

Background

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) posed an important challenge to the world of development cooperation and to the field of dev. By way of background, the Philippines Bilateral Strategy (PBS) received over NZD18m in financial support from NZAID over five years. The PBS had the three themes: (Indigenous Peoples, governance, and natural resource management); three cross-cutting themes (human rights, strengthening local capacity, and sustainability); and a number of cross-cutting programmes and approaches including human resource development, peace and development in Mindanao, and small grants funds. The strategy was initially developed with a two-year time frame to be reviewed and aligned with NZAID's developing Asia strategy and wider policy framework. However, due to resource constraints, this review did not occur.

Purpose and Objectives

The evaluation's purpose was to identify learning gained through the implementation of the PBS and to provide direction for the development of the new strategy. The evaluation focused on assessing the appropriateness of the strategy and the performance of the activities that it funded. The evaluation's approach included a study of documents and expenditure, engagement with stakeholders in Wellington and Manila, field visits and other research, presentation of preliminary findings and presentation of a draft report for feedback.

Main Findings

The evaluation's findings indicated that, although the PBS was well-aligned with NZAID and Philippines Government policies and priorities, it was not achieving a 'bigger, fewer, deeper and larger' focus, and that the small staff in Manila was overburdened. Activities funded were generally aligned with the various strategy themes and approaches. Individual activities funded under the PBS were largely successful, although some raised sustainability issues. Three specific projects (Indigenous People, the Natural Resource Management and Caraga Local Government Unit projects) had achieved good outcomes. However, as a set of interrelated and somewhat dispersed themes, the PBS lacked a central core and a clear frame for measuring results. No systematic monitoring against the strategy was undertaken during the period. The evaluation questioned the contribution of tertiary scholarships to poverty alleviation.

Follow-up

Evaluation recommendations for the new Philippines country strategy included the need to avoid spreading limited resources across a range of thematic areas, to be clear and logical, include an M&E plan, and to ensure that the strategy had adequate staffing levels for the work. The evaluation also suggested considering Indigenous Peoples' rights as a central theme, and reconsidering aspects of the tertiary education scheme.

To request a copy of the full report email aidevaluation@nzaid.govt.nz and quote the reference number - Eva0901.