

Results Measurement Working Group (RMWG)

Minutes of meeting and workshop, Washington DC and Online, 3rd June 2024

v. 20th Jun 2024

Participants (13):

- Rens Twijnstra (NL MoFA) *Working Group Chair*
- Andrew Nelson (USAID)
- Brian Macdonald (IDRC) – *Joined second half*
- Elizabeth Montgomery (SIDA)
- Hitomi Ho (FAO)
- Mike Albu (Beam Exchange)
- Miyazaki Kiyataka (JICA)
- Peter Beez (SDC)
- Ryo Miyamoto (JICA)
- Saotome Jun (JICA)
- Steve Hartridge (ILO)
- Tobias Zeller (GIZ)
- Alhasan Islam Tarawally (Sierra Leone)

Online (5):

- Jonas Bolzen (GIZ)
- Marianne Schmitt (ITC)
- Michele Clara (UNIDO)
- Nic Van Der Jagt (IKEA Foundation)
- Rebeka Pejkoivic (ITC)

DCED Secretariat (2)

- Nabanita Sen Bekkers (DCED Secretariat)
- Muneeb Zulfikar (DCED Secretariat)

Guest Speakers (2)

- Dean Karlan (US AID Chief Economist)
- Anastasia de Santos (US AID)

Welcome & Introductions

Rens Twijnstra (NL MoFA) welcomed participants to the meeting, inviting all participants to briefly introduce themselves.

1. Background to the Results Measurement Working Group, the DCED Standard for Results Measurement and the role of the DCED Secretariat

Nabanita Sen Bekkers and Muneeb Zulfikar (DCED Secretariat) gave a background to the RMWG, its key focus and achievements. Formed in 2008, the RMWG served as a platform for members of the DCED to prioritize results measurement in PSD, to generate credible outcomes, share experiences, define good practices, advocate shared priorities, and enhance programme quality through better results. This initiative was derived from practitioners who felt that conventional approaches to M&E such as baseline and endline studies or randomised control trials (RCTs) did not work in the private sector development context. Nabanita highlighted some of the key work and publications that have come out from the RMWG, including the [DCED Standard for Results Measurement](#), [Harmonized indicators for PSD](#) and [Pragmatic approach to measuring system changes](#)

Muneeb provided an overview of the DCED Standard, outlining its main principles and its current application. The Standard has been used by approximately 150 projects across more than 50 countries as seen in the [map of projects using the DCED Standard for RM](#). The Standard is frequently referenced

in strategic documents, job descriptions, and requests for proposals. The Secretariat offers an audit of RM system to boost the credibility of reported results from programmes. To encourage its adoption, the DCED offers various support mechanisms including learning events, guidance materials, and access to additional resources related to audit. The Secretariat continues to work on dissemination and adoption of the DCED Standard for RM through webinars and on-site workshops for practitioners (demand based).

Nabanita took this moment to pose a critical question to participants, asking about the overall sentiment in the room regarding the support for increased uptake of the DCED Standard. She inquired whether the group believed it was feasible to fully adopt the Standard and whether it could effectively supplement programme evaluations. Additionally, she sought insights on the existing evidence base for PSD both in programme monitoring and through external rigorous studies.

Peter Beez (SDC) shared the experience of SDC in promoting wider use of the Standard across all projects that are part of their private sector development portfolio. In their experience, SDC projects using the Standard were able to get better results than projects not using the Standard. Peter also encouraged other agencies to promote the Standard to their programs. Using the Standard could be more cost-efficient than more intensive, outsourced research efforts and could also be used to inform evaluation design. Steve Hartridge (ILO) and Elizabeth Montgomery (SIDA) mentioned that they were familiar with the DCED Standard but have not made compliance mandatory for their programs. They usually refer to using guidance from the Standard to develop effective measurement systems for programs. Tobias (GIZ) mentioned that they are vaguely familiar with the Standard but have not used it much. Ryo (JICA) mentioned that they are not familiar with the DCED Standard and have recently commissioned RCTs for programme evaluations.

Nabanita highlighted that the role of the DCED Secretariat in supporting the RMWG and addressing any member requests. She emphasized the Secretariat's commitment to identifying and advocating for best practices in results measurement. Recently, the DCED Secretariat successfully led a [four-part Workshop Series on Results Measurement](#), which was very well received and attended by more than 500 participants (in total) globally. Nabanita also mentioned the Secretariat's ongoing efforts to support the roll-out of the DCED Standard among members and their respective programmes.

2. Achievements of the RMWG last year (2023-2024)

Nabanita briefly went over some of the key achievements of the RMWG from last year.

- The DCED supported the rollout of the DCED Standard by publicizing relevant courses and guiding two programmes towards audits by the end of 2024.
- To enhance results measurement practices, a training course in Thailand focused on system change was held in October 2023 with 24 participants from 17 countries. Follow-up tools and case studies will be released in the summer of 2024.
- Organized an online training workshop on data analysis and visualization in the third quarter of 2023 where 65 participants from different programs participated. Following the positive feedback from participants and demand amongst programmes, the secretariat organized [four online training workshops](#) held between April to June 2024. These have had more than 500 participants (in total)
- Bilateral talks were held with member agencies on measuring systemic change to commission work on developing impactful case examples.
- Peer learning was supported through discussions with organizations like Mastercard NL MoFA, FAO, SDC, and ILO on the DCED's RM work.

3. RMWG Work plan for 2024 – 2025

Rens, Muneeb and Nabanita went over the four work items proposed for the RMWG in 2024-25

1. **Dissemination of the DCED Standard for RM:** The secretariat will continue promoting the uptake of the DCED Standard. This would include organizing short, in-person or online, seminars/workshops for donors and their implementing partners. The secretariat will develop a one-pager offering on how they can support member agencies and their implementing partners if they want to apply the DCED Standard. Interested working group members may continue to share ideas on how to encourage dissemination of the Standard within their agencies and seek support from the Secretariat as needed.
2. **Measuring Systems Change:** The RM Working Group will continue the work on measuring systems change initiated in FY 2023-24. The initial phase focused on secondary research to identify case examples of programmes potentially creating systems change. In 2024-25, the group plans to commission primary research to gather evidence on how these programmes are achieving long-term systems change. This work will be further defined upon completion of the 2023-24 research. A budget of USD 30,000 is requested from the Trust Fund for this assignment.
3. **Measuring the Impact of Green PSD Programmes:** As private sector development programmes adopt green growth strategies, there is a need to monitor and evaluate their environmental impact. The RM Working Group aims to provide guidance on measuring and reporting 'green' results, including identifying high-level impact indicators. This effort will involve collaboration with results measurement experts and possibly forming a task force. ILO and JICA showed interest in this. FAO mentioned that they have this included for some new projects and may not be ready yet to contribute for case studies. A budget of USD 30,000 is requested from the Trust Fund for this assignment.
4. **Updating PSD Evidence Framework:** The DCED Evidence Framework, which organizes research on private sector development, needs updating to reflect current interventions and pathways of change. The secretariat plans to revise the results chain and update supporting evidence. An external party will assist in deepening the research and enhancing the framework's visualization for better accessibility. The RM Working Group supports this initiative. A budget of USD 30,000 is requested from the Trust Fund for this assignment.

Exploring evaluations with Dean Karlan – USAID Chief Economist

Dean Karlan, Chief Economist for USAID, joined the Results Measurement Working Group (RMWG) session. He introduced himself as a professor of Economics and Finance, specializing in Microeconomics. He also mentioned that his office includes an evidence generation unit where Anastasia de Sanstos (USAID) is involved. His work on Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs) was a focal point of interest among the RMWG members, who had the opportunity to ask several questions.

Key Discussion Points

Do rigorous impact evaluation methods like RCTs work for flexible programs like PSD?

- **Dean Karlan's Response:** The RCT movement began in the late 90s, initially focusing on randomization rather than impact measurement. RCTs remain relevant for PSD and MSD programs because, despite the uncertainty of specific outcomes in interventions, RCTs can still evaluate what happens as a result of the approach and the tinkering involved.

RCTs are often considered quite expensive for programmes.

- **Dean Karlan's Response:** The cost comparison should consider what RCTs are more expensive than. Expertise in running RCTs is readily available, as academics often seek to contribute to

good research with credible data, sometimes offering their services at lower costs than specialized consultants. The real expense lies in obtaining high-quality data.

For PSD/MSD programmes, interventions are not even specific to a sector sometimes. How do we use RCTs in this case?

- **Dean Karlan's Response:** Clarity on the "unit" of intervention is crucial. For small firms, an RCT needs enough firms or partners to randomize over. RCTs cannot be conducted with a single entity; they require breaking down the units or categories involved. In MSD programs, randomization can occur over communities.

What budget should programmes allocate for RCTs?

- **Dean Karlan's Response:** There is no straightforward answer as it depends on the purpose of the RCTs. They are not for measuring impact but for developing policy. Determining the budget requires understanding the knowledge gaps, future expenditures, and the reliability of the data, which needs to be of high quality.

How much interaction should there be between evaluators and implementers?

- **Dean Karlan's Response:** Complete removal of interaction is impractical. Evaluators need to understand the big picture and the ambitions of implementers. Independence is essential to build trust and credibility, but evaluators should also make reporting a part of their offer to foster this trust.

What is the most effective way of improving income for low-income households?

- **Dean Karlan's Response:** It depends on the implementation quality. Effective models include cash transfers and graduation models, but they can become poor investments if not executed properly. Microcredit is another example where success depends on correct implementation.

Dean Karlan's insights on RCTs and their application in various programs provided valuable guidance for the RMWG members, helping them understand the nuances of rigorous impact evaluation and its practical implications for PSD and MSD programs.

Next Steps

Rens expressed gratitude to the RMWG members who attended both in person and online, as well as to Dean Karlan for his insightful discussion with the group. The working group agreed to schedule an online meeting within the next two months to discuss member priorities and maintain the momentum of idea-sharing