and risk. Purpose: Diagnosis and action</p> | <p>HR and Business Assessment: - “Are appropriate guidelines/policies in place?”</p> | <p>Here the indicator is used to assess features of compliance with particular obligations or norms. The indicator reasons in a “if not, then” conditional framework. Format: Yes/No.</p> |

In terms of *purpose*, the table distinguishes between

- Indicators used for diagnosis and description
- Indicators used for implementation purposes
- Indicators used for defining action

As regards the distinction between diagnosis and action, it is clear that diagnosing a situation may lead to action, but the point here is that there is rarely a direct link between diagnosis and decision-making, whereas action indicators as cited the table overleaf will typically involve a direct link to a process of decision-making.

It is important also to realize that much of the human rights debate about indicators fails to distinguish between indicators used for description and diagnosis and those used for implementation. The point to bear in mind is that not all human rights indicators defined in an implementation context are directly relevant to the process of diagnosing human rights situations. Processes of implementation are contextual and indicators may relate to more general processes of capacity building and awareness raising rather than to remedying human rights deficits

As regards the format of indicators, a distinction is made between

- Comparative frameworks
- Target data, i.e., milestone types
- Check data, i.e., often yes/no types

It is useful to recall that comparative data are not always expressed in numeric form.

3 Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines

There are a number of concerns involved in defining a monitoring and evaluation methodology. Monitoring methodologies should be coupled with learning and monitoring, and the definition of indicators should be partner-driven in order to ensure ownership. Finally, the indicators defined for the programme and project goals should ensure that a database is built up allowing for an informative and well-documented evaluation of the intervention.

Before discussing the methodology of monitoring and evaluation, the following section will clarify concepts, suggest appropriate definitions in accordance with the needs of DIHR partnership programming, and propose procedures for monitoring projects and of evaluating them. Evaluation procedures are treated first as they guide the way monitoring is undertaken. (However, it should be recognized that the discussion has been kept brief and that it is not exhaustive).

3.1 Evaluation

Evaluation methods and procedures have been fairly well elaborated in the Danida Guidelines on evaluation.³⁵ Evaluations are assessments of project and programme interventions. The purpose of evaluations is, on the one hand, to **document and examine** the results of an intervention, whether it relates to a project or programme, and on the other hand to **learn from the experience of intervention**. While formerly, evaluations tended to be backward looking and control oriented (was it a good or a bad project - can the investment be justified or not?), current evaluations are *also* forward looking and process oriented (what can we learn from the experience, what sort of processes have we been involved in, what messages do they hold for the future?). Current evaluations of big donors are often thematic or sector oriented encompassing several countries; in these assessments, the issue of thematic or sector experience is often a key question whereas the issue of control is addressed in a less prominent way.

Evaluations deal with five main questions, i.e., the criteria of evaluations. They are:

- Efficiency,
- Effectiveness,
- Impact,

.....
35 Danida, 1999.

- Relevance
- Sustainability

Terms of Reference for evaluations can emphasize these questions to varying degrees, but questions of effectiveness and efficiency will be included in all evaluations.

Efficiency refers to the productivity of the implementation process, i.e., whether resources have been spent in a cost-effective and productive way. Have the monetary and manpower resources available been utilized in a productive way which has produced the outputs warranted at a reasonable cost? Efficiency is measured by comparing costs to market prices (cost-effectiveness) or more generally by management performance indicators such as:

- Output performance (achievement of outputs within time frames)
- Spending performance (keeping spending within budgeted limits)
- Organisational performance (achievement of organisational or institution building targets)
- Learning performance (achievement of organisational or institutional learning targets).

Effectiveness refers to the achievement of objectives. Has the project or programme achieved the results stipulated in the project or programme description? Have the planned outputs been realised and have these outputs combined to realise intended project or programme objectives?

Impact refers to the ultimate outcome of the project intervention. It is often said that measuring impact relates to the long-term positive, as well as negative, effect of the intervention. This is true in the sense that impact evaluations must assess the wider social result of the interventions. It is not enough to assess how project target groups benefit from the project; one must also assess how such benefits affect other institutions or groups.

Impact evaluations are therefore confronted with two methodological problems: the first is the problem of attribution, i.e., can social change be attributed to the project? The second methodological challenge is identification of social change, i.e. how can social change be documented.

Many evaluations do not distinguish sharply between effect and impact evaluations. It is done here in order to clarify concepts, but also because the perspective used in DIHR evaluations is more effect than impact oriented. If several closely related project activities were undertaken in one country or

region, i.e. if programme activities were instituted, then impact evaluations would be more relevant because it would be worthwhile to establish how the different programme components reinforced each other. However, this does not mean that impact discussions should not be part of the evaluations of DIHR activities. All evaluations should relate to the development goal of a project or a programme, but it must be recognized that the main question in this context is whether project outcomes are contributing positively or negatively to the development goal defined for the project. Dependent on the character of the project, or programme, the impact dimension is treated flexibly in the DIHR evaluations.

Relevance raises questions about the appropriateness of assistance, i.e. whether the quality and level of assistance is in keeping with partner and donor policies as well as with local needs and priorities. The question of relevance is often addressed unevenly in evaluations. It may include the issue of timing, i.e. whether the intervention was appropriate on a historical background.

Sustainability assesses the likelihood that project benefits will continue beyond the life of the project period. This issue deals with hypothetical situations and with predictive assessments, which have not enjoyed a high success rate in a development context. Considerations of sustainability are not very common in the human rights field and not always very useful because human rights commitments are politically sensitive, and thus dependent on the stability of the political environment. Adverse contexts, for example, in authoritarian or totalitarian states, concerns about sustainability may simply be of less relevance, since the overriding concern of human rights work is to achieve immediate results.

3.2 The Method of Evaluations

Many evaluation reports are unclear concerning methodological choices. There are six types of methodological choices, which are relevant to human rights evaluations. It is important to reflect these concerns when defining the ToR of the evaluation and in implementing it:

1. The balance between efficiency, effectiveness, impact, relevance and sustainability concerns.
2. The degree to which reliable monitoring data are available and used in undertaking the evaluation.
3. Other methods of data collection undertaken during the evaluation (typically interviews and study of project documentation).

4. The degree to which stakeholder interviews and target group interviews inform the conclusions of the evaluation.
5. The degree to which the project deals with particular human rights, i.e. is the project rights based conceptually or in terms of its results? This would direct the interest of the evaluation towards particular rights fulfilment achievements.
6. Whether the evaluation is participatory or not.

The so-called fourth generation evaluation design suggests a stakeholder led evaluation where stakeholders construct a common understanding of the changes and achievements arrived at as a result of development interventions.³⁶ Danida does not define what *participatory evaluation* means. The Evaluation Secretariat of Danida associates participatory evaluations with evaluations, which put a particular emphasis on recording experience while evaluations, which emphasize documentation, are less likely to be participatory in nature. Participation is linked to process. In future DIHR evaluations, partners will play an important role in determining the ToR of the evaluations and in providing an input to the evaluation process itself. Of overriding importance in some of the projects, e.g., in a situation where target group beneficiaries are defined as part of the project objectives, will be to establish procedures of monitoring which serve the purpose of constructing a data-base for evaluations.

3.3 What is Monitoring?

In the human rights field, there are good reasons to define monitoring because different understandings of monitoring prevail between development and human rights activists.

Danida defines monitoring as “a continuing function that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders of an ongoing development intervention with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds.”

Danida, 2006a, p. 4, based on OECD/DAC, 2002, p. 27-28

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 36 Claus C. Rebien: “Træk af evalueringsdisciplinens udvikling” [Traits of the development of the evaluation discipline], *Den Ny Verden*, (31), 1, p. 20-33. DIIS, Copenhagen 1998, p. 22-24; Egon C. Guba and Yvonna S. Lincoln: *Fourth Generation Evaluation*, Sage Publications, Newbury Park, London, New Delhi 1989.

The definition adheres to a concept of monitoring which is employed in development contexts. Monitoring is seen as a project or programme management tool allowing the examination of project progress and the realization of objectives. The core ideas governing this definition are the periodicity of monitoring and measurements relating to project objectives, but also the view that monitoring is a *management instrument* and not a *research activity*. This is the definition, which we have adopted for DIHR partnership programmes and projects. In addition, we also seek to make monitoring part of a learning activity.

In contrast, in the human rights world as such, monitoring is often associated with the surveillance of state conduct by the UN Committees in Geneva. “The UN Monitoring Bodies”, as they are often called, investigate whether states conform to their human rights obligations. The main difference between the latter notion of monitoring and the former one is that the latter associates monitoring with state conduct, and the human rights framework of conventions and law is the main point of departure for monitoring activities. Monitoring is rights based as indicated by the PIOOM quote below. However, in human rights vocabulary, there is also sometimes a less clearly defined regularity of monitoring activities involved. Thus, monitoring can almost become identical with analysis as indicated in the UKWELI quote below.

According to the UKWELI handbook, monitoring is defined as “the long-term observation and analysis of the human rights situation in a country or region.”

UKWELI: *Monitoring and Documenting Human Rights Violations in Africa. A Handbook*, Amnesty International and Codesria, 2000, p. 8

For PIOOM monitoring “...means nothing less than a sustained (that is, repeated at regular intervals), standardized (that is, systematic) effort to gather data from a variety of sources on a set of occurrences involving human rights violations and/or warning indicators pointing to the probable occurrence of such violations in many cases (conflicts) and places (countries and territories).”

Albert Jongman and Alex P. Schmid: *Monitoring human rights: manual for assessing country performance*, Interdisciplinary Research Program on Root Causes of Human Rights Violations (PIOOM), Leiden 1994, p. 3

We have drawn on these different definitions in order to clarify that the concept of monitoring may be employed in various ways. DIHR projects

and programmes deal with capacity building as well as with rights based development. Hence, the definition of monitoring used at DIHR must take into account the fact that human rights violations will seldom be the object of monitoring. In the monitoring activities carried out by DIHR, project accountings, training activities, management performance as well as target group benefits are the most important objects. For that reason, we employ the Danida/OECD definition of monitoring quoted previously.

3.4 A Practice and a Method of Monitoring

In defining a practice of monitoring, there are four important questions to address: what is being monitored, who is carrying it out, how is the collected data being used, and how can monitoring data be used for learning? These questions have to be raised because the weakest link in the monitoring process is often accountability, i.e. who is responsible for monitoring and who is responsible for using the data generated during monitoring?

Indicators have to be defined in order to be monitored and used. Indicators are not cosmetic devices set up to satisfy a project management framework, but an instrument to be used. Indicators and benchmarks (where relevant) are the objects monitored. If no indicators are defined or if the indicators defined are not relevant, it will be the task of the monitoring process to define afresh what is going to be monitored, but a defined framework of monitoring is needed due to the fact that monitoring is a regulated activity. This answers the question of what is being monitored. But who should do the monitoring?

This question is both a question of practical consequence and a question of power. There has been a tendency to defer responsibility for monitoring to those in ultimate control of money. This is wrong in a partnership context and in principle. Monitoring must be undertaken by those closest to project activities, i.e. the project management. To defer the responsibility of monitoring to the financing organisations also implies a risk of not being able to undertake monitoring at regular intervals. Monitoring of project output indicators could be undertaken once a year in progress reports written by project management. Moreover, the immediate objective or development objectives of the project could also be examined in progress reports at least once a year in order to assess project progress against outcomes and objectives. Integral to this way of thinking about monitoring is the definition of indicators within a process of partnership: ideally, indicators and objectives should be defined in workshops before the project document is written. However, practical concerns about deadlines make such an

elaborate process difficult in some cases. What remains important, however, is to ensure, possibly in post-inception workshops, that the ownership of objectives and indicators is ensured in a manner, which allows partners to play an important role in the definition of the project or programme document.

Monitoring is not only the responsibility of the partners but also of DIHR. The monitoring carried out by DIHR is based on observations connected to daily management, on the reports written by the partners as well as on visits to the partner. The role of DIHR is, together with the partner and based on the progress reports, to examine and discuss the progress of activities, examine whether the immediate and development objectives will be achieved, as well as to discuss possible realignments of the project.

If monitoring processes are taken seriously by project managements as processes for examining progress towards immediate and development goals, monitoring will also become an instrument that aids learning because the focus on goal attainment will clarify what works well and what does not.

Monitoring can be thought of as involving four processes:

- data collection according to a method of data selection (carried out by the partner on a regular basis),
- data entry or programming (carried out by the partner on a regular basis),
- data analysis including learning, and
- action (carried out by the partner and feeding into DIHR monitoring).

Data collection usually involves the establishment of a format for data collection, which makes it a routine activity. In an access to justice project in South Africa, paralegal advisors were equipped with a one-page information sheet, which they ticked off every time they were approached by clients visiting their office or telephoning with a case. As far as data collection is concerned, it is crucial to make it part of the routine of project staff and to make it practical. Data collection should be based on the indicators defined in the project document.

The second process, that of *data entry*,³⁷ also concerns establishing routines. Sometimes project staff are good at collecting data, but sometimes “the rest

.....
37 Data entry means the entering of data sheets in files or data bases where information is stored systematically.

is silence”. Data entry, however, marks the first step in turning monitoring data to practical use. It is a step which paves the way for the preparation of the annual report of the organisation, but it also helps to create a foundation for critical analysis of project progress.

Data analysis is often the weakest link in the monitoring process for the simple reason that data is often collected, and then not analysed or used. Project management teams are usually responsible for the analysis of monitoring data, especially in small organisations where specific responsibilities of monitoring and evaluation are not defined. However, such management teams do not always find sufficient time for monitoring processes including sufficient analysis of the data collected. If this is the case, it also represents a lost learning opportunity for management as well as general staff. Analyses of monitoring data and assessments of progress against goals provide these groups with a structure for expressing their experience of implementation in a written and systematic form. The data analysis should be used to draft the progress reports for DIHR and should feed into the monitoring by DIHR. Time should be set aside in each project to discuss data collection and analysis and how this should be used for possible redirection of the project.

Linked to the process of analysing monitoring data is the process of *acting* upon the analysis made. The purpose of monitoring is to create a set of data which can be used in the evaluation of the project, but which can also be used as an instrument for reorienting project implementation. Such analysis-based reorientation of implementation may be a weak link in monitoring projects too. Ideally the partner should base the reorientation of the project on the data analysis. This process should be discussed with DIHR and should also form the basis of DIHR monitoring.

In summary, monitoring processes involve four stages: data collection, data entry (both of which may be routine project activities), data analysis and finally analysis-based action (the latter processes are often less governed by routine). Monitoring processes are continuous and repetitive and it is incumbent on project management to ensure that appropriate project monitoring in all its stages takes place.

No project document should be written without reference to monitoring procedures. Responsibility for specific monitoring procedures can be defined in the project document (see table 7).

The basic elements of monitoring are for the purpose of pure management of the project, i.e. to collect and provide the necessary information at the

decision making level (project management), who must then decide on further action (or no action).

The monitoring process can be supplemented by midterm reviews and final evaluations. Midterm reviews are normally internal evaluations prepared by the local project management, eventually in cooperation with the Danish partner, while final evaluations are normally carried out by external consultants, independent of the project. In both cases indicators are of high importance, and it goes without saying that the information contained in the indicators must be available for the evaluators, i.e. the process of routine monitoring must precede the evaluations.

3.5 A “Hands on” Guide to Monitoring

A “hands on” guide to monitoring will contain the following items:

Preparation of the project

1. Have the indicators been discussed and agreed upon by the partner?
2. Has it been carefully agreed how the monitoring is to be carried out, and who is to implement it?
3. Has the partner received a general DIHR introduction to monitoring, including an introduction to data collection and analysis?
4. Has agreement been reached on the monitoring format and the format for the progress reports?
5. Who is responsible for the progress report?
6. Has the division of responsibility regarding monitoring between DIHR and the partner been discussed?

Monitoring during the project process – responsibility by the partner

7. Has regular collection of information been carried out by the partner based on the indicators?
8. Has information from the indicators been included in the 6-monthly or yearly progress reports?
9. Has an assessment been undertaken based on information from indicators?
10. What implications does the monitoring have for project management and for the selected indicators?

DIHR monitoring

11. Has 6-monthly or yearly monitoring been carried out by DIHR?
12. Have progress reports been discussed with the partner, including the analysis carried out by the partner as well as possible redirections?

Preparation of the project

Before starting it is essential to obtain agreement about what the project is all about and to divide the areas of responsibility between the partners, thus obtaining ownership of the project. For instance, it must be clarified *what role DIHR shall have in monitoring*. These are preconditional steps for monitoring.

With regard to the first item on the list it is important to define and agree upon the indicators in partnership so that the indicators are not forced upon one of the partners by the other partner or by the donor. Ownership of the indicators is essential; otherwise – as shown by experience - they will not be monitored and/or used for learning processes.

The point of the second, third and fourth item is not only to reach agreement on indicators and make sure that it is feasible to collect the data, but ensure that monitoring is carried out by someone delegated with this responsibility. Thus, it is not enough to ensure that there is an implicit understanding of who is to do the monitoring; this task must be explicitly dealt with. In respect to this, an introduction to data collection and analysis as well as reporting should always be arranged. It is therefore advisable that, right from the start of the project, the reporting and monitoring format to be used in annual progress reports should be defined and agreed upon. Monitoring formats can be changed, but the advantage of monitoring increases when progress reports are given a uniform format.

Similarly, as regards the fifth and sixth item, it is important to put a name and address on the person who is to be responsible for the progress report. Preferably, it should be the project manager. The division of responsibility between DIHR and the partner should also be discussed.

Monitoring during the project process

The point of the seventh and eighth items on the list is that not only should monitoring – including regular data collection and analysis - be carried out, but the information should be put into the progress report so that it is available to the management and the partner, thereby assisting them in the task of assessing the situation and future perspectives and adjustments. In this respect it must also be clarified how frequently the progress reports should be produced, e.g. annually or biannually, and whether indicators should be mentioned at the start of the report, e.g. within the table of contents.

The point of the ninth item is not only to make an assessment possible, but also to ensure that it is made by the management with a view to evaluating the positive or negative changes as a result of the project.

Finally, the point of item 10 is to ensure that not only does an assessment take place, but it is followed up by a decision on management implications on progress (for instance, shall the course of the project be amended?), including the answering the question of whether the selected indicators are the right ones, or whether they should be substituted with new and perhaps more appropriate ones.

These are the essentials of monitoring, and they are summarised in the check list below.

Table 6

| Check list for Monitoring | | |
|--|---|--------|
| Preparation of the project | | |
| 1 | Have the indicators been discussed and agreed upon by the partners? | yes/no |
| 2 | Has it been agreed how the monitoring is to be carried out, and who does it? | yes/no |
| 3 | Has there been a general DIHR introduction to the partner on monitoring, including introduction to data collection and analysis? | yes/no |
| 4 | Has the format of progress reports been agreed upon? | yes/no |
| 5 | Who is responsible for the progress report? | - |
| 6 | Has the division of responsibility regarding monitoring between DIHR and the partner been discussed? | yes/no |
| Monitoring during the project process | | |
| 7 | Has regular collection of information been carried out by the partner based on the indicators? | yes/no |
| 8 | Has information from the indicators been included in the 6-monthly or yearly progress reports? | yes/no |
| 9 | Has an assessment been undertaken based on information from the indicators? | yes/no |
| 10 | What implications does the monitoring have for project management? - and/or for the selected indicators? (partner responsibility together with DIHR) | - - |
| DIHR monitoring | | |
| 11 | Has 6-monthly or yearly monitoring been carried out by DIHR? | yes/no |
| 12 | Have progress reports been discussed with the partner, including the analysis by the partner as well as possible redirections? | yes/no |

Monitoring processes call for analytical consideration and the formulation of specific learning experience, especially as regards the process towards

realization of project goals. Hence, the suggestion is that progress reports at least annually should contain a section on project goal attainment.

An example of a monitoring format for the annual report is the following (i.e. items to be included in the report):

- Purpose of the project (a short repetition for the reader)
- Narrative report about the period (general description)
- Analytical assessment (by the project manager in the partner organisation)
- Indicators (specification of fulfilment of planned targets or outputs, reasons for delay or other changes)
- Economic status.

The simplified monitoring format used in one of DIHR's civil society projects on Balkan and called "Monthly narrative report" can be used as a template for the formatting of narrative reports. It includes:

Project title

Project code

Name of organisation

Reported by (name)

Reporting period (date)

1. Rate of fulfilment of activities and outputs planned for the period in question
2. Reasons for delay or other changes
3. Planned activities and outputs for the next period
4. Any other relevant activities undertaken for the period in question
5. Any problems encountered
6. Any other relevant things to report.

It is easy to understand and does not take long to fill in and send to the Danish project manager. Normally, these reports can be contained within a single A4 page.³⁸

.....
38 See also Ministry of Foreign Affairs: *General Guidelines for grant administration through Danish NGOs*, Annex 2: "Status Report", Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Copenhagen, April 2006.

4 A Framework of Indicators

In this chapter, we will develop a framework for defining relevant human rights programme and project indicators based on a methodology of human rights principles. It seems useful first to pay some attention to the logical framework analysis as the main structuring framework of programme and project indicators.

4.1 The Logical Framework Hierarchy

In the following chapters we will seek to develop indicators relevant to two programmes in DIHR's International Department, i.e. Access to Justice and Civil Society. The purpose of the exercise is to provide inspiration for the definition of indicators, but also for the long-term and immediate objectives of program and project planning. It is important to stress that behind the human rights and governance indicators, there are objectives of programmes and projects that often tend to be forgotten in much of the discussion about measurement. The purpose of the definition of indicators is therefore not only to draw attention to the indicators as such, but also to the hierarchy of objectives that are the starting point for the work of planning and assessment. For this reason, it may be useful to focus on the position of indicators in the logical framework matrix.

The matrix in table 7 shows the hierarchy of objectives according to the logical framework schedule. Moreover, the matrix horizontally ties together objectives, indicators and monitoring. The matrix is used as a structuring tool that can be attached to every project or programme defined. The advantage of such a structuring instrument is 1) that the goal hierarchy is available in a short schematic form, 2) that objectives and indicators at the different levels are explicitly defined, and 3) that monitoring schedules are linked to the definition of goals and their indicators.

As regards indicators, many project documents tend to define indicators on the last page without necessarily relating the indicators to specific objectives. Secondly, monitoring is rarely considered as a part of project or programme planning. The following matrix may serve to encourage people to think about monitoring as part of the planning process.

Table 7

| A Matrix of DIHR Project Planning and Management | | | | |
|---|--|--|----------------------|---|
| Title of Project : | | | | |
| Title of Programme: | | | | |
| DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE 1. | INDICATORS OF DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE 1. 2. 3. | MEANS OF VERIFICATION 1. 2. 3. | ASSUMPTIONS | RESPONSIBILITY FOR MONITORING AND DATES OF CHECK |
| IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE 1. 2. | INDICATORS OF IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. | MEANS OF VERIFICATION 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. | ASSUMPTIONS | RESPONSIBILITY FOR MONITORING AND DATES OF CHECK |
| OUTPUTS 1. 2. 3. | INDICATORS OF OUTPUTS 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. | MEANS OF VERIFICATION 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. | ASSUMPTIONS | RESPONSIBILITY FOR MONITORING AND DATES OF CHECK |
| ACTIVITIES 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. | INPUTS, e.g., : BUDGET DIHR VISITS TRAINING SESSIONS IN COPENHAGEN | | PRECONDITIONS | RESPONSIBILITY FOR MONITORING AND DATES OF CHECK |

The matrix in table 8 presents the terminology used for indicators for the different levels in the LFA hierarchy. The column on the right shows the difference between the organization’s own performance, where the organization normally has full control, and the result(s) obtained. In the last situation, the organization is not always in full control, because the project may produce some unintended results, and other factors external to the project may also influence the result.

Table 8

| Terminology – Logframe and Indicators | | | |
|--|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|
| Time perspective | Goal/objective | Indicator | |
| Long term | Development objective | Impact indicator | Result |
| Middle term | Immediate objective | Effect (outcome) indicator | |
| Short to middle term | Output | Performance (output) indicator | Performance |
| Normally short term | Input (activities) | Process indicator | |

In order to describe the goal hierarchy and its meaning in more detail, the *development goal* places the project within the context of society and civic endeavours such as, the rule of law, democratic consolidation, or increased human rights protection. This goal is usually a long term one spanning a period longer than was assigned to the project. It is not expected that the project in itself realizes fully the endeavours it addresses, but that it contributes towards them. The meaning of the development goal is therefore to indicate the family to which the project belongs and to raise questions about the long term strategy of the organization implementing the project. These questions are immediately relevant also to the specific and current project strategy: in what way is the current strategy effective in contributing to long term goals? Indicators of the development objectives must therefore be seen as indicators which measure broader social processes than the ones of the immediate project goals; hence, the indicators of the development goals are used to point out strategy development and to signal the type of capacity development which the project implementation organisation must refer to.

To take one example, “The strengthening of the rule of law” may be a long term development objective defined in the context of a training project with the judiciary. The expectation of DIHR project achievement is not that the projects ensure the rule of law, but that they contribute towards it. The definition of development goals requires therefore an overview of other developments in the sector including an understanding on how other players contribute to its development. Secondly, the definition of long term goals and their indicators also prompts deliberations with the partners about the best strategies to achieve these goals. In terms of accountability, the individual project cannot always be expected to deliver final results on long term development goals.

As regards the immediate objectives of a programme or a project, these goals describe the purpose of the project that must be realized in the course of the project period. This means that indicators provide an operational meaning to objectives that must be realised within the span of the project period. Project management is therefore accountable for the realization of conditions suggested by the indicators defined.

Evaluability of Swedish HR&D Projects

During 1999, a team of consultants assessed the evaluability of 28 HR&D projects ranging in size from SEK 1 million to SEK 32 million. Among the findings, design weaknesses in terms of poorly defined project objectives and specific purposes were prominent. The logframe approach could have helped to avoid some of the design problems, but was not used systematically in the Swedish projects. The team suggested two remedies regarding design. First, that immediate goals should be more realistic, given the time and resources dedicated to them. Secondly, that the logical link between outputs and immediate goals should be more clearly established.

However, it was also recognized that the HR&D projects were sometimes difficult to fit into a logical framework format. Awareness-raising projects were often kept at a “general process-purpose” level which made the projects’ immediate objectives difficult to specify. Secondly, several projects concern legislative development, where it may be inappropriate for a project to define outcomes that are overly specific. Thirdly, the evaluability of institutional capacity building projects was adversely affected by the absence of a clear intervention logic for capacity building. In some cases, project designers define project objectives in terms of administrative capacity rather than the effectiveness of service delivery. However, this is a feature common to institutional strengthening in most sectors, not just the field of HR&D.

4.2 The Concept of Partnerships

Partnerships which take place in a context where the donor controls resources may be termed asymmetric. This marks an important departure for understanding the context in which partnerships take place. The principles adhered to by DIHR have to be understood within this context. DIHR partnerships build on the following principles and operational guidelines:

Table 9

| Partnership - Principles and Operational Guidelines | |
|--|--|
| Principles | Operational Guidelines |
| Shared vision | Definition of common objectives |
| Mutual respect | A dialogue of respect based on transparent criteria and procedures of decision-making |
| Accountability | Accountable methods of reporting and goal realization |
| Participatory processes of decision-making | Consultative methods of coaching |
| Responsible management | Efficient and cost-effective use of resources |
| Knowledge | Partnerships based on a learning relationship where country and research information are crucial to DIHR cooperation |

The implication of partnership thinking is that indicators must be defined in cooperation with the partners. “Ownership” of indicators is essential as indicators are management instruments with which organisational performance can be measured.

Indicators are often defined as a last-minute activity that takes place after the programme or project document has been formulated. This often happens when sharp deadlines are to be expected. In these situations, indicators become Friday afternoon efforts where communication between donor and partner is often more focused on other tasks such as the budget.

In situations like the one described, what is important is that indicators are treated, discussed and possibly revised in a process between the donor and the partner where a mutual understanding of objectives and how they are measured has been established.

4.3 DIHR’s Partnership Relations

A key element in DIHR’s cooperation with other organisations and institutions is the concept of partnership. However, this does not mean that all kinds of collaborations are taking place within the framework of a partnership agreement. DIHR can, for instance, act on a consultancy basis or as a sub-contractor in a limited field of operation. However, according to the framework agreement between DIHR and the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “*The partnership concept has always been the cornerstone of the international work of DIHR, which aims at enabling and empowering local institutions and NGOs to promote and protect human rights.*”³⁹

.....
39 Danish Institute for Human Rights: *Cooperation Agreement between the Danish Institute for Human Rights and the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006 – 2009*,

A historical review of different types of partnership reveals that there is no single prototype for partnership agreements, nor one single definition of partnership. Instead, there is a continuum or “*spectrum of partnerships*” extending from a genuine (“*authentic*”, “*active*” or “*reciprocal*”) partnership to a mere formal or conventional cooperation.⁴⁰ One of the historical origins of partnership in a development context can be traced back to the international solidarity movements in the 1960s and 1970s; subsequently, however, the concept of partnership has been adopted by governments, donors, development agencies, NGOs etc., and thus it has lost most of its ideological baggage and is now used in a more pragmatic way to describe a variety of development relationships.

The perception of partnership is normally associated with mutuality and synergy between partner organisations. Key words are trust and commitment, shared beliefs and values, common standards of legitimacy, transparency, and accountability; and similar approaches to gender issues.⁴¹

Despite the obvious benefits from genuine partnerships, a certain disillusion has also crept in over time. In practice it is not so easy to live up to the many idealistic formulations, and it is moot whether many partnerships actually fulfil the expectations of both parties. In many cases there is a distinct asymmetry between the partners in the North and the South, especially with regard to access to financial resources and the control of financial transfers.

Nevertheless, DIHR continues to support the concept of partnership and it is committed to overcoming the inherent difficulties involved. Thus, “*DIHR partnerships are based upon a sustained degree of mutual trust and confidence, in which the inequalities of resources are subordinated to a cooperative relationship whose long-term goal is that of ‘building a human rights culture’.* In a partnership framework, the partners and collaborators can have unequal power. What makes it a partnership is that despite these inequalities, they share underlying common values and trust, and have common decision making. The inequality of resource endowments is compensated by the common value orientation. Partnership is about combining activities and values. The work of DIHR takes its outset in the human rights value-base.”⁴²

Danish Institute for Human Rights, Copenhagen 2006c p. 5.

40 Danida, 2005, Annex 2: “Partnership: Concepts and Definitions”, p. 1.

41 Danida, 2005, Annex 2, p. 2.

42 DIHR, 2006c, p. 5.

It is judicious to make the following distinction:

- Develop indicators in partnership
- Develop indicators for partnership

The former has to do with formulating project or programme indicators, and as previously quoted in the chapter about criteria for good indicators, it may be asserted to be a criterion in itself that the indicators are developed and formulated among the partners (see section 2.3.5). In practice, a number of preliminary indicators may be formulated by one of the partners, e.g., if one partner is pressed for time due to a donor deadline. But it is of crucial importance that indicators are re-drafted and possibly redefined in cooperation with the other partner, especially with regard to allocating responsibility for data-collection and establishing methods for verification. To ensure that this process takes place it can be formulated as one of the indicators for partnership.

The second kind has to do with managing expectations and thus also includes the partner's expectations with regard to DIHR. According to the *DIHR Thematic Review of Partnership*, relationships between partners go through a life-cycle consisting of three stages: 1) start-up, 2) growth and transition, and 3) exit or development stage.⁴³ A common feature of all three stages is a requirement allowing sufficient time to let the partnership develop and grow: "*Partnership requires effort on both sides, and this means input of human resources, time, building of personal and institution relations, risk-taking and understanding of each other's values, attitudes, concerns and interests.*"⁴⁴

.....
43 Danida, 2005, p. 6. We shall stick to this simple tripartite division. For a more elaborate version, emphasising the complexities by comparing partnership with a marriage, see Steven Sampson: *Towards a Partnership Policy for the DIHR International Department*, external consultant, 20 February 2006, including the following phases: the flirt, the blind date, the courtship, the engagement, the arranged marriage, the marriage of convenience, the wedding, the honeymoon phase and the first child, polygamy, interfering parents, quarrels, growth and development of the marriage, bitter divorce (p. 6-8).

44 DIHR, 2006c, p. 5.

1. Start-up

It is important to: *“Devote time in the early stages of a partnership life-cycle to ensure that both parties understand and appreciate what their roles are in practice, the responsibilities involved, as well as the ambiguities and strains in such role.”* And furthermore to: *“Ensure that the senior managers and Board members of their partners are not just aware of the partnership arrangements and the associated roles and responsibilities, but are actively engaged in the joint planning discussions and other forms of shared dialogue.”*⁴⁵

It is a good idea to elaborate and adopt a Memorandum of Understanding in addition to the contract.

2. Growth and transition

In this phase, which can be of short or long duration, all the normal partnership interactions take place, including a regular schedule of visits to the partner. *“It is important that time is allocated for visiting the partner and discuss the progress of the project. Face to face meeting creates a forum for launching new ideas and input to day-to-day management of the project.”*⁴⁶ It is also emphasised that *“visits should always be based upon a tentative programme discussed in advance,”* and that *“the visits should, if possible, be coordinated with other donors.”*⁴⁷

During this phase, monitoring of the project’s progress is important.

3. Exit or development stage

Support continues to be needed to facilitate the transition between the different stages, in particular the exit or development stage. It may include

1. using DIHR’s web page more effectively
2. setting up twinning relations
3. promoting ongoing exchanges and attachments with other institutions
4. developing links with the donors
5. accessing new networks

.....
45 Danida, 2005, p. 5-6.

46 Thomas Trier Hansen: *Managing Expectations and what should be our success indicators (quality and quantity)*, DIHR, undated paper, p. 1.

47 Hansen, undated, p. 1.

In the third phase, an evaluation of the whole project would be highly relevant.

4.4 Indicators for partnership

The *DIHR Thematic Review of Partnership* suggests the following sample of indicators for effective partnering:⁴⁸

1. That the partners actively engage in the preparation of plans and proposals for the next stage of the partnership process.
2. That there is an identifiable mechanism regarding the solution of conflicts in the partnership and that this is agreed and understood by both parties.
3. That a clear description of the process and methodologies that describe DIHR's ways of working with partners is shared with partners and is available on the web.
4. That DIHR's reporting requirements and other administrative demands are available and understood by the partners' managers and financial officers.
5. That there are written summaries of all external scanning, SWOT, or other analytical exercises fed into this planning process.
6. That DIHR Country Strategies based on this contextual assessment are prepared in conjunction with local partners and are shared with local partners.
7. That written records are kept of self-evaluation exercises on the partnership, with problems and issues clearly prioritised, and that these are shared between both partners.

Members of staff working in International Department of DIHR have suggested that the following items be included in a checklist:

.....
48 Danida, 2005, p. 26-27.

Table 10

| Indicators for Partnership (checklist) | |
|---|--|
| 1. Start-up | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to project: identification of partner, compare values • What will DIHR do in the country? Discuss with the partner, who can then say yes or no to partnership • Integrate values into the partnership • Go through the contract; be sure that the partner knows what is in the contract • Specification (annex): what is expected of the partner, and what does the partner expect of DIHR? • Memorandum of Understanding to be agreed upon and adopted (in both state sector and civil society projects) • Ownership of the project document: if the document is written by DIHR, ask the partner for LFA related input and overhaul the suggested project indicators; if the document is written by the partner, help to make it operational • In some weak countries: basic build-up and learning about DIHR values (external and internal) |
| 2. Growth and transition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching: questioning rather than telling, relate to the partner's problems • The tone (manners) is important • Time to talk (number of visits) • Progress report: partner monitoring (by means of indicators), distribute indicators between DIHR and the partner • Biannual meetings about the partnership: have both partners lived up to each other's expectations? • Communication: why don't you answer my e-mails? • Not only coaching, but also product input and qualitative check of products (allocate sufficient time and resources for that) • Take the partnership seriously and be aware of delivering a good product • Internal midterm evaluation (learning from mistakes, getting dressed to external evaluation), discussion of Terms of Reference (participatory) • Visibility: communication and reflection about who is in front externally |
| 3. Exit or development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before termination (e.g. three months before) clarify the future perspective to the partner ("cooperation beyond cooperation") • Be aware of the partner's expectations of the future • How is the partnership being assessed in the final evaluation of the project/programme? |

4.5 The Methodology of Developing Indicators

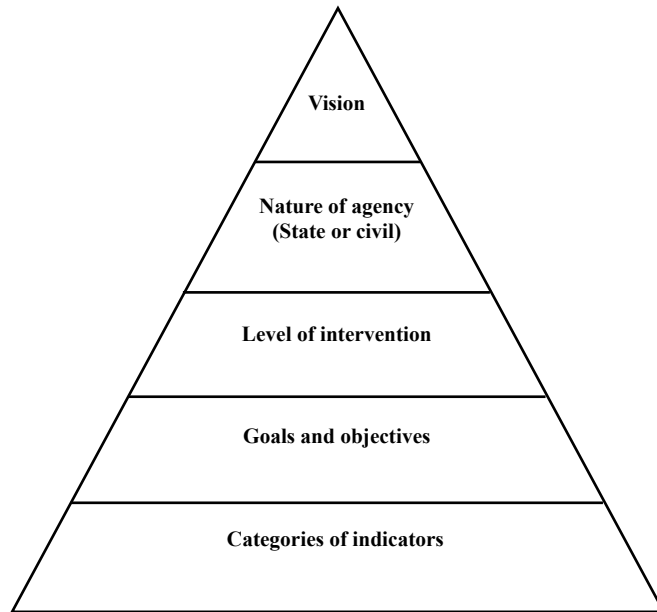
In the methodological discussion below, we have taken the DIHR programme or project support as starting points in order to have a concrete background against which indicators can be developed. However, the methodology of defining programme and project indicators may be applicable to other contexts as well.

Within the overall DIHR vision of promoting knowledge about and respect for human rights in law, in administration and in practice, the International Department of DIHR collaborates in partnership programmes with state institutions as well as with civil society organisations. The overall umbrella defining DIHR support is capacity development, i.e. the assistance provided is intended as a contribution to the strengthening of capacity within state institutions or within civil society. Capacity building efforts may sometimes take the form of general institution building such as, for instance, contributing to the establishment of a human rights resource centre in Malawi or contributing to the creation of a human rights network in Balkan. However, in most cases there is a more specific purpose to the nature of capacity support such as supporting the reform of the administration of justice in South Africa or enhancing access to justice in Rwanda. Human rights awareness may be an important objective in police training projects, whereas access to justice programmes may imply a more rights-based foundation with a focus on fair trial rights. The point of all this is that while capacity building functions as an overall umbrella encompassing the work of International Department, the nature of capacity building may change from one project to the next, from awareness raising in one project, to institution building in another, and to advocacy efforts in a third. In other words, capacity building has to be related to the kind of services that planners and developers intend to deliver. Capacity building has or should have a specific purpose.

The nature of the institutions and organisations within which capacity is supported is therefore important inasmuch as they define the nature of the capacity development envisaged. However, in addition, the DIHR strategy or any other strategy vis-à-vis the sector in question will contribute further to the definition of the planned capacity development. The strategy is translated into different levels of intervention which characterize the work. Goals and objectives further specify the nature of the work and finally the indicators selected relate to rights dimension or human rights principles, or for instance to governance dimensions.

A hierarchy of different levels of specifying the indicators involved can therefore be envisaged:

Figure 1



As the analysis moves from the top to the bottom of the pyramid above, the specification of roles and objectives becomes increasingly detailed. This is illustrated by the shape of the figure.

4.6 A Framework for Indicator Definition in Programmes and Projects

Tabel 11

| Steps in the Formulation of Indicators | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Preconditions governing choice of indicators | | | Actual formulation | |
| The level of intervention | Goals or Objectives | Categories of indicators | Indicators | Targets |
| Regional, national or local | Programme or project goals | Governance and human rights | Process or results | The indicator as a target |

To illustrate the hierarchy described above, starting from the third level in the pyramid there are five steps that are relevant to address from a methodological point of view:

1. *The level at which indicators are defined (e.g. global, regional, national, local)*

| Example 1 |
|--|
| Level of intervention (Regional, national or local) |
| Regional: Balkan Human Rights Network (civil society). |
| National: A Vision for Justice & Implementation of Legal and Judicial Reform in Cambodia (state and law reform). |
| Local: Human rights programme in Iraq: Capacity Building of Human Rights Organizations in the southern part of Iraq and at the University in Basra. |

2. *The goal and objectives of implementing institutions (e.g. programme or project goals)*

| Example 2 |
|---|
| Goals or Objectives: (Programme or project goals) |
| Example of development objective: Increased respect, formally and substantially, for the rights of the individual in criminal procedure in China, and compliance with existing human rights standards. |

3. Categories of indicators (e.g. governance, human rights indicators)

| Example 3 |
|--|
| Categories of indicators. (governance and/or human rights) |
| <p>Example: Revision of the Chinese Criminal Procedure Law & the Protection of Human Rights in China.</p> <p>Output: To establish and maintain a platform of cooperation between partners, which effectively facilitates the submission of consolidated recommendations to revise the Criminal Procedure Law and bring it into conformity with international human rights standards within the period 2006 – 2008.</p> <p>The following two indicators can be used to measure the output:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Regular consultation with other stakeholders, donors and experts, through their participation in various platform and partner activity, and through platform partners' participation e.g. in international conferences.2) The platform partners collaborate closely with each other and exchange all findings and materials. |

As can be seen, the output in example 3 contains elements of both governance and human rights. The establishment of a platform of cooperation is a governance intervention, which has the purpose of analyzing the legislation from a human rights perspective and formulating recommendations for bringing the law into conformity with international human rights standards.

Thus, in this example, both indicators relate to governance, while one indicator (the second), albeit not explicitly, relates to human rights (human rights are implicitly contained in the findings, materials, reports and summaries of discussions).

4. Formulation of specific indicators (e.g. result and process indicators)

| Example 4 |
|---|
| Result and process indicators |
| Result indicator A. Impact indicator (long term): DIHR Country Indicators for China, measuring formal and actual compliance with human rights principles, show improvement in areas relating to civil rights. B. Effect/outcome indicator (short/medium term): A Project Management Unit broadly recognized by the sector institutions as the coordinating, supporting and monitoring body for the implementation of the Legal and Judicial Reform Strategy. Process indicator: The time needed to process an application, or the regularity of staff meetings, or the actual compliance with laid-down financial procedures. |

5. Targets

| Example 5 |
|--|
| The indicator as a target |
| Target: 250 folders with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights printed by the end of 2006 |

4.7 Not yet a routine matter

It takes some time before working with indicators can become integrated as a routine procedure in an organization. A thematic report devoted to DIHR's work in partnership (2005) states that, "*a number of mutually agreed indicators derived from the LFA process have been applied to assess outcomes and the potential for long-term impact.*"⁴⁹ However, since working with indicators has been introduced comparatively recently, it may be a challenge to establish sustained and routine practices for working with indicators. As with any other new ideas, it takes some time before they can be adapted. It also requires an additional effort to formulate indicators and it is perhaps not obvious why they must be formulated at all, or how to use the indicators once formulated. One of the motivations is, "*... pressure from donors and other stakeholders to develop identifiable and attributable measures demonstrating the impact of their work.*"⁵⁰

.....
49 Danida, 2005, p. 12.

50 Danida, 2005, p. 12.

However, despite what some people might think, there is nothing mysterious about indicators; they are simply tools for measurement, and thus provide a helping hand to staff members and project managers in monitoring planned activities.

Reviewing DIHR a number of examples can be cited to illustrate the practical difficulties connected with the use of indicators.

1. *Sometimes there are no indicators for development objectives.* It is not only due to the fact that project managers may not be aware that indicators can or should be linked with development objectives, but also a reflection of the fact that normally there is a limited relationship between DIHR's projects and development impact, because the projects are relatively small and thus will not always have, in a meaningful sense, a broader and long term societal impact.

In addition, there is the general problem that impact is always difficult to measure in any type of project, be it big or small. Therefore several projects have development objectives of a rather general type: "*contribution to development of a human rights culture in country X.*" Soft formulations like this are not too onerous. Indicators, if any, may capture this development, making it possible to state that there is a correspondance between developments in society and the objectives of the project. The project can be said to fall in line with general trends.

2. *Sometimes indicators are too ambitious compared with the reality in which the projects are situated.* Some projects are carried out in such a complex and unstable environment that precise indicators are difficult to formulate, or perhaps even meaningless, and for that reason the indicators may sometimes be over-ambitious or redundant. In other words, the unstable environment in some development contexts make strict planning schedules less attractive.

However, it must be kept in mind that projects are established on the basis of a number of assumptions. Based on the project's inner logic planned objectives can be established and supported by indicators as if these assumptions are valid.

All the same it may turn out that the indicators have been too ambitious in scope compared to practical realities faced by the project. Why then not formulate other and more modest indicators reflecting reality? One reason may be that more modest indicators are not perceived to be in tune with

donor objectives or perhaps because there is a political will to be very ambitious. Under such preconditions, indicators are not very helpful.

3. A common feature seems to be ***unclear distinctions between result indicators and performance/output indicators***. In practice, it appears difficult to distinguish between them, maybe because the projects are so small that result and performance are very similar. One thing which has caused confusion in the use of the LFA hierarchy is how to make a clear distinction between activities, outputs (and their indicators) and immediate objectives (and their indicators). For example “a seminar” can appear on several different levels in the LFA hierarchy as both objective and indicator. If we take an immediate objective as referring to the “increased capacity” of an organisation, then the ability to organize a seminar may be an effect indicator of the organisation’s increased capacity. But a seminar could also be an output, and the performance indicator could be a seminar, just as a seminar could also be an activity.

Another example is the following, where a project uses the term “applied regulations”. Logically, when we speak of regulations that are “applied” by somebody else, the applied regulations cannot be a performance by the project but must be something final, i.e. a result of the project. In the project, however, applied regulations are formulated as an output (performance), although logically it must be a result. In addition, applied regulations are also used as an indicator of output, although it must be an indicator of result. The problem here is not that applied regulations are used both as output and as indicator of the same output, but that something “applied” cannot be a performance but must be something final, i.e. a result.

A third example is measurement of “increased awareness” of X-reform among e.g. key stakeholder groups. When we speak of awareness, it is somebody else’s awareness and not the project workers’ awareness; therefore increased awareness must be an objective, but in the given context of the project it is actually an output. In the same project, one output (performance) indicator is, “*at least five examples of media debate in relevant fora ... addressing specifically X-reform.*” These five examples can hardly be a measurement of the project’s own performance, but rather of its result (unless the project is in control of the media).

Part of the problem may be linked with the terminology: output sounds like a result but is in fact a performance. Therefore, it may be a good idea always to think in terms of performance or delivery when using the word output.

4. *The indicators are formulated but not intended to be used* for monitoring by the project managers. The indicators can perhaps be used by the evaluators after the project. That is not the idea behind indicators, as such, and it is waste of time to formulate indicators that are not monitored. When data collection is not a routine activity, data retrieval may become so laborious that it is not attempted at all. If so, the indicators are meaningless.

5. *Means of verification are sometimes missing, and responsibility for monitoring may not be specified.* Who is actually monitoring the project, and how are the data collected? Is it part of a routine process, or is it an extra effort to be carried out at the end of the project? These are essential questions in order to follow up on the already formulated indicators. Very often it is a good idea to create a “format” and arrange to have the data keyed into the format on a regular basis by a person who has “a name and address” (the responsible person).

6. *Indicators measure more or less than what they are supposed to measure.* An example of an indicator measuring much more than it is supposed to measure is the following: the objective is “*approval of tested principles and guidelines for inspection of places of detention and imprisonment*” while the indicator measuring the same thing is nothing less than a “*set of principles and guidelines meeting international standards adopted, produced, published and used by users.*”

Alternatively, an example of an indicator measuring less than it is supposed to is the following: while the objective is “*to increase the competencies of public authorities for human rights education of prison and police officials and of primary and secondary school teachers*”, the indicator to measure this is “*the development of human rights curriculum and manual for prison and police officials and for pre-university teachers acknowledged and initiated by relevant authorities*”. It is quite normal that an indicator measures less than the whole objective, but here it is not measuring the objective at all, but only what might be called a precondition for achievement of the objective, namely that the development is “acknowledged” and “initiated.”

7. *Sometimes rather complicated indicators are invented.* For instance “*Incorporation of international and domestic legal framework (ratification of international instruments and expressed recognition of international principles, as well as domestic Constitution, statutes and internal regulations) reflects a higher degree (quantitatively as well as qualitatively) of explicit human rights provisions.*”

Such an indicator will probably cause difficulties of interpretation and it may therefore be a good idea to unpack it. Although the project manager in this case appears to be fully aware of the meaning of the indicator, and is able to work with it, it is nevertheless possible to introduce a few comments.

First, linguistically, it makes no sense to speak of the “*incorporation of ... domestic legal framework.*” Secondly, the brackets may be “bulleted” in order to clarify the structure of the sentence. Thirdly, one may ask whether an indicator should contain an explanation of what it is measuring, or whether it should express purely empirical measurements. In this example, the indicator explains that “*incorporation ... reflects a higher degree ... of explicit human rights provisions.*” But perhaps measuring the level of incorporation is enough for an indicator. Alternatively, the sentence can be interpreted in the following way: incorporation (if and when it takes place) shall reflect a higher degree of explicit human rights provisions. Only if this is the case, is there an indication of a successful achievement of the project’s immediate objective.

This example prompts the question of whether indicators should be simple. The immediate answer is that indicators should be so simple that they can be monitored, e.g. it can be asserted that it is better that the indicators are too simple and are monitored than they are too complicated and not monitored. But does this mean that we are cheating ourselves; that we establish a too simplified picture of reality? Yes, that may be true, and we may be forced to accept it. Indicators always provide a simplified picture of reality; it is the essential connotation of an indicator. It can also be useful during an introductory phase of working with indicators to operate with simple indicators, until project managers become familiar with them, and only subsequently begin to improve the quality of the indicators. Furthermore, it can be argued that a simplified picture is not necessarily worse than a complicated picture; the latter can be so complicated that it is impossible to interpret.

Therefore, until working with indicators become an integrated and routine part of DIHR’s project planning, it may be useful to add “simple” as one of the criteria for good indicators.

8. *A variant of some of the aforementioned examples is a combination of high ambitions, complexity and a mixture of objectives and indicators.*

For instance, a regional project has as one of its immediate objectives: “*To enhance knowledge and awareness about human rights in the countries of the region particularly among professionals, officials and decision makers.*” The soft language does not exclude it from being an immediate objective,

because some knowledge and awareness may be enhanced among some of the members of the target groups in the short term. Nevertheless, it appears to be closer to a development objective. The indicators are the following:

- Professionals, officials and decision makers with increased expertise in international human rights standards
- Changes in the target groups' attitude towards human rights
- Increased public debate and dialogue on key human rights issues including controversial public themes (extent of NGO/citizen/media involvement in debates)
- Initiate greater participation by target group members in the activities of human rights' NGOs (including active membership of the boards).

These indicators are so comprehensive that they are either very difficult to measure within the frame of a normal project (e.g. without research) or they are on the level of being objectives themselves. The wording of the fourth indicator is in terms of action ("initiate") rather than measurement. It can therefore be suggested that the project's immediate objective, quoted above, is raised to the level of a development objective, while the four indicators are reformulated to become four immediate objectives, or even better – only one or two immediate objectives. The final link in this exercise would then be to formulate new indicators for each of the immediate objectives.⁵¹

9. Indicators have an in-built tendency to be augmented in volume or numbers from one period to the next. The reasoning goes like this: if we have done X this year, then we can do X + 1 next year. It may be a good thing, eventually, to use indicators like this, but it should be done with caution and not automatically. A routine performance – on the same level as before but actually delivered - is better than wishful thinking about increased performance that is not delivered.

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51 See also Jacob Kirkemann Hansen: *Discussion paper on BHRN impact indicators*, DIHR, Copenhagen November 2005

5 Practical examples

Three practical examples are introduced in the last section. The examples derive from DIHR projects carried out in cooperation with partners in the state sector as well as in civil society organisations. The first example is a state reform project in Cambodia, the second one a civil society project focusing on reform of the criminal procedure law in China, and the third example is a civil society and university project in Iraq.

Below, elements of the logframe documents are reviewed with comments included on the indicators used where relevant.

5.1 Example 1

| A Vision for Justice and Implementation of Legal and Judicial Reform in Cambodia |
|---|
| <p>Brief description of the project:</p> <p>The Council of Ministers in Cambodia adopted its Legal and Judicial Reform Strategy in 2003. The strategy was presented at a National Workshop at the end of 2003, which was followed by the establishment of a number of working groups dealing with specific issues in order to give input to the development of the Short and Medium Term Action Plan of the strategy.</p> <p>The formal structure of the reform process was that the Cambodian government established a Council for Legal and Judicial Reform, the work of which was facilitated by the Permanent Coordination Body (PCB). As the secretariat for these two bodies, a Project Management Unit (PMU) was established, which also functioned as the monitoring body for the implementation of the action plan.</p> <p>In 2005 the Legal and Justice Reform in Cambodia was entering the implementation phase. Therefore, in this project phase, focus was put on the development of the necessary management and other tools needed for the PMU to carry out its role efficiently and effectively and on the capacity building of the staff of the PMU. It also focused on the strengthening of a sector approach to reform by establishing stronger information mechanisms, encouraging common work methodologies and tools, including management tools, through the development of a strategic plan for the PCB and through training of key staff of the sector institutions in the planning methodology.</p> <p>Finally, a project catalogue with profiles of the projects identified in the action plan was elaborated in order to secure timely implementation of the identified projects in accordance with the action plan, and a bulletin on the progress of the reform was developed to secure the adequate information levels in the justice sector and outside.⁵²</p> |

.....
52 Danish Institute for Human Rights: *Implementation of Legal and Judicial Reform in Cambodia*, Project document and Annex 1, DIHR 2005a.

| Objective | Indicator | Means of Verification |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Development objective Overall reform of the Cambodian justice sector by supporting the creation and consolidation of its common and shared vision</p> | <p>Impact indicator The impact indicator will be anchored in the general perception of the Cambodian population that justice can be obtained and that the justice system works for the benefit of the Cambodians</p> | Not mentioned |
| <p>Immediate objective To contribute to the creation of an integrated sector approach to Legal and Judicial Reform, based on the values enshrined in the Constitution, the Legal and Judicial Reform Strategy, and international human rights instruments, to which Cambodia is a state member, and to continue to contribute to the implementation of the Legal and Judicial Reform Strategy by supporting the coordination, support and monitoring functions of the PMU</p> | <p>Effect indicator 1. Understanding of the need for coordinated planning and management principles for the sector, a strategic plan for the PCB and the PMU, a planning manual, and initiation of a discussion on the development of a Justice Vision for Cambodia. 2. A PMU broadly recognised by the sector institutions as the coordinating, supporting and monitoring body for the implementation of the Legal and Judicial Reform Strategy</p> | Plan by the PCB accepted |
| Output | Performance indicator | |
| 1. Project catalogue for implementation of the legal and Judicial Reform Strategy developed. | 33 percent funding for projects included in the project catalogue by the end of 2005 | Project documents signed |
| 2. Strategic plan for the PMU developed. | Adopted strategic plan and a business plan for the PMU and action plans for the aspects where funding has been obtained. | Published plan. |
| 3. Planning manual for legal and judicial sector institutions developed | Planning manual finalized. | Approval of the planning manual by the PCB |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| 4. PCB meeting/retreat to present the PMU strategic plan, the draft sector planning manual and to discuss management principles of a sector approach to reform | Plan for the process adopted | Agreed plan |
| 5. Strategic plan for the PCB developed | Expressed support and willingness to manage the sector approach to reform by the PCB members | Plan published |
| 6. Training of key staff of the implementing institutions in strategic planning. | Approximately 100 managers from the sector institutions trained and understand the concepts of strategic planning. | A minimum of 80 managers from the sector institutions have received a diploma for participation in course. |

Comments on the indicators

Impact indicator

Whether the development (long term) objective is realized can be measured using the population's perception of two aspects: that justice *can* be obtained, and that the justice system works for the *benefit* of the population. Before looking at the measurement, it may be relevant to ask: what is it exactly we should be measuring? That justice can be obtained is perhaps more precisely formulated in terms of "access to justice" and the "effectiveness of the judicial system". That the justice system works for the benefit of the population may, especially in a third world context, be formulated more precisely if it also includes the dimension that "justice reaches lower levels of the population".

The population's perception of justice can be measured by perception surveys. Whether this kind of data can be automatically generated and published in the media, or whether surveys have to be carried out in connection with the project, does not appear in the project document (Means of Verification are not mentioned in relation to the impact indicator). In relation to the impact indicator the point is that measurements in the form of regular perception surveys can be repeated and thus will show specific trends. However, it is doubtful whether it is a practicable activity to carry out perception surveys as a general rule.

If we accept that perception surveys provide valid information about genuine changes in the justice system, the next question is: How do we know that changes in the justice system can be attributed to this particular project? We cannot know for sure, because it would demand more comprehensive research, and the project has limited resources. Therefore, a more simple mechanism for impact measurement must be created, and the argument in this case is that as long as the project goes parallel with visible and measurable changes in the justice system, it is assumed that the project to some extent must have had some influence. The assumption is supported by the fact that the project has a certain size and has high priority among political decision makers in the partner country.

Effect indicator

In order to realize the intentions stated in the immediate objective, *understanding* the need for coordinated planning etc. must be prevalent, and likewise the Secretariat must be *broadly recognized*. When these two effect indicators can be measured, the immediate objective has been realized.

Please notice that the language used to formulate both the immediate objective and parts of the two effect indicators is soft language. The immediate objective mentions a “contribution to the creation of...”, which is less difficult to achieve than to “create”, and therefore it is easier to show that the objective has been realized. Parts of the effect indicators are also formulated in soft language, using the terms “understanding” and “broad recognition”. But how do you measure “understanding” and “broad recognition”? Are such terms sufficiently specific and measurable, cf. the SMART criteria? The answer is given in the means of verification, namely that a strategic “plan by the PCB (has been) accepted.” The argument goes like this: the plan will only be accepted *on the condition* that there is sufficient understanding, and that recognition is broad enough. And vice versa: when (or if) the plan is accepted, the conditions *must* have been fulfilled. Thus, the indicators are measurable, although indirectly. There is no explicit measurement of the effect indicators; they are assumed to be measurable by implication.

Another interesting observation is that “understanding” and “broad recognition” are also *preconditions* for realization of the immediate objective, but the indicators are not selected to measure preconditions. It is not the purpose of indicators to measure project assumptions or preconditions.

Taking a closer look at the effect indicators, one may further ask whether they are simple. The first effect indicator is composed of five components (sub-indicators), which suggests that it is not very simple.

Performance indicators

The intention in the performance indicator related to Output 1 is obviously to ensure that resources are actually made available for the planned outputs. However, since project performance (and its indicators) is normally understood to be something that is under complete control of management, and since 33 percent funding does not represent a situation of complete control by management, this indicator is more than a performance indicator; it is in fact an effect indicator.

Concerning the performance indicator related to Output 2, there is, apparently, a simple relationship between output and indicator: the output consists of the development of a strategic plan, and the indicator measures the adoption of a strategic plan. However, development and adoption are not one and the same thing. It appears that the performance indicator sharpens demand. Not only must the strategic plan be developed; it must also be adopted. Thus, the indicator contributes to the realization of the output.

An interesting observation concerning the performance indicator related to Output 5 is that the indicator measuring “expressed support and willingness” is verified by publication of the strategic plan and therefore binding (in public) on the members of the PBC.

The performance indicator related to Output 6 is an example of a combination of quantitative and qualitative aspects. A quantitative indicator shows that so and so many persons have gone through a training program, and it also contains a qualitative aspect, namely that the persons must achieve a certain level of understanding before being awarded a diploma. The performance indicator is defined with stronger ambition than can actually be verified, presumably in order to make sure that not all persons who have been trained will automatically get a diploma. The difference indicates that the diploma is not only given to people for simply attending classes, but also for what they learned. The specificity of the means of verification gives these strong characteristics of a target.

Below, a SMART-check of indicators used in this project has been made.

SMART-check of indicators (Cambodia)

| | Impact indicator | Effect indicator | Performance indicator |
|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Specific | Not very | Not very | Yes |
| Measurable | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Attainable | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Realistic | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Time-bound | Yes | Yes | Yes, but not explicitly mentioned |

The figure shows that the indicators used generally live up to the SMART-criteria, with the exception of impact and effect indicators characterized as not very specific.

5.2 Example 2

| Revision of the Chinese Criminal Procedure Law & the Protection of Human Rights in China | |
|--|---|
| Brief description of the project: | |
| <p>The National People’s Congress in China has decided that the Chinese Criminal Procedure Law (CPL) shall be revised and that the revision shall have priority with a view to strengthening key human rights areas. The revision is scheduled to take place in March 2008 at the latest. The Danish Institute for Human Rights has entered into a project focusing on the establishment of a platform of key actors to provide input to the current legal reform process of the criminal procedure law. The partners constitute a mixture of state and non-state actors as well as practitioners and academics: the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Haidian District People’s Procuratorate and Guangzhou University Human Rights Centre together with a bar association which is to be identified.</p> <p>The overall aim of the programme, 2006 – 2008, is to achieve an increased level of codification and implementation of human rights standards in the criminal procedure in China. In particular the focus is on enabling the partners of the project to positively affect the Chinese legal framework and to contribute to its effective implementation in practice.⁵³</p> | |
| Development objective | Impact indicator |
| Increased respect, formally and substantially, for the rights of individuals in criminal procedure in China, and compliance with existing human rights standards | DIHR Country Indicators for China, measuring formal and actual compliance with human rights principle, show improvement in areas relating to civil rights |

.....
 53 Danish Institute for Human Rights: *Platform for Human Rights. A Danish Institute for Human Rights Programme: ‘Revision of the Chinese Criminal Procedure Law and the Protection of Human Rights in China’ (January 2006 – December 2008)*. DIHR, Copenhagen 2006a.

| Immediate objective | Effect indicator |
|---|--|
| <p>Increased level of codification and implementation of human rights standards in the criminal procedure in China, through supporting a platform of different key actors and the strengthening of their cooperation in relation to provision of consolidated input to a revision and implementation of the Criminal Procedure Law (CPL).</p> | <p>1) Incorporation of international and domestic legal framework (ratification of international instruments and expressed recognition of international principles, as well as domestic Constitution, statutes and internal regulations) reflects a higher degree (quantitatively as well as qualitatively) of explicit human rights provisions 2) Recommendations in consolidated input produced by platform partners reflected, directly or indirectly, in adopted amendments to CPL</p> |
| Outputs | Performance indicator |
| <p>1. Establishment and functioning of a platform for cooperation between partners, which effectively facilitates the submission of consolidated recommendations to the revision of the CPL towards conformity with international human rights standards within the period of 2006-2008.</p> | <p>1) Minimum four platform meetings convened, and one international conference; hosted by different partners and with all key partners as well as DIHR present in each meeting. 2) Regular consultation with other stakeholders, donors and experts, through their participation in various platform and partner activity, and through platform partners' participation e.g. in international conferences. 3) A mechanism for sharing of all documents etc. set up electronically and made available to partners; partners used it in practice and indicate usefulness. 4) The platform partners have had a close cooperation and exchange of all findings and materials among them. The cooperation is among others indicated by reports and summaries of discussions</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>2. Compilation of relevant baseline data for consolidation, and drafting of, recommendations in relation to a reform of the CPL.</p> | <p>1) Minimum two papers drafted with regard to the reform of the CPL and its implementation, including proposals for amendments/additions/deletion of existing articles. List of recommendations 2) The results and the recommendations have been compiled and shared in the platform forum, documented through reports from these. 3) Drafted recommendations assembled in structured manner, clearly consolidated by baseline data and analysis</p> |
| <p>3. Law and policy makers, key professional stakeholder groups in the justice sector, and the general public, have an increased awareness of human rights in criminal procedure and the necessity of changing the CPL, achieved through strategic advocacy activities.</p> | <p>1) Informal interim briefings with lawmakers have been held; the platform has submitted a final consolidated report to law makers; 2) At least one test case on key CPL provision completed; 3) Seminars/symposia with key stakeholders in justice field held and reported on, evidencing discussions towards increased conformity with human rights; 4) At least five examples of media debate in relevant fora, including internet, radio and television, addressing specifically CPL reform</p> |
| <p>4. Increased capacity in relation to human rights and criminal procedure among selected institutions and professional stakeholder groups.</p> | <p>1) Five training session held in 2006 in criminal procedure law and human rights awareness 2) Evaluation and analysis of impact of training</p> |
| <p>5. Applied internal regulations among key actors (practitioners), including e.g. treatment of juvenile offenders and minor crimes, as well as input to the revision of the CPL based on the experiences drafting the regulations.</p> | <p>1) Applied internal regulations in HDPP. 2) Satisfactory expert meetings held 3) Examples of media coverage in relevant fora</p> |

Comments on the indicators

Concerning example 2, a general observation is that this project has a strong element of “professional estimation” in the measurement of indicators (as

a category we can call it “expert assessment”). This means that, although some indicators are simple and quantitative (and measurable in an objective sense), the measurement of other indicators is based on an analysis by the project management and/or partners. This analysis does not necessarily have to be very deep or time consuming; the whole point of the measurement is that it is based on professional analysis. It is a perfectly legitimate way of working with indicators, as long as the project management team is professionally capable and has “hands on” the project.

Another general observation is that the means of verification are missing. Normally, in the logframe format, Means of Verification have their own column in order to make sure that the indicators are not only formulated but also measured.

Impact indicator

The impact indicator relates to already published and regularly updated research reports. Thus, documentation on the impact indicator is readily available. However, like the first example, the impact measurement is limited to an observation that particular developments in society run parallel with the development objective of the project, and it is assumed that the project in this case has a sufficient size and political importance to attribute to increased respect for the rights of individuals in criminal procedure. Due to limited resources with regard to impact measurement this is an acceptable methodology from a practical point of view.

Effect indicators

Both of the effect indicators are closely linked to the ongoing work of the project group; thus, they are relatively easy to measure. The measurement is not a direct measure, but a professional estimate (or legal interpretation) of the degree of legal changes taking place.

Performance indicators

The four indicators, related to Output 1, are basically quantitative indicators to measure various aspects of the establishment and functioning of the platform. The quantitative aspect can be defined with reasonable precision; in some cases an exact figure is given (four platform meetings), in other cases it has to be estimated what is meant by, for instance, “regular” consultation and “close” cooperation.

In some cases, the indicators contain both a quantitative and a qualitative aspect. Apparently the three indicators, related to Output 2, are mainly quantitative, but they are based on a professional estimate of the quality of the work done and therefore also contain a qualitative aspect. Other examples are the two indicators, related to Output 4, where increased capacity is measured quantitatively in terms of performance (training sessions) and qualitatively by means of impact evaluation. At this level, the implementation of impact evaluation is considered to be a performance. Still another example of a combined indicator is indicator 2, related to Output 5, where a quantitative element (expert meetings) is combined with a qualitative element (“satisfactory”).

The *test case* (indicator 2 related to Output 3) represents an interesting attempt, not dissimilar to a natural science experiment, to shed light on increased awareness of human rights in criminal procedure. The result can be used not only to illuminate the independence of the courts in a general sense, but also show to what extent human rights norms are integrated in the practical work of the court.

Examples of media debate can generally be used as an indicator to show public interest in a certain topic. In countries with an authoritarian political system and state controlled press, examples of media debate may reveal the political system’s view on certain issues; the statements and arguments publicized in the media debate can therefore be assumed to have more political significance (reflecting the view of the authorities) than in a society with a free press. An indicator of this type is used as indicator 4 related to Output 3.

In some cases, Means of Verification are included in the text formulation of the indicator (e.g. indicator 4 related to Output 1).

Below, a SMART-check of the indicators used in this project is given.

SMART-check of indicators (China)

| | Impact indicator | Effect indicator | Performance indicator |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Specific | Yes | Not very | More or less/Mainly yes |
| Measurable | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Attainable | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Realistic | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Time-bound | Yes, but not mentioned explicitly | Yes, but not mentioned explicitly | Mainly yes |

The figure shows that the indicators generally live up to the SMART-criteria with the exceptions that effect indicators and performance indicators are not sufficiently specific, and the performance indicators are not in all cases time-bound. Please notice that this is a very general check. Compared with example 1, example 2 has a much larger number of indicators. In principle, the SMART-check should be made for each and every indicator used (for instance, each of the four indicators related to Output 1, etc.)

5.3 Example 3

| DIHR Human Rights Programme in Iraq 2006 – 2008 | | |
|--|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| <p>Brief description of the project:</p> <p>The aim of the Human Rights Programme in Iraq is to build up capacity in various human rights organisations in the southern part of Iraq and at the University of Basra, so they can contribute to the promotion of human rights concerns in the region. The programme will address three overall areas: civil society, criminal justice and university. The civil society component is the most comprehensive.</p> <p>Few Iraqi organisations receive direct funding to carry out their own activities in Iraq and those who do are primarily from the north. The development of the civil society to become an important monitor and advocator for human rights is slow and will obviously need much direct support and capacity building.</p> <p>The present programme is an attempt to directly continue the capacity building and funding of Basra Centre for Human Rights (BCHR), but the objective is furthermore to continue and qualify capacity building of a large number of local civil society organisations especially in south Iraq. Experience has demonstrated that local organisations are particularly engaged and responsive to human rights topics that are urgent and have immediate relevance.⁵⁴</p> | | |
| Development objective | Impact indicator | Means of Verification |
| <p>Independent human rights organisations, universities and other stakeholders in Basra and the southern region promote key human rights concerns including the rights of women.</p> | | |

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 54 Danish Institute for Human Rights: *DIHR Human Rights Programme in Iraq 2006 – 2008*, DIHR, Copenhagen 2005c.

| Immediate objective 1 | Effect Indicators | Means of Verification |
|---|---|---|
| A professional human rights centre strengthening the local human rights in various aspects of their work. | The Basra Centre for Human Rights (BCHR) staff and trainers upgrade organisational and human rights skills and expertises. BCHR training grow/develop in quality and quantity | Progress reports Questionnaires filled in by local NGOs at the beginning and end of the project Internal review of BCHR Local NGO records |
| Immediate objective 2 | | |
| The general public, the local government, NGOs and other stakeholders gain awareness and start engaging in dialogue/ improvements of key human rights issues and women's situation particularly in southern Iraq. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # NGO awareness raising initiatives grows # NGO advocacy initiatives grows # NGO monitoring initiatives grows # radio/TV/newspaper coverage of human rights # open/public meetings/workshops addressing human rights topics # posters in cities in the South focusing on human rights topics # booklets/flyers distributed about human rights topics # meetings attended by local government officials/politicians addressing human rights issues # NGO initiatives encouraging debate on human rights topics # pro-human rights legislations in process of formulation # donors involved in human rights initiatives in the south # UNAMI/UN organisations (taking) human rights initiatives # civil society/donor/others joint initiatives # civil society/local government human rights initiatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress reports Questionnaires filled in by local NGOs at the beginning and end of the project Local human rights NGO records Human rights monitoring reports Review reports Media coverage |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Immediate objective 3 | | |
| <p>Civil society engages in criminal justice issues through monitoring/awareness raising activities and engages in cooperation with concerned state institutions to support administration of justice conforming to human rights standards</p> | <p>Juvenile justice working group established with broad representation (government, NGOs, courts, etc.) Police complaint forum established with broad representation (police, prosecution, prisons, NGOs, etc.) # human rights training for police # human rights training for police staff # human rights training for judges, advocates, etc.</p> | <p>Working group minutes Working group recommendations Training programs List of participants Training reports Progress reports</p> |
| Immediate objective 4 | | |
| <p>Academia in Basra and southern Iraq (Basra University) builds up a body of professional human rights expertise which implements human rights education programmes is supported by key infrastructure, resource material and linked into an active network with other similar institutions nationally and internationally.</p> | <p>Academia human rights seminar outside Iraq activating Basra University as a project partner # training of trainers for # of teachers at Basra University # internal human rights courses conducted annually # students completing human rights courses # exchange trips for teachers # meetings and tours to academic colleagues/events National university network established Planned university network annual meetings implemented</p> | <p>Training programs, list of participants and reports Study tour reports Monitoring reports Mid-term reviews Meeting programs, list of participants and reports Network statutes, minutes, membership list, reports, etc. Network conference programs, list of participants and reports</p> |

| Outputs | Performance indicators | Means of Verification |
|---|--|-----------------------|
| <p>1. The independent Basra Centre for Human Rights is managed professionally and according to principles of good administration, and becomes the professional focal points for capacity building and facilitation of civil society organisations in the southern region</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # staff development initiatives # written policy papers and guidelines on internal administration, governance, etc. # internal reviews # advisory board meetings completed # local organisations adopted as members of BCHR Completed general assembly and elected new board Completed registration in Iraq as a local organisation # co-donors contributing to financing of BCHR # training initiatives offered to local NGOs and others # local trainers conducting training within the framework of BCHR # local trainers specialised in new human rights topics # facilitated cross cutting working groups in different human rights topics | |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p>2. The local human rights NGOs constitute a base of <i>institutional capacity and adopts international human rights values</i> emphasising the rights of women and organise a number of <i>awareness raising and dialogue activities addressing key human rights issues</i> for relevant cross cutting target groups and the public</p> | <p># human rights NGOs each produce annual/audit reports # human rights NGOs register according to Iraqi law # human rights NGOs each attract external funding above US\$ 10,000 yearly # human rights NGOs attend human rights training # human rights NGOs each initiate # human rights monitoring and awareness raising documents/activities # human rights NGOs initiate activities focusing on women’s rights # human rights NGO information and awareness raising initiatives # human rights NGOs engage in dialogue in media # human rights NGOs targeting local government bodies in debate initiatives # human rights NGO human rights training activities # human rights NGOs addressing women in awareness raising/debate activities</p> | <p>NGO records Monitoring reports Review reports Media coverage</p> |
| <p>3. Selected <i>criminal justice</i> institutions such as the police, city courts and prisons will in cooperation with the civil society start combating torture and seek to improve juvenile justice, inspection of prisons, etc.</p> | <p># individual human rights violation cases recorded by NGOs # NGOs establishing their own database on human rights violations # documentation studies # media coverage about human rights violations Complaint mechanism proposing guidelines for police and prison staff (combating torture) Juvenile justice working group proposing guidelines for procedures of treatment of young criminals</p> | <p>Databases on individual human rights violations Study on human rights violations Publication on human rights violations Media coverage Guidelines</p> |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| <p>4. Basra University is a professional and effective base for university human rights education, with trained staff at various faculties, ongoing teaching programmes, sufficient support structures and with a prominent position in national academic networks</p> | <p># teachers training sessions (basic and advanced) in human rights implemented # teachers from Faculty of Law and other faculties participating in the courses # courses in language and IT, etc., offered by local/in house capacities Curricula for law and a selected number of other disciplines Drafted curricula adopted for approval by University authorities # compilations of human rights teaching materials (reading list, copies and samples) developed and printed Professional human rights library collection compiled and catalogued and made available to all staff # conferences/workshops held, gathering broad representation from other Iraqi universities # Basra staff participating in national university network</p> | <p>Opening of human rights centre Monitoring reports List of inventory List of students at human rights training at Basra University Human rights curriculum Human rights training materials Monitoring reports Questionnaires for students Mid-term reviews List of participants in human rights conferences, etc. Partner reports Network board reports Network activity/meeting reports</p> |
|--|---|--|

Comments on the indicators

The Iraq programme is very sensitive to the assumptions (e.g. that “Iraq continues to make progress towards building up democratic political structures”, against the risk that “Iraq falls into chaos and civil war”), but since the assumptions axiomatically are accepted as valid, the programme can be used as an example of how to formulate concrete and relatively simple indicators.

A general comment is that there are probably *too many indicators* for a single programme (except for the development objective, where an impact indicator is simply missing), but altogether they provide a *variety of examples* and thus they can serve as *inspiration* for other projects in the same topical field (civil society organisations, university partners, as well as starting up human rights projects in politically difficult surroundings).

Since most of the indicators are simple and quantitative, their function is self-explanatory, and only a few comments are made. However, it should be mentioned that # is an indication of “number” to be specified subsequently,

presumably together with the partners when the programme has progressed further, and perhaps with the intention of formulating targets.

Impact indicator

No impact indicator is formulated although there ought to be one. The reason why there should be an impact indicator is that the project loses its long-term orientation without an indicator by means of which the development objective can be measured.

Effect indicators

Some of the effect indicators are rather unspecified. For instance, in relation to Immediate objective 1, it is mentioned that the training shall “grow”/”develop” in “quality” and “quantity”. What is missing here is a *reference point* by which the growth can be measured, as well as further *specification* as regards the quality and the quantity. As means of verification are mentioned, for instance, Local NGO records, which is not very specific either.

Reservations of this kind produce a SMART-check of indicators that looks like this: while the effect indicators are measurable, attainable and realistic, they are not very specific, and therefore we can only say that they “in principle” live up to the criteria just mentioned. For instance, they are in principle measurable, but how to measure and what it is more precisely that shall be measured is not entirely clear in a number of indicators.

SMART-check of indicators (Iraq)

| | Impact indicator | Effect indicator | Performance indicator |
|-------------------|-------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Specific | - | Not very | Yes |
| Measurable | - | Precision required to become measurable | Yes |
| Attainable | - | In principle, yes | Yes |
| Realistic | - | In principle, yes | In principle, yes |
| Time-bound | - | Yes, but not mentioned explicitly | Yes, but not mentioned explicitly |

7 Literature

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One of the challenges in working with human rights at programme and project level is to measure results and performance. Indicators are used as tools of measurement. The formulation of indicators, however, also raises conceptual questions. Perhaps this is the reason why indicators sometimes cause headaches.

Indicators are only important if they are used. This manual provides human rights workers with a set of tools by which to plan, monitor and evaluate human rights projects. The manual contains three types of information:

- a presentation and discussion of basic concepts concerning indicators as well as monitoring and evaluation,
- suggestions for monitoring procedures at the Danish Institute for Human Rights, and
- a discussion of relevant human rights indicators applicable to the design and implementation of human rights programmes and projects.

Indicators are data used by analysts or institutions and organizations to describe situations that exist or to measure changes or trends over a period of time. They are communicative descriptions of conditions or of performance that may provide insights into matters of larger significance beyond that which is actually measured.



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