The Construction of a Monitoring and Evaluation System for Social Programs and Education: An Institutional Challenge with Technical Elements

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The Construction of a Monitoring and Evaluation System for Social Programs and Education: An Institutional Challenge with Technical Elements

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CONEVAL
Outline

- From the **political** and **institutional** side
  - How can we make it happen?
  - What do we do with the information?
  - How can we *convince* operators and policy makers to use the information from evaluations?

- Importance of **monitoring** to complement impact evaluation
  - Are we using the right indicators?
  - How can we explain impact?

- Examples of the **importance** of evaluation in policy making
Social Policy

- Identification of social problems
- Analysis
- Program design
- Program operation and resource allocation
- Monitoring and Evaluation

Accountability
Why evaluate?

- Supports **learning** about programs
- Helps **re-designing** and **improving** programs
- Encourages comparison among programs and supports **efficient use of public funds**
- Improves the **planning, operation and budgeting** of Social Development Policy
- Promotes **Transparency** and **social accountability**
From 1970 to 2000 the Mexican social expenditure reached $9.4 billions pesos

- Mexico has a long social program tradition, since mid-Twentieth Century.
- But it's not clear the real social benefits of all this investment
- In a private firm, you always measure the return of the investments
Decision taking Process

I. Identifying benefits

   Profits

II. Measuring Impact

   TI-TC

   What would have happened without...?  
   Counter-factual

III. Monitoring

   In order to understand the evolution and causes of profits

   The manager doesn’t work usually for results

IV. Who needs to know impact?

   Owners; shareholders

   Not clear
   Public resources
   Democracy and Transparency
Challenges in the development of a Monitoring & Evaluation System for Social Policy

- **Institutional**: In order to have evaluations and useful information, we must change the rules of the game (incentives) taken into account all agents involved.

- **Technical**: We need to have the proper methodology to measure impact and well-prepared evaluators.

- **Managerial**: We need a logical framework, a good monitoring system and good indicators.
Institutional accomplishments: increasing the demand for evaluations

I. International support
   - IDB support: the need for evaluation
   - Receptive authorities

II. National Institutional Changes
   - Since 2000, Congress demands –by law- annual external evaluations for every public program
     - In 1999 the ruling party was not any more a majority in Congress
Institutional accomplishments

- The Social Development Law (2004), institutionalizes the evaluation process:
  - National Council for the Evaluation of the Social Development Policy
  - Poverty measurement
  - Obligation to evaluate new programs
- Democracy (2000)

III. Internal Institutional Changes

- Creation in 2002 of the Under Secretariat of Planning, Prospective and Evaluation
- Participation by stakeholders involved with evaluations
Institutional accomplishments: What to do with the results?

- In the past almost nothing.
- Now the weaknesses and recommendations (summary) found by the evaluators are officially sent to every program manager.
- Programs have to give an official answer on what actions will they implement.
- The office of internal affairs (auditor), demands to see proofs of the actions taken every year.
With this process we promote:

- Evaluations are taken into consideration
- Better reports by evaluators
- Programs make changes
- Evaluations became this year a tool for the budget process within Sedesol
Strengthening the Results-Based Monitoring Systems

Ray Rist

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Beyond impact evaluation

- Impact evaluation shows us unbiased results, but:
  - Sometimes we don't know the causes of the impact
  - What happened to intermediate variables?
  - Several times, results are obtained after one, two, three years
  - Are we measuring the impact of the right variable?

- Social programs’ stakeholders need information in the short run
M&E System

- Monitoring and evaluation are two separate, but interrelated strategies to collect data and report the findings on how well (or not) the public sector is performing.
- Both interrelate to support good public management.
- Impact: Tests causality.
- Monitoring:
  - Sets a logical framework
  - Identifies key indicators
  - Gives short run information on processes
  - Improves management
Major Activities Where Results Monitoring Is Needed

- Setting goals and objectives
- Reporting to Parliament
- Managing projects, programs and policies
- Reporting to donors
- Allocating resources
Logical Framework

- **Impacts**: Long-term, widespread improvement in society (Long-term results)
- **Outcomes**: Intermediate effects of outputs on beneficiaries (short and medium term results)
- **Outputs**: Products and services produced
- **Activities**: Tasks personnel undertake to transform inputs to outputs
- **Inputs**: Financial, human, and material resources
Adult Literacy

Goal (Impacts)
• Higher income levels; increase access to higher skill jobs

Outcomes
• Increased literacy skill; more employment opportunities

Outputs
• Number of adults completing literacy courses

Activities
• Literacy training courses

Inputs
• Facilities, trainers, materials
Some Examples of Results Monitoring

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<tr>
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<th><strong>Infant Health</strong></th>
<th><strong>Girls Education</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Policy Monitoring</strong></td>
<td>Decreasing Infant Mortality Rates</td>
<td>Increasing girls education attainment</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Program Monitoring</strong></td>
<td>Information on pre-natal care is being targeted to pregnant women</td>
<td>Expanding capability of school facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Project Monitoring</strong></td>
<td>Awareness of good pre-natal care in 6 targeted villages</td>
<td># of girls in four urban neighborhoods completing primary education</td>
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Indicators: The “CREAM” of Good Performance

A good performance indicator must be:

Clear  (Precise and unambiguous)
Relevant  (Appropriate to subject at hand)
Economic  (Available at reasonable cost)
Adequate  (Must provide a sufficient basis to assess performance)
Monitoreable  (Must be amenable to independent validation)
Is the indicator useful? Are we going to use it?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Data source</th>
<th>Data collection method</th>
<th>Who will collect data</th>
<th>Frequency and cost of collection</th>
<th>Difficulty to collect</th>
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Challenge: Results-Based Monitoring

**Firm**

![Firm Diagram]

**Social Program**

![Social Program Diagram]
Institutional challenge: Making Monitoring mandatory

- Today there is **no obligation** by Congress to do this
- Indicators demanded by the Finance Minister and Congress with little management purpose: Highly inefficient

- New Dirección General de Evaluación y **Monitoreo** de Programas Sociales, in order to promote internally the construction of a monitoring system
- International support: WB, IDB
  - Create a true Results-based management system for every program
- Obligation to have the logical framework for all programs
Future Challenges

- Not enough (good) evaluators ✗
  - Impact evaluation
  - Monitoring
- We should promote more partnerships with international and national institutions ✔
- Excess transparency ✗
  - Changing the external institution every year
- We still need to link more closely (and formally) evaluations with the planning and budget process. ✗
Evaluation: Concrete findings

- **Oportunidades**: Increase of 24% in female school enrollment; 12% increase in child height
- Food Program: There is more impact on nutrition delivering cash than a food basket
- Milk Program: Fortified milk reduces 26% child anemia, at a cost of 0.7 dlls per child
- Rural Supply: The program helps to reduce prices 9% on average (aprox.)
- Cement Floor Program: Reduction of 19% in anemia and worms among less than 5 years child.
Concrete findings (2003)

- The poorest communities are the least benefited of housing programs due to infrastructure and land requirements.
- 15% of the rural-supply stores were not there.
- 30% of micro-credits were for consumption.
- Childs weren’t absorbing the iron in the Oportunidades’ food supplement.
Better policy making

- *Oportunidades* remained with new Government
- The government changed the formula of the food supplement
- The Food Program will start delivering cash in remote localities
- The new fortified milk is included in other federal and state programs
- Precise recommendations for using the fortified milk
- Sedesol started the pilot of a new microcredit program
- We are more confident on having cement floors: it has a big impact on health
Conclusions

- Evaluation must be part of the Social Policy
- Building a Monitoring and Evaluation System is a political task, that requires technical elements
- It is crucial to build-up on the evaluators, policy-makers and congress official’s technical abilities
- It is important to institutionalize the process and take into consideration the program’s stakeholders for the evaluation process
- Good evaluations are certainly useful to make better decisions on social policy.
- The ultimate beneficiaries of all this will be the less advantaged families