

The international think-tank in the modern age (and how does ODI shape up?)

A Peer Review Workshop at ODI
Friday, 7 September 2007



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The international think-tank in the modern age (and how does ODI shape up?)

1. Introduction

As part of its 2007 Strategic Review, ODI invited a small group of individuals to a one-day “peer review” workshop. The workshop aimed to explore two questions: What is an international think tank in the modern age? and How does ODI shape up? Participants, both in the room and remotely connected, included Directors of Development Think Tanks in the UK, USA, Canada, Argentina, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Bangladesh, and a wide range of others involved in the process of research-based policy development. Appendix 1 (an invitation letter to participants) provides further background information, Appendix 2 (a follow-up note to participants) provides some briefing materials and identifies the key questions. A list of participants is provided in Appendix 3, and the workshop programme in Appendix 4. Appendix 5 contains an annotated copy of the PowerPoint presentation used on the day. The key discussion points and conclusions are outlined below.

2. What is an ‘international think tank in the modern age’?

The first part of the day focused on the question “what is an international think tank in the modern age?” Simon Maxwell introduced this with a brief presentation (See Appendix 4). He focused on three challenges: coverage, capacities and communications. Responses from participants in the room, and around the world, and the subsequent discussion covered a wide range of issues. Key points included the following:

- The industry is not homogeneous and there is no one model of a think-tank
 - The model depends on organisational imperatives, context and purpose.
 - There are different ‘personalities’, for example ‘agenda-shifting’ (e.g. NEF), policy development (e.g. IPPR), or ‘new paradigm’ (e.g. Demos).
 - Core values matter: ‘what can you not argue for and still be who you are?’
- The ‘international’ label is problematic
 - Initially defined as (a) working on problems outside one’s own borders, and (b) working on issues that require international decision-making.
 - A better definition might focus on whether the think tank is governed internationally, how it is networked internationally and whether its agenda is based on global priorities.
 - There is no fundamental difference between running a think tank in developing countries vs. developed countries. The politics may be different but it is the response to the context that is key.
- The ‘modern age’ agenda also needs discussion
 - Important to shape agenda and not just pick up fashionable topics.
 - Challenge to go beyond ‘palliative economics’ characteristic of MDG focus.
 - Importance of being agenda-setters, offering ‘winning solutions’.
- The ‘policy code-sharing model’ is attractive but needs further development
 - Should there be a single brand, for example, linking think-tanks around the world?
 - Much discussion of the need for equitable partnerships.
 - The NGO federation model might be an alternative to the airline alliance model.
- A special challenge for international think-tanks based in developed countries is to get the right balance between country work and synthesis of international thinking

- Strength often comes from doing both and feeding southern field-level research into northern policies.
- Others, however, e.g. CGD, have deliberately eschewed country level work.
- Strong demand for high-level narratives.
- Another challenge is depth versus breadth
 - International think-tanks need to resist the urge to be all things to all people.
- Non-project funding is always difficult
 - 'Policy research is a hard sell'; 'all think-tanks say the No 1 problem is funding'. Non-ideological, multi-issue think-tanks are particularly unattractive to donors.
 - Key is to offer independence, quality, but above all impact. Quality and impact sell more easily than independence. NB This may mean recruiting 'practitioners' as well as 'researchers', for example senior ex-civil servants who know about implementation.
 - Funding does drive the nature of the institution: 'you are what you eat'.
- The funding question is also relevant to the desired independence
 - Funding should be broad based so as not to set limits on 'character' or activities.
 - Important to be selective about funding opportunities: 'let go of ideological donors'.
 - Important not to be too precious, however. Most think tanks have to work closely with donors hence complete independence is rare.
 - Politics is important everywhere: 'if you challenge the consensus, you are marginalised'.
- Similarly with respect to 'advocacy'
 - Policy-based advocacy is what leads to change.
 - Abstract neutrality turns you into consultants.
 - Advocacy doesn't have to be ideological; there is a difference between ideology and objective analysis focussed on a particular interest.
- Note the field is crowded:
 - Approx 1000 think-tanks in the world focused on international development with most new think-tanks in the South.
 - Issues of competition, conflict and partnership are central.

3. How does ODI match up?

The second part of the day focused on the question "how does ODI match up?" John Young introduced this with the second part of the presentation in Appendix 4. Key points included the following:

- Lots of praise: 'ODI is terrific'; 'ODI is one of the leading development think-tanks in the world', 'you are well-organised and well-managed', 'there are some good narratives in the Annual Report' etc.
- 'ODI is not broke and doesn't need fixing.' Perhaps you are in an institutional mid-life crisis? You are old and established; you shouldn't try to be young and racy. Know who you are and stick to it.
- Some ambiguity about the mission. Which model of think-tank does ODI aspire to be? Where is the core ideology? Why no advocacy?
- More seriously, do you want to influence primarily UK or internationally? If the latter, then need different products in different places, ensuring relevance and suitability.

- You are good at synthesising narratives but need to step up to a higher level and reinforce your role. You need stronger ‘propositions’, linking field-level work with the bigger picture. Need better evidence of impact.
 - You also need to work harder at setting the agenda, rather than responding to fashionable or new topics.
 - You should think about hiring more practitioners. Encourage teams to have a mix of types of people, some researchers, some communicators, some implementers.
 - You are too thinly spread and need to focus – themes and arenas of influence.
 - With respect to the two previous points, ODI resembles an auto-repair shop – one model over here, another over there. It is not possible to do everything; need to specialise. This may mean abandoning some things you think you are good at. Aiming to be ‘the best’ at everything is not sustainable.
 - You need to strengthen partnerships, probably not open offices in other countries (‘I am horrified by this idea’; ‘it’s a horrible idea’). ODI should work in a facilitating mode with partners overseas and shouldn’t overly bureaucratise or complicate the contractual arrangements. You should make more use of evidence from the South and should frequently publish ‘views from elsewhere’.
 - ‘ODI does not qualify as an international think-tank, because it does not have an international board’.
 - Leadership is crucial, both ceo and senior management. Hope the Board is constantly thinking about succession planning and questioning its own performance.
 - Core funding would be helpful. Would donors consider consolidating their funding? Invest in a fund-raising office. Need to appeal to high net worth individuals or venture philanthropists who would rather invest in winning strategies than immediate solutions, e.g. the Joe Bloggs meeting room.
 - However good you are now, you need to worry about remaining so in the future, the context is changing: there are more issues, more actors, more competition, more conflict.
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4. Appendices

Appendix 1: The invitation

The international think-tank in the modern age (and how does ODI shape up?) – 7 September 2007

I'm writing to ask you a favour, which would mean giving us an hour of your time, but might have the benefit of being interesting for your own work. The favour is to participate remotely in a workshop we are holding on the topic and date at the head of this letter. If, by chance, you happen to be in London on 7 September, an even better option would be to join us for the day.

ODI is carrying out a strategic review, which will shape our development for the period 2008-13. A logical place to start would be with a full, external evaluation – but we can't afford to do that. Instead, we are carrying out an internal exercise and building on existing reviews and stakeholder surveys. We are also collecting stories of change. In addition – and this is where you come in – we are hoping to organise a small workshop for a high-level group of peer reviewers. This would be a one day event, designed not to look at individual work in any detail, but rather to stand back and ask the question at the head of this letter – what does a think-tank working on international issues need to look like in the period up to and beyond 2010, and how close are we to that ideal?

Why might this be interesting for you? Not because we have the right answers, but rather because we have, with our partners overseas, thought quite a bit about the art form of bridging research and policy, and about the management of think-tanks and their business models: some of our findings might be interesting. In addition, the process we are going through might be useful to others.

We're planning a one-day workshop, at ODI. The idea is to focus most of the morning on the first part of the question, about what it means to be an international think-tank, and in the process identify the questions to be asked of an institution like ODI. Examples might be the balance between research, policy advice and public affairs, or the quality of partnerships, or the strength of horizon-scanning and agenda-shaping. In the afternoon, we would turn to ODI and see how well we address these challenges. We will share with you the results of our own internal efforts and anything else (within reason) you'd like to know about us. Then we will reflect on how we in ODI could do things better.

For 'overseas visitors', we will set up two slots, one of which will suit your time zone. The connection will either be by phone or, if you have access to the facilities (which we now do), by video link. What we will do is ask you to think about two or three questions, circulated in advance, and give us a 5-7 minute reflection. There will then be time for a discussion with the people in the room.

No significant preparation will be needed. We will send you the questions, but also ask you to have a look at our Annual Report for 2006-7, which will be out by then, and perhaps also at a paper by Ingie Hovland on how to evaluate research institutes and programmes.

Will you do it? It would be great to have you involved in this.

With best wishes,

Simon Maxwell

Appendix 2: Further information for participants

Colleagues

Thank you all for agreeing to participate in the ODI peer review meeting on 7 September, some in person and some remotely. A list of participants is attached. The programme is also set, and attached.

In terms of background documents, Moira Malcolm has already sent you the [ODI Annual Report](#), and also the [Working Paper](#) (no. 281) by Ingie Hovland on how to monitor and evaluate research projects, programmes and institutions. At this stage, and this is especially for those of you participating remotely, I'm now enclosing the PowerPoint that John Young and I will use to introduce the morning and afternoon sessions. There are notes for each slide, which give more explanation or explain the pictures. We will probably amend these during the course of the next week, but not significantly.

The logistics of the day will be complicated, and we will be in the hands of the company setting up the conference calls. If all goes well, we will ask each of the remote participants to speak for a maximum of five minutes at the beginning of each of the two remote sessions, to answer the three questions guiding the day, viz.

- What is best practice in international think-tanks? Who is good?
- What's difficult about reaching best practice?
- What are the main strengths, weaknesses and organisational development challenges facing ODI?

For those in the room, we will take the first two questions in the morning, and the third in the afternoon.

We hope the material supplied, plus the PowerPoint, added to your own knowledge of ODI, should trigger some thoughts. Don't worry if not. If anyone has the time and energy, and feels like submitting a page of speaking notes or bullet points in advance of the meeting, that would probably help others and also help guard against telecoms failures. That is optional, however.

Does all this make sense? Please advise if not. Otherwise, we look forward to seeing you and/or talking to you on 7th September.

With best wishes,

Simon Maxwell

Appendix 3: List of Participants

Participants in London	
Barder, Owen	Director, Development Effectiveness, DFID
Evans, Alison	Director of Programmes, ODI
Gelber, George	Head of Public Policy, CAFOD
Goodhart, David	Editor, Prospect Magazine
Jay, Baroness Margaret	Chair, ODI
Maxwell, Simon	Director, ODI
Raworth, Kate	Senior Researcher, Oxfam
Taylor, Matthew	Director, RSA
Wade, Robert	Professor, LSE
Yeo, Stephen	Director, CEPR
Young, John	Director of Programmes, ODI
Remote Participants	
Bennett, Steven	Chief of Staff, Brookings Institution
Bhattacharya, Debapriya ¹	Executive Director, Centre for Policy Dialogue, Dhaka, Bangladesh
Ducote, Nico	Director, CIPPEC, Buenos Aires, Argentina
Fernando, Priyanthi	Director, CEPA, Colombo, Sri Lanka
Fukuda-Parr, Sakiko	New School and former Head, UNDP Human Development Report
Lunogelo, Bohela	Economic and Social Research Foundation, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
McGann, James	Director, Think-Tank and Civil Societies Program
O'Neil, Maureen	President, IDRC
Titumir, Rashed	Director, Unnayan Onneshan, Dhaka, Bangladesh
Additional Contributors	
Birdsall, Nancy	President, Centre for Global Development
Carin, Barry	CIGI, Waterloo, Canada
Green, Duncan	Head of Policy, Oxfam

¹ Debapriya was unable to be connected

Appendix 4: The Programme

09.15 – 09.45	Coffee	
09.45 – 10.00	Introduction	
10.00 – 10.30	<p>The international think-tank in the modern age</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The distinctive character of a think-tank: policy entrepreneurship. • The special problems of working in an international context: policy code-sharing. • How you would recognize quality if you met it (Working Paper 281). • Summary of key questions 	Led by Simon Maxwell
10.30 – 11.30	Discussion	
11.30 – 12.30	<p>Remote contributions I</p> <p><i>Bangladesh, Sri Lanka & France</i></p> <p>Each person will be asked to speak for 5 mins on the international think-tank in the modern age and how ODI performs</p>	<p>Priyanthi Fernando</p> <p>Maureen O’Neil</p> <p>Rashed Titumir</p>
12.30 – 13.00	Summary	
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch	
14.00 – 15.00	<p>Remote contributions II</p> <p><i>US, Tokyo, Zambia, Russia</i></p> <p>Each person is asked to speak for 5 mins on the international think-tank in the modern age and how ODI performs</p>	<p>Steven Bennett</p> <p>Nico Ducote</p> <p>Sakiko Fukuda-Parr</p> <p>Bohelo Lunogelo</p> <p>Jim McGann</p> <p>Debapriya Bhattacharya</p>
15.00 – 15.30	<p>How does ODI shape up?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief introduction to ODI (Annual Report) • Stories of change • Description of our work with partners overseas. 	Led by John Young
15.30 – 16.30	Discussion	
16.30 – 16.45	Tea	
16.45 – 17.30	Round-up	
17.30	Close	

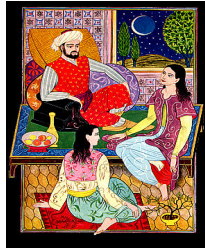
Appendix 5: The Presentation



This presentation will last 15-20 minutes and will cover:

1. What do we mean by 'the international think-tank in the modern age'?
2. How do we recognise a successful example when we meet it in the street?
3. What are the practical challenges facing think-tanks trying to achieve best practice?
4. And what are the questions for our panel?

The think-tank . . .



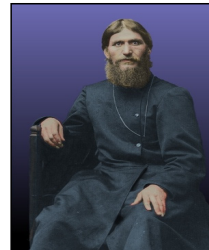
(a) The story-teller



(b) The networker



(c) The engineer



(d) The fixer

2

The international think-tank in the modern age is

- A think tank . . .
- Working internationally . . .
- In the modern age!

Take each of those aspects in turn.

A think-tank works at the inter-face of research and policy. It is distinguished from a research organisation or a campaigning organisation by

- A commitment to research and to evidence-based policy-making;
- A determination to generate attractive 'narratives' which are relevant to policy;
- Engagement with policy-makers and other stake-holders in the design, implementation and dissemination of work programmes;
- A commitment to work with those who implement policy, the 'street-level bureaucrats' and the private sector.
- An understanding of and willingness to engage with policy-making processes and timetables.

Some think-tanks are 'independent', others have a political affiliation.

The slide shows my own representation of the four styles of policy entrepreneurship relevant to a think-tank: (a) story-teller, (b) networker, (c) engineer, and (d) fixer.

odi
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The international think-tank . .

not

Microsoft

not

McDonald's

but

The airline alliance model: 'Policy code-sharing'

Building Effective Research Policy Networks: Linking Function and Form
Enrique Mendizabal

Working Paper 276
Results of ODI research presented
in preliminary form for discussion
and critical comment

3

An international think-tank is distinguished from a national think-tank by virtue of the fact that it works on the national problems of other countries (e.g. an OECD think-tank working on African development) or on problems with an international dimension (e.g. trade, international finance, climate change, security).

In my work, I have identified three models for such work:

Microsoft, viz centrally-controlled, global and (not using the term pejoratively) hegemonic. This is not an appropriate foundation for independent bodies to work together,

MacDonalds – independently owned (McDonalds is a franchise operation), but in most respects, centrally-controlled etc . . . As above. Again, not suitable.

The airline alliance (e.g. the Star Alliance) in which independent companies compete in some areas but collaborate in others (e.g. marketing, cross guarantees of quality). This seems more like it. Airlines talk about code-sharing. In ODI, we have experimented with 'policy code-sharing', for example in our Pan-European project on European Development Cooperation to 2010.

There has been further work at ODI by Enrique Mendizabal on the functions and on the development of networks.

The international think-tank in the modern age

The three 'C's:

- Coverage (of 'new' issues)
- Capacities (of partners)
- Communications

Finally, the context is changing within which the discussion takes place. Three important changes are

1. Evolution of the coverage of the international development agenda. For a decade, this has been dominated by the Millennium Development Goals. These remain important, but new factors include (a) the way China is reshaping the development agenda, (b) the growth of a security agenda, and (c) the growing prominence of global priorities, threats and risks (for example climate change, financial imbalances).
2. The growing number and capacity of developing country think-tanks. Most still concentrate on national issues in their own countries, but many are well-networked on those topics internationally and are also engaging on the international agenda (e.g. aid architecture, global governance).
3. Rapid changes in Information, Communication Technologies have changed the way all think-tanks carry out research, disseminate their work and engage with policy-makers. The next wave of changes (e.g. web 2.0, social networking, viral communication) will also have profound effects.

Recognising quality when you meet it

- **Strategy and direction**
- **Management**
- **Outputs**
- **Uptake**
- **Outcomes and impact**



5

An obvious metric of quality is impact on policy or even (more ambitiously) on end-states like poverty. However, attribution is hard and lines of causality are long. New impact assessment methods are being developed, for example outcome mapping, stories of change, RAPID Outcome Assessment, Episode Studies, Social Network Analysis.

More generally, Ingie Hovland has reviewed available concepts and methods for the evaluation of research projects, programmes and institutions. In addition to impact, she reviews methods for evaluating the quality of outputs and also uptake. Importantly, she looks at management, including strategy and direction, separately for projects, programmes and institutions.

Ingie Hovland has produced checklists for best-practice evaluation. In the case of research institutions, she recommends a five step procedure, viz

1. Choose a centralised or decentralised focus;
2. Decide on the mix of self-assessment and external evaluation;
3. Note whether quality and uptake of outputs are monitored regularly;
4. Capture impacts; and
5. Use the evaluation to draw up a revised strategy for the next phase.

Seven practical challenges

- 1. Engaging with a changing agenda**
- 2. With the right people**
- 3. And the right competencies**
- 4. In the right partnerships**
- 5. With the right balance of work**
- 6. The right facilities**
- 7. And the right kind of funding**

This list is derived from work towards ODI's Strategic Review, to be completed later in 2007. From a longer list of issues, the following have generic relevance:

1. The need to be relevant to the current agenda and forward-looking. We will need a work programme which reflects emerging issues (urbanisation, climate change, migration, security etc . . .).
2. Think-tanks need the right balance of senior researchers and less experienced staff, which is often hard to achieve. We have set out to 'grow our own' future Research Fellows and programme leaders. There are many challenges associated with recruitment, training and retention.
3. Policy entrepreneurship has been seen as a core competence for all think-tank professionals. In some teams, however, some think that it may be more appropriate to have a mix of researchers, communicators and administrators.
4. Equitable partnerships are key to networking, but are hard to achieve.
5. Most think-tanks struggle with the balance between research, policy advice/consultancy, and public affairs – not least because public affairs, a core function, is hard to fund.
6. This is about location, meeting rooms, video-conferencing etc . . .
7. This is about the balance between earmarked and unearmarked funding, and about project versus programme finance.

Issues for our panel

- **What is best practice in international think-tanks? Who is good?**
- **What's difficult about reaching best practice?**
- **What are the main strengths, weaknesses and organisational development challenges facing ODI?**

Finally, three sets of questions:

1. Have we described adequately 'the international think-tank in the modern world'? What elements of best practice are missing? For example, have we said enough about governance and accountability? Who in the world is really good? Who should we all be benchmarking ourselves against?
2. It would be unrealistic to pretend that all think-tanks operate in the same environment. How important is secure and independent funding? What assumptions are we making about a liberal political environment and market-place for ideas?
3. ODI is the main topic for the afternoon session.



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How does ODI shape up?

John Young

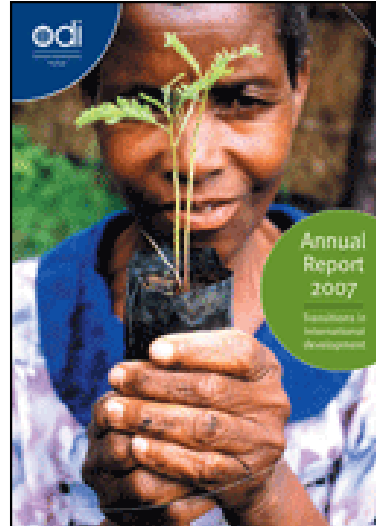
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This presentation will take 15-20 minutes. It will cover:

1. A reminder of the 'exam question'
2. How to describe ODI in a few words
3. A summary of our experience with evaluation
4. A few words on the main strategic questions
5. A summary of our Strategic Review process

The key question.... . .

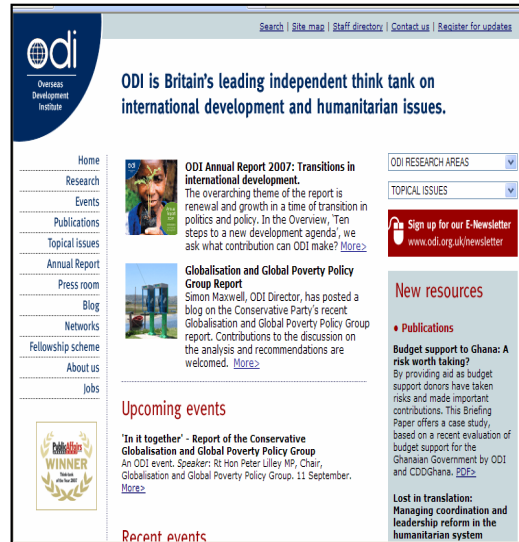
‘What are the main strengths, weaknesses and organisational development challenges facing ODI?’



This is the key question we are asking the peer review panel to consider in this part of the discussion.

ODI is . . .

- Britain's leading independent think-tank on international development and humanitarian issues.
- With a mission to inspire and inform policy and practice .
- Through research, policy advice and public affairs .
- And with no core funding.



The screenshot shows the ODI website homepage. At the top, it says "ODI is Britain's leading independent think tank on international development and humanitarian issues." Below this, there are several sections: "Home", "Research", "Events", "Publications", "Topical issues", "Annual Report", "Press room", "Blog", "Networks", "Fellowship scheme", "About us", and "Jobs". There are also links for "Search", "Site map", "Staff directory", "Contact us", and "Register for updates". A "Sign up for our E-Newsletter" button is visible. The main content area features a featured article titled "ODI Annual Report 2007: Transitions in international development" and another article titled "Globalisation and Global Poverty Policy Group Report". There are also sections for "Upcoming events" and "Recent events".

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So, what is ODI?

This bit is easy. The full Mission Statement has some adjectives and reads as follows: 'ODI is Britain's leading independent think-tank on international development and humanitarian issues. Our mission is to inspire and inform policy and practice which lead to the reduction of poverty, the alleviation of suffering and the achievement of sustainable livelihoods in developing countries. We do this by locking together high-quality applied research, practical policy advice and policy-focused dissemination and debate. We work with partners in the public and private sectors, in both developing and developed countries.'

Note especially that ODI has no core funding. In a typical year, we have over 500 separate contracts with about 200 donors. The median contract is for about £10k.

ODI in 2006-7

- 70 researchers
- Close to 100 Research Reports, Working Paper Briefing Papers and Opinion pieces.
- 69 public events, attended by 4,000 people.
- 300,000+ visits to the website per month
- Over 100 media interviews or briefings
- Turnover: £12m



In 2006-7, ODI had a total staff of about 110, of whom 70 researchers. We worked with a large number of Research Associates. In addition to project research and outputs, the Institute managed two academic journals, and produced large numbers of its signature Briefing Papers and Opinion pieces .

There were 69 public meetings, many held in parliament, jointly with All Party Parliamentary Groups. Speakers included UK and other country ministers, Heads of UN agencies and international banks, EU Commissioners etc . . .

- Hillary Benn on 'The Challenge of Reducing Poverty: Comparing Developed and Developing Countries'
- Benita Ferrero-Waldner on "Human Security and Aid Effectiveness: The EU's Challenge"
- Donald Kaberuka on "Aid Architecture - The Role of the Regional Development Banks"
- Madam Ogata, President of JICA on "Japan and The evolving G8 development agenda"
- Kermal Dervis, UNDP on "Development, Global Issues and Democratic Governance"

The website attracted 300,000 visits per month, and nearly 200,000 downloads. The blog was very successful.

Evaluation (1): external evaluations

There have been a few:

- Chronic Poverty Research Centre
- Econ. And Stat. Analysis Unit
- ODI User Survey
- Civil Society Consultations
- Humanitarian Stakeholder Survey
- Humanitarian Practice Network
- Fellowship Scheme

Some lessons:

- The outputs are good
- Best when we identify, understand and engage strategically with the target audience
- Best when we manage for impact, not just for outputs.
- Best when our ideas are accessible, easy to find and easy to recognise, with good, simple branding.

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There has been no full external evaluation of ODI. However, there have been several external reviews of elements of the ODI programme; and there are also internal processes.

External evaluations have mostly dealt with programmes that are financed by one major donor, and have not always been core ODI research programmes:

- CPRC is a DFID-funded research consortium, led by the University of Manchester, but with substantial ODI participation. The evaluation was a mid-term review.
- ESAU was a DFID-funded secondment programme for DFID economists.
- The FS, of course, is a placement operation for young economists.
- HPN is a network for the humanitarian community, managed from ODI but with relatively small ODI research inputs.
- The other items were consultation exercises.

The lessons highlighted are extracted from a longer analysis, available on request.

Evaluation (2): Stories of Change

Some examples:

- Aid for trade
- UN reform
- **Social protection in Uganda**
- International policy on bushmeat
- Supporting parliaments
- Migration policy in India

.. at a pre-budget dialogue meeting, citing CPRC research, Samuel Wanyaka (Director of the Uganda Parliament Budget Office) announced an allocation of Shillings 0.5 billion (£?) as counterpart funding (for a £3m DFID Grant) for a cash transfer programme and other social protection activities in the next FY...

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Social Protection in Uganda

Targeted social protection is already a feature of the 2004 Poverty Eradication Action Plan for Uganda. The focus of this is on free primary education, improved access to health services, conflict resolution initiatives and credit for poor women. The use of cash transfers as a poverty eradication instrument is gaining support in Uganda, and elsewhere. At the end of 2006 ODI and the Chronic Poverty Research Centre (CPRC) were commissioned by the Uganda Social Protection Task Force (SPTF) and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) to design a cash transfer pilot scheme for Uganda. DFID-Uganda funded the project. The study was completed in April 2007 and has been widely well-received. The study produced a clearly defined cash transfer pilot scheme aimed at those households in the first decile in the distribution of consumption expenditure, with the explicit objective of improving nutrition, schooling and access to health care over a three-year period. Its feasibility, affordability and scope for scaling-up were also demonstrated and a significant level of political support secured.

The study was successful in that DFID have undertaken to fund the pilot to the tune of £3 million over four years. Most excitingly recent news from Uganda also indicates that the Government of Uganda will not only support the pilot politically but also financially. At a pre-budget dialogue meeting convened by the Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (where DR&T has representation), the Director of the Uganda Parliament's Budget Office, Samuel Wanyaka, who cited CPRC Uganda's research, announced that in the forthcoming budget an appropriation of Shillings 0.5 billion is being made as counterpart funding for both the cash transfer pilot and to support the social protection agenda in the country. Whilst this is not large in budget terms, it represents a very important step as it sets a precedent and will help to secure buy-in by parliamentarians. The Uganda National Budget is currently in Parliament for debate.

Evaluation (2): Stories of Change

Some examples:

- Aid for trade
- UN reform
- Social protection in Uganda
- International policy on bushmeat
- Supporting parliaments
- Migration policy in India

Overall lessons:

- Need for clear and succinct messages
- The value of ‘engagement teams’
- A range of outputs
- The importance of partnerships and networks
- ‘Strategic opportunism’

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We evaluate ourselves in various ways, including by keeping impact files and recording comments on projects. For the Strategic Review, we also tried to capture some ‘stories of change’, using the methods pioneered by our RAPID team to understand why some policy-related work had been taken up. The initial cases cover a spectrum, from national to international and from sectoral to wider institutional:

- *The Rise of the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach*, by William Solesbury
- *UN Reform: The High Level Panel on System-Wide Coherence*, by Simon Maxwell
- *Pushing Parliaments up the Development Agenda*, by Alan Hudson
- *The Working Group on Bushmeat: Informing the International Policy Process*, by David Brown
- *Cash Transfers and Social Protection in Uganda*, by Julia Brunt
- *Social Protection for Poor Migrants in India*, by Priya Deshingkar
- *Improving Seed Security in the Horn of Africa: Two Cases of Successful Influencing through Personal Contacts*, by Kate Longley
- *Viral Communications and Networks in Ethiopia*, by Enrique Mendizabal

Key lessons for success:

- Making one’s own contribution in the midst of a wave of other contributions (SLA).
- Bringing together a variety of interlinked activities around the same policy initiative through “engagement teams” (UN Reform).
- Developing a few clear and succinct key messages (Migrants).
- Actively build personal relationships (Seed Security).
- Making use of an approach that might be called strategic opportunism (Networks).
- Working closely with research partners in country (Uganda cash transfers)
- Clear recommendations (Parliaments)
- Sometimes a single research paper can capture key policymakers (Bushmeat).
- More often requires a full body of work and a range of outputs (Uganda, Migrants)
- Key outputs might be personal meetings (Seed Security).
- Close links with key policymakers (SLA).
- Personal networks (UN reform, Parliaments).
- Strategic opportunism (Networks, Bushmeat, SLA)
- “Luck”

Evaluation (3): cross-party commentary

- *‘The work of ODI, has made a really important contribution to putting Africa high on the international agenda. You can feel proud of the impact you have had.’ (Tony Blair)*
- *‘My team and I value ODI enormously for the tremendous amount of intellectual input they put into international development... and has an incredibly important role to play in the development of British policy and I want to salute that today.’ (Andrew Mitchell)*
- *‘It’s very much the ODI . . . that takes forward the All Party Group, and it serves an extremely useful purpose.’ (Baroness Northover)*

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As examples of comments received on ODI, here are three recent items from the three main political parties in the UK. The comments were made by Tony Blair, when he was Prime Minister, by Andrew Mitchell, the Conservative spokesperson on international development, and by Baroness Northover, the Liberal Democrat Lords spokesperson. They reflect the fact that ODI works very hard to be neutral as between the parties.

What we're doing to ensure we...

- 1. Engage with and shape the agenda**
- 2. Work with the right people**
- 3. Have the right competences**
- 4. Develop the right partnerships**
- 5. Get the right balance of work**
- 6. Have the right facilities**
- 7. Access the right kind of funding**

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What are we doing to make sure we're in the right shape in 5 years time:

With no core funding it's very difficult!

- Clear Mission and Purpose "Intent". Perpetual change inside ODI – wide range of internal knowledge sharing processes: TTs, Meetings, SR, BP, Working Groups etc.
- Agenda & People: Very close contact with all actors: Policymakers, Practitioners, Academics & engagement with all. Often contracted to help shape the agenda. 5-yearly SR, Annual BPs. Council. Active Public Affairs programme – convening power.
- Competencies: Recruitment policy, staff development, "growing our own", WWs
- Partnerships: Gradual Shift from sub-contracting to partnership mode. Very difficult under tight financial and time pressure. Network of N&S TTs (Evidence-based Policy in Development Network cf EPIN).
- Balance of Work: 3 themes of Mission, Recruitment, Performance Management Processes. RAPID. PPA funding.
- Facilities: Office, IT etc. Use of Space – "The Space Team". Location. Gradual shift to network / virtual mode: VC, Web2 Technologies etc
- Funding: Very difficult. Business Model. Efficiency. Cross-Subsidy. Exploring new funding sources (Foundations, Private Sector, Individuals), new work streams (Training, project management).

Currently in the middle of a Strategic Review...

Our process: SR 2007

		April	May	June	July	August	Sept	October	Nov	Dec
Staff Meetings	Special staff meetings		15 th				10 th	28 th / 1 st	28 th	
Ongoing	Strengthening of Financial Systems									
	Knowledge Management									
	Public Affairs and Comms									
	HR Review									
	IT Review									
	Systems Review and Integration									
	Management Development Programme									
Phase 1 (April - August)	SMT Brainstorming				4 th					
	SMT with Middle Managers			6 th						
	Financial and Business Modelling									
	Market Analysis									
	Evaluation: Audit of existing systems									
	Evaluation: Review of existing evaluations									
	Evaluation: Stories of change									
	Evaluation: Stakeholder focus groups									
	Evaluation: Proposals for development of Institutional M&E									
		SMT Brainstorming						3 rd		
Phase 2 (Sept - Dec)	SMT with Middle Managers						3 rd			
	Retreat							20 th / 1 st		
	External environment and the work of ODI									
	First draft available								15 th	
	Consultations with Board and Council							20 th & 27 th		
	Final draft available									30 th
	Approval by Board									

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Multiple working groups:

- Business Model
- External Environment
- Evaluation
- Values
- Knowledge Management
- IT
- Information Systems

Broad staff engagement through

- Staff Meetings
- Retreat
- On-line discussions

Big Questions:

- Issues
- Content & mode of work
- Size, Shape, Location
- Business Model, Internal management