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Rhetoric or Reality? Implementation of Cross-Sector Policy at the UK Government Department for International Development (DFID)

Abstract

International development discourse emphasises collaboration, partnerships and cross-sectoral approaches, but to what extent is cross-sector policy implemented in practice? This article presents findings from research into cross-sector policy implementation at the Department for International Development (DFID). The research utilised elements of grounded theory methodology and participatory methods of data collection. DFID have made attempts to implement cross-sector policy in practice, with the strongest evidence being found at project level. However, DFID faced substantial barriers to policy implementation including: territoriality between sectors; priority given to 'product' over processes; and the promotion of competition within the organisation's culture.

Introduction

There is currently consensus among international development organisations to focus on the elimination of extreme poverty and inequalities. To this end, many organisations are collaborating to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (UNDP, 2000). The MDGs highlight that factors contributing to global poverty and inequalities are interdependent (Abu-Ghaida and Klasen, 2004; DFID, 2007). Indeed, the Overseas Development Institute argues, “visions for poverty reduction are cross-sectoral” (ODI, 2001:1), leading to calls for traditionally sectoral development organisations and government ministries to adopt more cross-sectoral and coherent structures and approaches (DFID, 2003a; Moser, 1993). More recently security issues have also provided a shared focus for international aid policy (Eyben, 2006)

Many calls for cross-sectoral approaches have come from gender discourse and Sustainable Livelihoods literature, where it is claimed that previous sectoral development approaches have had poor outcomes as a result of their failure to acknowledge the cross-sectoral nature of people’s lives (Moser, 1993; Kabeer, 1994; Carney et al, 1999; DFID, 2001a). Others argue for collaborative and cross-sectoral approaches on the basis of added benefits in terms of greater synergy and creativity from sectors working together (Caldwell, 1986; Cabinet Office, 2000; Mkandawire, 2001; Harrison et al, 2003).

While the concept of collaboration is not new, Harrison et al (2003) argue that “What is new perhaps is the increased emphasis that recent governments have put on joint working” (Harrison et al, 2003:8). This emphasis may be motivated by the increasing complexity of international development with its growing number and diversity of contributors (Forster and Stokke, 1999; Mkandawire, 2001). Within the UK

Government, the Department for International Development (DFID), influenced by both international and domestic emphasis on collaboration has recognised that it needs to be

“...contributing to the elimination of poverty in poorer countries...through working collaboratively with other government departments to promote consistency and coherence in policies affecting their development” (DFID, 1997:20).

DFID has promoted partnership and joining up within all its key policy documents over the last decade.² DFID has also made a strong commitment to poverty elimination and the MDGs by assimilating these goals into the department’s objectives within its Public Service Agreement (PSA) (DFID, 2005).

Terminology and Definitions

There is little consensus and associated confusion over the use of collaborative terms within the literature (Kanbur, 2002; King and McGrath, 2004; Elsey et al, 2005). Indeed many terms are used interchangeably.

There were no definitions for cross-sector within the development literature or the dictionary. However, ‘cross’ is defined as “to move or go across something; traverse or intersect”, “indicating action from one individual group...to another” and as “involving interchange...reciprocal” (Makins, 1992:379). This is consistent with Googins and Rochlin’s (2000) belief that cross-sector partnerships are ‘reciprocal’ and DFID’s emphasis on the need for ‘mutual reciprocity’ when working together (DFID, 2001a). In the context of international development, ‘sector’ usually refers to a

² These key policy documents include for example: DFID’s White papers (DFID, 1997; DFID, 2000a); annual Departmental Reports (DFID 2001b; DFID, 2002a; DFID, 2003a; DFID, 2004a); Target Strategy Papers (TSPs) outlining how DFID intend to achieve the MDGs (DFID, 2000b-f; DFID, 2001c-f); Institutional Strategy Papers (ISPs) outlining partnership with multilateral organisations (DFID, 1999a-c; DFID, 2000g-j; DFID, 2001g-k; DFID, 2002b-c; DFID, 2003b) and Partnership Programme Agreements (PPAs) outlining partnership with civil society groups (DFID, 2002d-i).

domain or disciplinary subdivision of development organisations and government ministries. The following working definition of cross-sector was developed for this research:

‘a dynamic process, where two or more divisions or groups reciprocally share and exchange ideas and/or actions’.

This working definition of cross-sector does not imply equality of relationships between the sectors as implied by the term ‘partnerships’. The definition does not suggest the overview of the term ‘coordination’. In addition, while cross-sector engagement may focus on a subject area such as HIV, the definition does not imply the involvement of all sectors as in the term ‘mainstreaming’. Yet, cross-sector implies greater engagement and reciprocity between the sectors than definitions of ‘multi-sector’.

Research Rationale and Questions

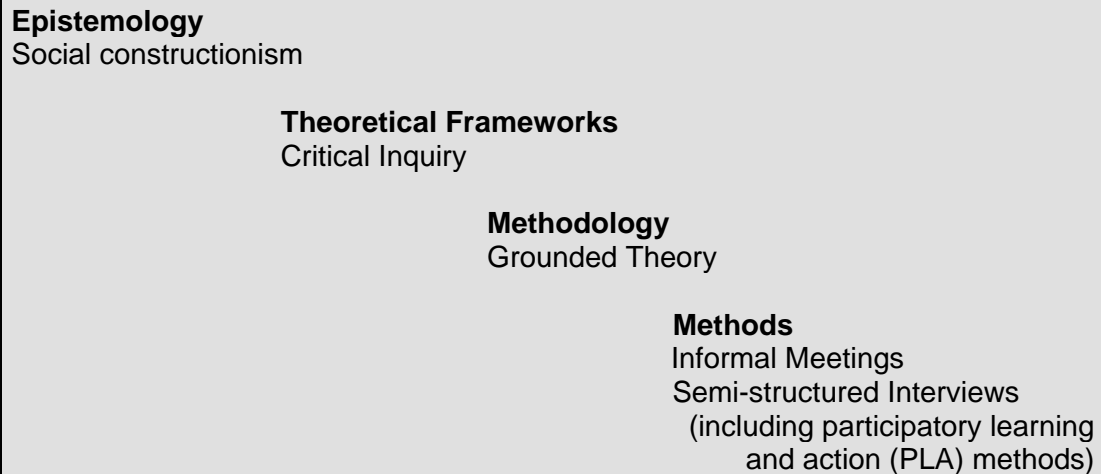
Within the context of a lack of clear definitions of what cross-sectoral approaches are, increasing calls for cross-sectoral approaches, and DFID’s public commitment to adopting cross-sectoral approaches, this research aimed to answer the following key question:

- Is there evidence of cross-sector policy implementation at DFID?

Methodology

The research methodology used in this study can be illustrated using Crotty’s (1998) ‘Four Elements’ hierarchy (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Methodological Hierarchy (after Crotty, 1998)



A social constructionist epistemology underpinned this research. Social constructionists believe that knowledge and meaning cannot exist independently of people, but are conferred onto subjects and objects through human interaction and engagement with the world (Crotty, 1998; Berg, 2001). Therefore, from one set of research findings on cross-sector policy and practice, many different accounts may be constructed, which represent different researchers' interpretations and respondents' multiple realities.

Critical Inquiry was an influential theoretical framework informing this research. Critical Inquiry is political by nature and introduces a degree of scepticism that accepted ways of thinking are natural, rational and neutral (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000). Critical Inquiry enhances learning opportunities (Brookfield, 2005) and adoption of critical inquiry as a theoretical framework opens up the potential for learning throughout the research process.

This research used elements of grounded theory methodology. This decision was influenced by the paucity of previous research specifically focusing on cross-sector policy and practice, which is reflected in a lack of cross-sectoral theory. The research

was informed by existing theories, such as, policy theory, feminist theory and organisational theory and consequently, does not claim to have commenced from a blank theoretical sheet (Charmaz, 2000; Glaser, 2002). Therefore, it did not adopt a purist form of grounded theory, rather, it has been informed by the ideology and principles of this methodological paradigm.

Methods

The chosen research question and methodology favoured qualitative and flexible methods of data collection. Therefore, the two main methods chosen were informal meetings and semi-structured interviews³ incorporating Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) techniques⁴.

Choosing to use PLA methods within the semi-structured interviews was one attempt to enhance learning within the research process. Most participatory techniques are used at community level, but Mohan (2001) claims more transformative approaches should also encompass other levels including development organisations. Data were collected using these methods throughout the different levels of DFID and with their partners. Whilst this research does not claim that these approaches were transformatory; reflection, learning and action were all reported as outcomes by both the participants and researcher.

The specific PLA methods used in this research were a 'post-it note' prioritising exercise; a diagramming exercise accompanied by discussion of the diagrams; and a

³ All semi-structured interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed after gaining the formal consent of interviewees.

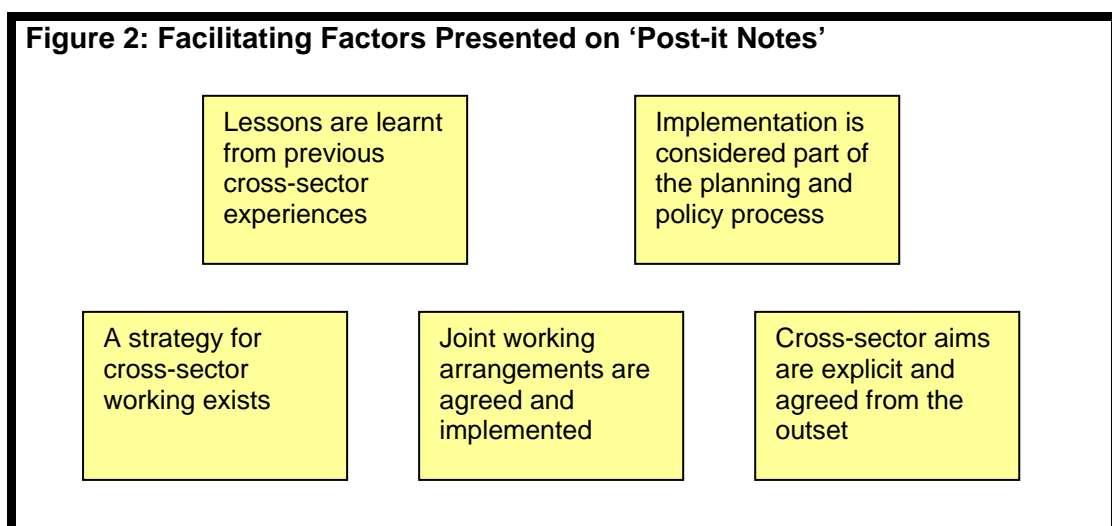
⁴ Participatory learning and action (PLA) techniques have evolved from Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA): "...PRA is associated with the use of visualisation methods, such as maps and matrices, for analysis by and with participants. But for some, 'doing PRA' is less about using particular methods than an approach...that calls for different ways of relating." (Cornwall and Pratt, 2002:1). PRA in turn evolved from Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA): 'both a philosophy and a methodology for incorporating the voices of the poor...' (Robb, 2004). The PLA approach, meanwhile, emphasises learning and action as integral to the research process.

word brainstorming exercise. These chosen methods combined to encompass the individual learning styles of respondents (Kolb, 1976; Honey and Mumford, 2006).

Post-it Note Prioritising Exercise

In the 'post-it note' prioritising exercise, individuals were presented with two sheets of paper. On one sheet, the attached five post-it notes each contained a statement that was a potential facilitating factor for cross-sectoral approaches (see Figure 2). On the other sheet, five post-it notes each contained a statement that was a potential barrier to cross-sectoral approaches (see Figure 3)⁵.

Participants were asked to remove any statements with which they strongly disagreed and to add any facilitators or barriers they thought were missing from the sheets. Finally they were asked to prioritise two facilitating statements and two barriers that in their experience were the most important factors influencing cross-sectoral approaches.



⁵ Several authors identify possible collaborative facilitators and barriers (Cabinet Office, 1999; Cabinet Office, 2000; Bullock et al, 2001; Bird and Koirala, 2002; Harrison et al, 2003). These statements are adapted from these sources.

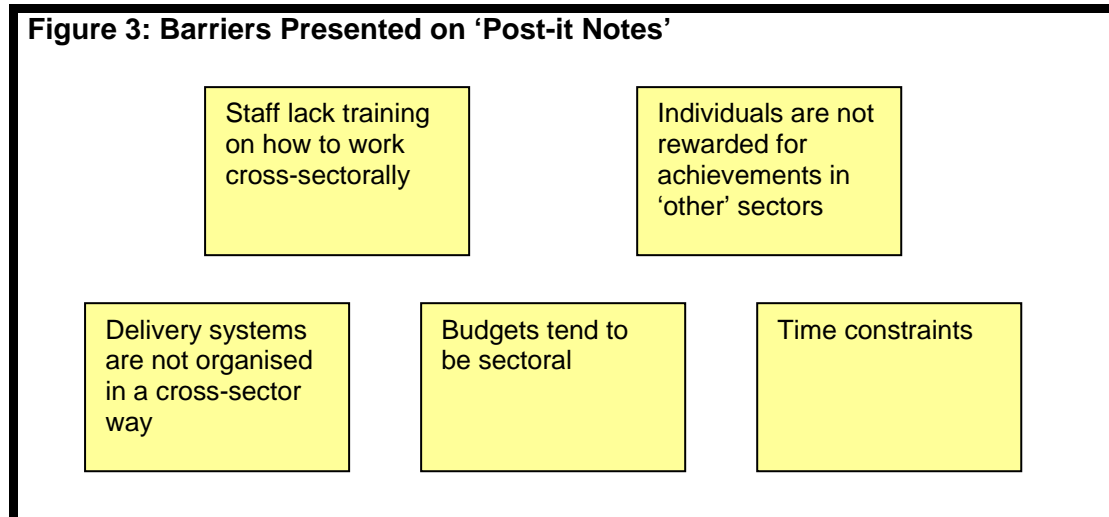


Diagram Exercise

In this exercise, interviewees were asked to represent visually, an example of either cross-sector 'good practice' or a cross-sectoral approach that had resulted in learning. Interviewees were asked to illustrate the relationships and processes involved. Although there are numerous PLA visual tools such as Venn diagrams and spider diagrams useful for representing cross-sectoral relationships and processes, respondents were unprompted in generating visual illustrations to represent their own ideas. The diagram examples were discussed, providing contextual explanation.

Word Brainstorming Exercise

The third participatory method employed in this study, was a 'word brainstorming' exercise. Interviewees were asked to brainstorm five words to describe the policy environment at DFID. These were used as the basis for a short discussion of the DFID policy environment in relation to cross-sector policy and practice.

Research Sample and Settings

DFID is made up of many different managerial and operational levels within the UK and overseas that have diverse identities: what McGrath (2002) called 'multiple DFIDs'. Therefore this research investigated the translation of calls for cross-sector

policy into cross-sector practice throughout the different layers of DFID in the UK and at 'country level' in Nepal.

Interviewees were selected purposively and opportunistically, in an attempt to ensure that the 'multiple DFIDs' and their partners were represented.⁶ Key staff were identified at an early stage of the research. Other interviewees were identified through an opportunistic 'snowballing' technique by asking respondents for relevant and appropriate contacts.

30 semi-structured interviews and 93 informal meetings were carried out at:

- DFID offices in the UK and Nepal;
- DFID funded projects in Nepal; and
- Nepali Government offices in Kathmandu and Rupandehi District⁷

and with:

- development consultants, contracted managers and advisors of DFID Nepal projects in the UK and Nepal;
- DFID Nepal partners including donors, NonGovernmental Organisations, and consultants in Kathmandu & Rupandehi District; and
- academic staff with specialist interest in DFID and/or international development.

Research Stages

This research had four phases of data collection: In stage one, the semi-structured interview schedule was piloted in the UK. Stage two consisted of six weeks of data

⁶ In the past, international development activity has often focused on and utilised projects. More recent international aid policies have favoured the promotion of partnership with country governments (Hinton and Groves, 2004; Mosse, 2005; Eyben, 2006). Yet, both government partnership and the use of projects are modes of development that currently co-exist. Therefore, data was collected from both Nepali government partners as well as with DFID-funded projects.

⁷ Rupandehi District is located in the Terai (Southern Nepali plains that extend to the Northern plains of India), where the DFID projects chosen for study all had district offices. This district was also relatively unaffected by the ongoing civil conflict in Nepal at the time data collection took place in 2002/2003.

collection at the DFID London office and with DFID partners in the UK. Stage three comprised six months data collection in Nepal with DFID Nepal office staff and partners, and stage four comprised one week of data collection at the DFID London office. Some opportunistic and supplementary informal meetings were held outwith these stages. The research followed an iterative process of praxis, emphasising reflection and further research action based on this reflection.

Key Findings

Evidence and Examples from different levels of DFID

In the 123 interviews and meetings, nearly all respondents struggled to give any examples of cross-sectoral policy statements being implemented at DFID. About a third of the examples described, demonstrated poor cross-sectoral practice and persistence of sectoral approaches. Many other examples more accurately portrayed multi-sectoral approaches.

DFID London

At DFID London, general collaboration between the different divisions and sectors was reported: "...it rarely happens that you write a document without close consultation with other people, not that it wouldn't be possible to do that within the organisation..." [INT 02]

Two respondents described a model known as the 'Triangle of Skills' (Robinson and Manandhar, 2001; Chakrabarti et al, 2002). The model was developed in response to debate about whether DFID needs to move away from disciplinary staff towards more generic development workers. One respondent drew a diagram of the triangle of skills to illustrate cross-sector policy and practice at DFID. Another respondent

suggested the skills triangle could be DFID's strategy for cross-sector policy and practice, although acknowledged this was not explicitly stated by DFID.

Eight respondents referred to the restructuring of Policy Division at DFID London in 2002-03 and its aims of increasing cross-sectorality. Since the restructuring, cross-sector working was reported to have improved although the new teams retained the dominance of particular disciplines and skills particularly in economics and statistics. Consistent with the literature, staff reported that sectoral, specialist disciplinary expertise was still crucial to cross-sectoral approaches (Petrie, 1976; DFID, 2001a; Harriss, 2002). In reality, Policy Division changes were not thought to be strictly cross-sectoral as there were no sectors left; it was more accurately team working. Most of the respondents describing the Policy Division review, remained unconvinced that the changes would be effective in enhancing cross-sectorality:

"...we are...restructuring in a way which means there is more incentive and greater flexibility within the structure to enable...different groups to work together, in...a...cross-sectoral way...the structure isn't going to do it...How do you actually get people to make that shift in mindset about working together in a more interdisciplinary, intersectoral way?...just rejigging things as to how we're organised isn't going to do it. It just means you basically throw everything up and it all comes down again in a slightly different configuration but basically, the same methods of working are entrenched" [INT 03].

Three respondents mentioned the DFID London HIV Strategy Task Force and three other respondents mentioned the DFID London Maternal Mortality Reduction Task Force. These groups were described by some staff as excellent, whilst others criticised the meetings for domination by particular sectors and lack of agreement over budgets, goals and approaches.

DFID Nepal

At DFID Nepal, only one example was given outlining cross-sector practice at this level of DFID. The 'Core Team Working' model is a set of guidelines for working cross-sectorally where no more than three staff work in a team at one time, but pull other expertise into the group as and when it is necessary or beneficial (DFID Nepal, 2000). Despite documentary support for this approach, only one respondent out of 11 respondents at DFID Nepal mentioned this example. Another member of DFID Nepal staff commented "we are still in the very early stages of working in teams" [INT 22].

Nepali Government

At the level of collaboration between the Nepali Government, DFID Nepal and DFID funded projects, two meetings were offered as examples of collaboration. The Nepal National Reproductive Health Coordinating Committee was described by five respondents and the Nepal National HIV Strategy Group by six respondents. Both of these examples were strongly criticised for appearing to be examples of good cross-sector collaboration on paper, but in reality demonstrating poor practice. Diagrams and accompanying discussion described a lack of continuity between meeting agendas, disruptive behaviour in the meetings, health sector dominance, and policy implementation problems.

DFID Funded Projects

Most examples of cross-sectoral connections described by respondents were at project level. Around a third of respondents from all levels of DFID and their partners, reported greater levels of cross-sector policy and practice at project level, particularly within districts: "here in London...we've lagged behind what happens at country and programme level...it's easier in smaller teams..." [INT 09]

Several project level staff claimed cross-sectoral approaches were the most appropriate way to approach development. DFID funded projects in Kathmandu and at district level reported a degree of flexibility in patterns of working, which were not as evident at higher levels of the DFID hierarchy. This flexibility was thought to give staff freedom to adopt cross-sectoral working suitable for achieving beneficial community impacts. Also the smaller scale upon which work is undertaken at project level was thought to contribute to increased cross-sectorality through the need for reciprocity and for sharing resources and service delivery mechanisms: "...sharing lessons learned and information, ways of working...informal collaborations...who can we talk to, who can we learn from and who is on the ground already" [INT 06].

Facilitating Factors

According to responses from the 'post-it note' exercise, the most important facilitating factor for cross-sectoral approaches was that 'implementation is considered part of the planning and policy process'. Participants also identified additional facilitating factors: 'top management support, champions and political commitment' and 'being clear about the aims and added value of cross-sector approaches'.

From the word brainstorming exercise, participants described DFID as 'focused', 'participatory' and 'consultative'. These three characteristics were viewed positively in discussions with respondents and were thought to be conducive to cross-sector policy implementation. However, other contradictory contributions included participants describing DFID as 'unfocused' and 'non participatory' and other respondents described the inadequate nature of consultative processes at DFID:

Despite the presence of some positive facilitating factors for cross-sectoral engagement, the overwhelming theme within participants' responses referred to a

significant gap between the rhetoric and reality of cross-sector policy and practice due to a number of substantial barriers.

Barriers to Cross-sector Policy Implementation

Within the post-it note exercise, the most important barrier identified was 'budgets tend to be sectoral'. Within this exercise, participants also identified additional barriers including: structural issues of power, top down bureaucracy and hierarchy and donors and sectors having different priorities and procedures leading to a lack of consistency and agreement.

Other barriers to cross-sector policy implementation were mentioned by respondents during interviews and meetings. These included:

1. disciplinarity and territoriality
2. a disjuncture between DFID's multiple roles
3. DFID's concentration on end products
4. DFID's support for central government focused development such as Sector Wide Approaches (SWAPs) and their move away from project focused development
5. DFID's competitive policy environment
6. poor communication between the multiple DFIDs

These barriers are explained briefly here.

Disciplinarity was the most frequently mentioned barrier, with over a third of respondents describing problems with disciplinarity and territoriality between the sectors and between individual representatives from those sectors. There were many reports of health sector domination through both the hegemony of their viewpoint and marginalisation of other sectors. This was cited as a factor both within DFID and among their partners.

Although less frequently mentioned, the barriers 2) to 5) were emphasised with a strength of opinion by respondents. DFID was described as having a lack of congruence between its role as part of the UK government political bureaucracy, which is market oriented, speaks the language of business and is strongly results focused, and on the other hand, the organisation's development role that emphasises pro-poor development, is people focused and cross-sectoral. Respondents argued that the bureaucratic political orientation dominates DFID's agenda and therefore relegates cross-sectoral and people centred development to a lower priority level.

Respondents commented negatively about DFID's concentration on achieving an 'end product' within short time frames. DFID's documents also emphasise quantification and outcomes with little emphasis on processes such as cross-sector approaches. In this context, cross-sectoral processes, are viewed predominantly as a means to an end and there is little attention paid to conceptualising and understanding the processes themselves.

Respondents were also outspoken about DFID's support of central governments as an approach to development, for example, their pursuit of Sector Wide Approaches (SWAs). Simultaneous calls for sectoral and cross-sectoral approaches were thought to make both less likely to succeed. The current trend for 'scaling up' from projects to programmes and central government support was also criticised for moving development away from project level development, where most implementation of cross-sector practice was reported to be taking place.

When respondents were asked about DFID's policy environment, the overwhelming sense from the data gathered in the word exercise was a negative one. The most

commonly cited word given by respondents was 'competitive', but there were also themes encompassing arrogance, isolation, confusion and top down approaches.

Barrier number 6) was raised by a small number of respondents, but was also observed by the researcher during the course of the research process. Poor communication between the 'multiple DFIDs' was thought to act as a barrier to implementing cross-sectoral approaches. Among respondents, there was a lack of awareness of key UK Government policy documents calling for cross-sectoral and collaborative working. No strong messages of support or operational guidance for cross-sectoral approaches were being communicated from DFID London to other parts of the organisation or their partners. There were no DFID Nepal documents calling for cross-sectoral approaches. Perhaps of most concern were the reports that cross-sectoral approaches at project level were not supported by DFID Nepal staff:

"...we've got an evaluation that's going on now and I'm not sure that the cross-sectoral impact is being even thought about, even though we have advised that it is thought about...It's likely that it's only the direct impact, direct beneficiaries of your programme that are going to be looked at, even though quite a significant impact that we've had...has been on other sectors"
[INT 14].

Indeed, several staff argued that where cross-sectoral approaches were being adopted at project level in Nepal: "...it is in spite of and not with, but outside of DFID"
[INT 08].

Discussion

The findings present a mixed picture of cross-sector policy implementation at DFID. On the one hand, there are examples of DFID adapting structures to enhance cross-sector working. On the other hand, respondents talked of many negative elements of

the DFID organisational culture and of a lack of commitment to implementing cross-sector policy in practice. In order to clarify these results, discussion focuses on three key questions: (1) To what extent is cross-sector policy implemented at DFID?; (2) What is the nature of the barriers to cross-sector implementation?; and (3) Why is the rhetoric not matched by reality?

(1) To what extent is cross-sector policy implemented at DFID?

DFID have made attempts to enhance cross-sectoral approaches. The major structural changes within Policy Division at DFID London and the development of the 'Triangle of Skills' as a tool for discussion are two examples. However, even these examples raise some concerns. Whilst some DFID London staff pointed to the Policy Division Review as an example of good practice to enhance cross-sectoral working, official documentation listed other key reasons why this reorganisation was taking place with interdisciplinary working being only one of a number of goals (Manning, 2002). Some staff found the Triangle of Skills model useful conceptually and certainly it was intended as a theoretical model to stimulate debate. However, the majority of the cross-sectoral examples presented by DFID London staff were also theoretical, describing how sectors should link up rather than outlining actual linkages.

In determining to what extent cross-sector policy has been implemented at DFID, the greater cross-sectoral activity at project level is of interest. Although it might be expected that implementation of policy takes place on a greater scale at project level due to the focus on practice rather than policy making, policy implementation should be taking place and supported throughout the organisation. The key advantages at project level were identified as flexibility and reciprocity due to the smaller scale on which people operate. However, DFID funded projects are the part of DFID that least identify as part of the organisation. Few project staff described themselves as DFID staff with most affiliating themselves to the named project or the organisation

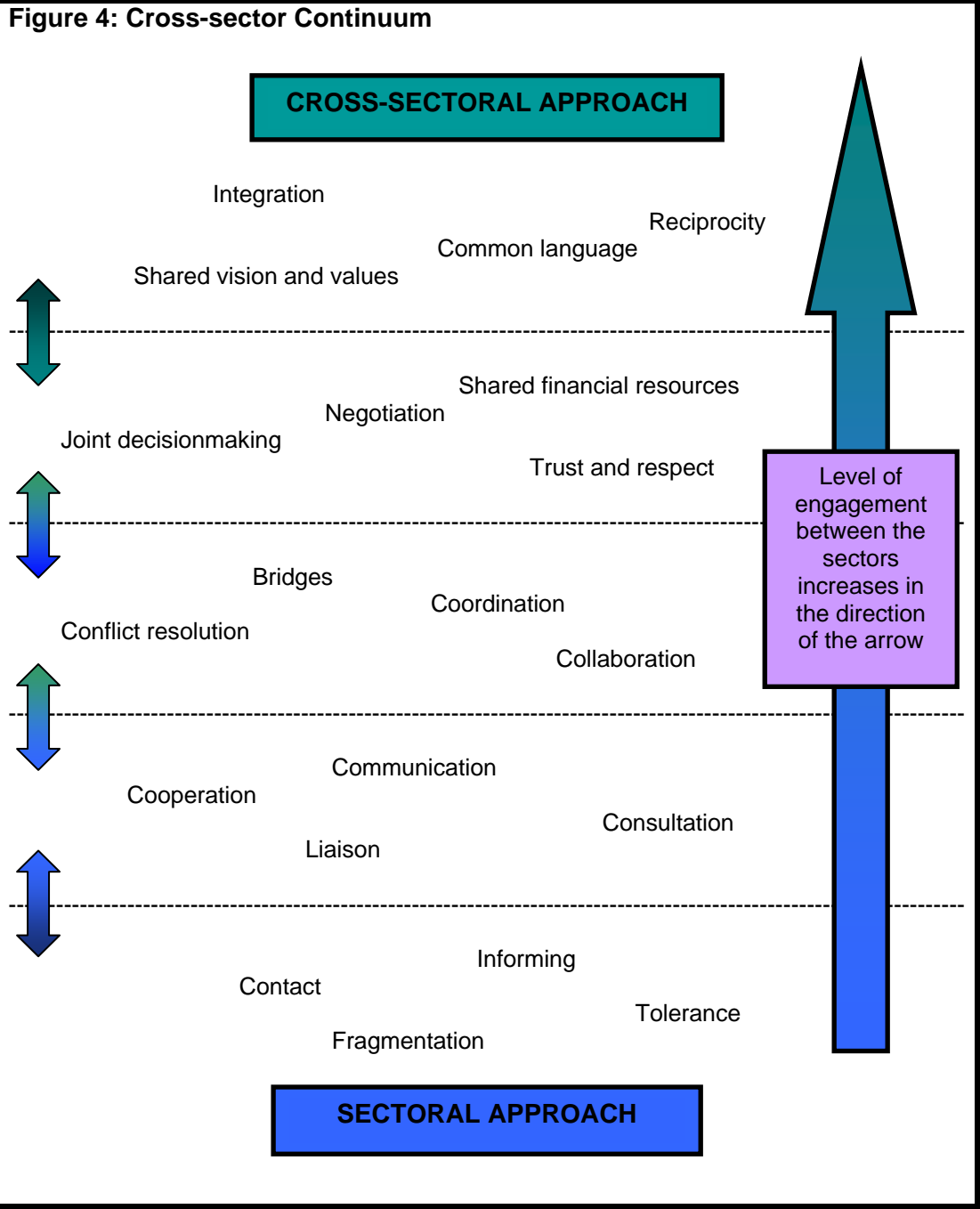
contracted by DFID to manage the project. Reports of projects working cross-sectorally 'in spite' of DFID and projects being directed by DFID to resort to sectoral working in order to achieve targets, raise questions about DFID's commitment to cross-sectoral approaches.

The Cross-sector Continuum

In the examples given by respondents, a consistent theme emerged of the different possible levels of cross-sectoral engagement. This was suggestive of a cross-sector continuum (see Figure 4). This visual representation of cross-sectoral engagement draws on the work of Arnstein (1969) and Handy (1993, 1991).

The continuum presents different possible levels of cross-sectoral engagement, which were subjectively arranged by the researcher in order from lower levels of cross-sector engagement at the bottom, to deeper and stronger levels of engagement at the top. The large arrow represents this increasing level of cross-sectorality. The small arrows suggest that this continuum is dynamic and that all of these levels within the continuum are fluid and can be perceived and interpreted in multiple ways. This is, therefore, only one possible version of a cross-sector continuum. Individuals and sectors may not share definitions, or may choose to interpret definitions differently resulting in different levels of engagement.

The continuum was devised in the late stages of the research, which unfortunately precluded using the continuum as a tool for discussion among respondents and prevented getting feedback on the continuum's utility. Nevertheless, it was used to inform and guide the research. Participants' responses suggested most cross-sectoral activity at DFID is clustered around the bottom of the continuum in lower levels of cross-sectoral engagement.



The continuum proposed here is not intended to suggest that the top is somehow 'better' than the bottom, but rather, that different initiatives may aim for different levels of cross-sectorality to suit the particular work, timescale, number of sectors involved, existing relationships and context. The continuum is merely intended to serve as a representative and illustrative example of the different possible levels of cross-sectorality. It is a visual tool that, along with other diagramming methods

utilised during data collection, could be used at different stages of collaboration to stimulate discussion, to help negotiate roles, responsibilities and expectations, to increase awareness of possible differences in sectors' perceptions, and possibly even to contribute to conflict resolution in cross-sectoral practice.

(2) What is the nature of the barriers to implementing cross-sector policy?

Why are DFID apparently struggling to implement cross-sector policy? Respondents outlined many barriers to cross-sectoral approaches and it is perhaps impressive that DFID have managed to implement cross-sector policy at all. There may be a difference between those barriers that originate within DFID themselves and those barriers faced by all those pursuing cross-sectorality. DFID make it harder for themselves to engage in cross-sectoral activity where the organisation has not clarified a working definition of cross-sector and has failed to outline clear operational guidance for implementing cross-sector policy. Certainly, the rhetoric supporting cross-sectoral approaches in DFID's public documents was not matched by any strong internal organisational messages that cross-sectoral approaches were a priority. Similarly, the strong focus on end products; poor communication between the 'multiple DFIDs'; pursuit of central government support; and DFID's organisational culture of competition and arrogance, were all key barriers: but they are all, also, arguably factors within DFID's control.

One of the barriers respondents spoke about was a key disjuncture between DFID's role as part of the UK Government as a hierarchical political bureaucracy and the contrast with DFID's other key role as a development organisation. Many respondents in this study suggested these roles do not sit well alongside one another and that they are not equally important to DFID. The dominant pursuit of political bureaucratic, economic ends, or what Mosse describes as 'a new managerialism' (Mosse, 2005:3) was thought by some respondents to be hindering DFID's

development role and distancing them from the people who are their intended beneficiaries.

In contrast, sectoral budgets, sectors having different priorities and procedures, disciplinarity and territoriality are examples of barriers common to all cross-sectoral approaches. Organisations attempting to implement cross-sector policy need to have clear strategies for overcoming these barriers, and strategies for maximising facilitating factors. This approach also needs to be clearly articulated throughout the organisation. It is well documented that general support statements within high level policy documentation are not enough on their own and they do not necessarily translate into policy implementation.

Many of these barriers outlined earlier are not only hindering cross-sector policy implementation but may also be impacting negatively on other organisational goals.

(3) Why is the rhetoric not matched by reality?

The results suggest that, on balance, DFID is not truly committed to cross-sectoral approaches. Two factors that contribute to effective policy implementation are top level commitment and good communication of this commitment to the rest of an organisation. In terms of cross-sector policy at DFID, these factors are absent. Stating commitment to cross-sectoral approaches is important, but there is then a need to 'identify and advocate measures to make them real' (Chambers and Petit, 2004).

In this study, many policymakers were not aware of the research that supports cross-sectoral approaches. Therefore, the existing research was not being utilised to strengthen organisational support for cross-sectoral approaches, thereby weakening the likelihood of policy implementation. Another reason for a gap between the

perceived benefits and the widespread adoption of cross-sectoral approaches may be the common perception that working collaboratively across sectors is difficult. Respondents reported a common necessity to settle for a lower level of cross-sectoral engagement than initially envisaged.

So why do organisations continue to make rhetorical statements that are not supported in reality? For DFID, collaboration with partners and working cross-sectorally to eliminate global poverty is not only crucial to achieving their organisational goals, but it is also an important part of how they wish to portray their identity. Despite a paucity of studies that outline the specific benefits of cross-sectoral approaches, collaboration is generally viewed as beneficial. The presence of so many statements of support for collaborative working within DFID's documents suggest they value collaboration, but under pressure of Government deadlines and pressure to spend development money, it may be challenging to implement these collaborative goals and cross-sectoral approaches may be awarded lower priority. A small group of respondents did, however, claim that DFID viewed policy documents as synonymous with policy implementation. This is crucially different to the emphasis placed by respondents on implementation being considered part of the policy process.

The activity at project level appears to be the closest to Moser's vision of "integrative strategies which cut across sectoral lines" (Moser, 1993:54) but this has not been fully embraced by DFID. There remains a significant gap between DFID's rhetoric and the reality of cross-sector policy in practice.

Conclusions and Recommendations

DFID was viewed positively by many respondents and these views are consistent with many documents that claim DFID is rated highly within the UK Government

(ODI, 2000; Ashley, 2002; Chakrabarti et al, 2002; Short, 2003; Watt and Perkins, 2003; White, 2003; DFID, 2004b;). They have also been described as having a comparative advantage in some areas of development such as governance (Court, 2006). However, this research set out to explore implementation of cross-sector policy at DFID: and in this specific area, DFID was viewed less positively.

There is a key challenge for DFID to examine their organisational culture in order to create an environment more supportive of cross-sectoral approaches. This may involve challenging debate regarding the organisational epistemology and may require senior staff to decide whether they can accomplish all the organisation's diverse goals, which currently imply differing and perhaps even contradictory motivations. Individually, there is space for learning lessons from more reflection on practice, as outlined by Eyben (2004).

More generally, there are lessons from this research that may be of interest to DFID, but also to other organisations wishing to pursue cross-sector policy and practice. The results from this study endorse existing calls for implementation to be viewed as an integral part of all policy processes (Cabinet Office, 1999; Bullock et al, 2001). The results also outline a lack of shared definitions and clear operational guidance for cross-sectoral approaches, which has led to a lack of shared understanding of what cross-sectorality is and how to achieve cross-sector working. This suggests the need to concentrate on understanding these processes in themselves before presuming that they can achieve particular outcomes. A more even balance is needed that acknowledges processes and outcomes are interdependent (Mosse, 1998; Kabeer and Subrahmanian, 1999).

There are some crucial lessons to learn from the good cross-sector working taking place at project level. These examples may be small scale, but project staff have

valuable practical knowledge of operationalising cross-sector policy. Features such as being small-scale and flexible appear to be important factors in successful cross-sectoral approaches. However, committed individuals at project level do not equate to a committed organisation. Support is needed at both an individual and an institutional level, because one without the other weakens the possibility of cross-sector policy implementation.

Lessons from this research suggest that any organisation wishing to support cross-sectoral approaches will need to maximise the identified facilitating factors and devise strategies for dealing with barriers that exist or might arise. The cross-sector continuum model offers one possible framework, which could be used for staff development or facilitating collaborative working. The continuum could be used to raise awareness of the many possible levels of cross-sectoral engagement that can be tailored to suit particular needs.

Finally, little evidence exists demonstrating substantive benefits from cross-sector policy and practice. There is, therefore, a need for further research into the impact of cross-sectoral approaches. Many respondents thought that cross-sectoral processes improve coordination and raise awareness of other development actors' views and priorities. These benefits to staff are laudable, but what is less clear is whether cross-sector processes result in positive impacts for intended beneficiaries and whilst we know that "poor people do not live in sectors" (Robinson and Manandhar, 2001:9), we are lacking substantial evidence that cross-sectoral approaches bring benefits to poor people. The facilitating factor that was the second most added and prioritised by respondents referred to the need to be clear about the aims and added value of cross-sector approaches and currently this clarity appears to be lacking.

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