



British Embassy



Wilton Park



Image: Brett Jordan

Report

Improving the impact of development projects in Sub-Saharan Africa through increased UK/Brazil cooperation and partnerships

Thursday 17 – Friday 18 November 2016 | WP1492

Held in Brasilia

In partnership with:





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This Wilton Park event, hosted by FUNAG and held in Brasília, provided an important opportunity for policy makers, government officials, academics and civil society representatives from Brazil, Africa and the UK, as well as from international organisations, to discuss issues such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the measurement and evaluation of development cooperation. The two day discussion focused on the potential and limitations of development cooperation provided by the UK and by Brazil and on how the two countries could improve their partnerships with countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The discussions reflected the importance of looking at examples of past and ongoing trilateral cooperation initiatives and raised attention as to how recent political and economic events in Brazil and in the UK could impact on the provision of development cooperation and in the articulation of partnerships.

Executive summary

- There is a need to discuss the impact of recent political and economic events in the UK and Brazil and how they influence the provision of development cooperation, including trilateral cooperation.
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) –highlight the importance of looking at ways in which UK/Brazil cooperation and partnerships can support the implementation of the SDGs in their specific national contexts as well as in engagement with Sub-Saharan Africa.
- The UK and Brazil share a common goal of improving the execution and outcomes of cooperation. It is important for the two countries to engage in a space in which they can understand each other and improve cooperation and partnerships.
- Recent events in the UK and in Brazil illustrate the importance of guaranteeing accountability, showing how development cooperation makes a difference where it is deployed and how both Development Assistance Committee (DAC) countries and Southern providers can improve their capacity. Everyone can learn.

Recommendations

1. Trilateral cooperation initiatives involving the UK, Brazil and African countries are positive but there should be an awareness of what is expected of the African partners in these arrangements.
2. Efforts related to the development of measurement and evaluation criteria for South-

South Cooperation (SSC) should be encouraged and strengthened without losing sight of the specificities of the SSC approach, particularly the differences regarding aid provided by Northern donors, such as the UK. Tools and criteria developed to evaluate North-South cooperation are not adequate to address SSC.

3. The SDGs present complex targets that have to be met by all countries, regardless of their location in the global South or the global North. Brazil and the UK have to work together in order to partner with countries located in Sub-Saharan Africa for the successful implementation of the SDGs.
4. Policy makers and experts studying development cooperation in Brazil and the UK should be aware of the impact that recent domestic events (such as political and economic policy changes) have in the provision of development cooperation.

The UK, Brazil and Sub-Saharan Africa partnership

5. The UK and Brazil have been providing development assistance for decades, the UK as a member of the DAC and Brazil as a Southern partner. Despite differences in terms of approaches, the two countries can establish a joint approach combining their knowledge and experience.
6. The UN 2030 agenda acknowledges that countries across Africa require assistance to achieve the new SDGs. The debate about implementing the SDGs raises the importance of developing new approaches to common problems. The implementation of the SDGs requires technical solutions to sectoral problems.
7. Both Brazil and the UK provide cooperation and development assistance to countries across Africa in areas such as food security, poverty reduction and agriculture. The main question regarding this partnership is: “what value and impact could be achieved by a more integrated partnership between partners in order to share costs and approaches?”

UK/Brazil trilateral cooperation

8. The practice of horizontal, demand-driven cooperation and non-conditionality as well as the joint construction of projects has been the most significant element in the UK-Brazil partnership. Trilateral cooperation, including in formulating, monitoring and evaluating results, provides the essential elements of proper ownership. This partnership strengthens both Brazil and the UK’s capabilities of understanding each other’s potential.
9. The potential of trilateral cooperation is very high but the challenge rests in setting up a platform for all stakeholders, creating an environment for coordination and avoiding duplication. The potential gains of trilateral cooperation are endless provided it is done in the right way and with the right motivation.
10. The UK and Brazil signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for a Global Development Partnership in 2011, representing a very unique combination of different aspects of development cooperation. This has allowed for the two countries to go beyond the traditional implementation of technical cooperation projects, bringing the opportunity of strengthening the dialogue and continuing to promote policy development. For Brazil, partnering with the UK is a strategic path and the 2011 MOU establishes a framework that promotes an open and ongoing dialogue and provides a mechanism of articulation and coordination. The two countries are currently working on a programme framework for future cooperation.
11. The UK and Brazil believe that it is possible to harmonise their principles of cooperation by creating an innovative mechanism of coordination, to promote more structural and comprehensive ways of working with the different modalities of cooperation.
12. DFID is also working in more than 50% of the countries in Africa that Brazil works in, so

there is a simple way of combining the two countries' perspectives in terms of geographical coverage. As a result of the measureable impact of good cooperation, including in the implementation of joint projects, most of the areas that the UK and Brazil decide to work in together are linked to geographical overlap of work between the two countries.

13. UK-Brazil partnership is motivated by the recognition that there are positive experiences associated with UK projects implemented in Brazil in the 1990s. There is also a need to develop an understanding that each country is both a provider and a recipient of cooperation at the same time – a mindfulness that countries always have something to share and something to learn. In this regard, the important issue is for the UK and Brazil to incorporate knowledge and experiences from their African partners and to define what and how they expect African partners to contribute. African institutions should be involved in the discussion and formulation of triangular partnerships. If triangular cooperation takes place without African nations, the horizontal component is being omitted – this could have significant influence on impact and outcomes – as well as on the relevance of any programme.
14. Within trilateral cooperation, all three of the partners should have an input from the very beginning. Partners have to share the concepts, discuss the principles and then the three partners must continue to be involved in the design of the project and in the monitoring and evaluation. While some actors point out that this may imply that one loses effectiveness, from the Brazilian point of view, trilateral cooperation is not about speed but about doing it right, having true ownership of the process. For Brazilian actors, the best outcome is not when you have a package that you try to impose upon the other partner through conditionality, but when the partners work together. If this arrangement is implemented correctly it is an advantage of trilateral cooperation. From the Brazilian perspective, trilateral cooperation is important to reinforce the notion of partners, instead of recipients and providers.
15. Trilateral cooperation does not operate in a vacuum; partners involved in cooperation have challenges, deadlines to which they are accountable. For trilateral cooperation to be relevant, it has to respond to those issues. There are important questions that come to play: What are the demands on those who are the 'recipients'? How can trilateral cooperation equip the 'recipient' partners? Actors should be aware that institutions such as the African Union have many partnerships but there is no capacity to manage those partnerships.
16. Achieving effectiveness and efficiency within trilateral cooperation is complex but it should not stop partners from pursuing this road. Partners should be aware of the differences and specificities related to thematic issues as well as the complexity of qualitative measurement.
17. Trilateral cooperation is a challenging and fascinating process. The UK-Brazil partnership needs to assess which aspects of the partnership are going well and which are not. This attention to the process has been very useful. Awareness of the issues involved in the UK-Brazil relationship invites the following questions: how actors should think of ways to evaluate cooperation? What are the power relations within the partnership? One of the most interesting aspects related to trilateral cooperation is that it provides space for dialogue, for the promotion of a space for peers to discuss existing and emerging challenges.

UK, Brazil, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Sustainable Development Goals

18. Partnerships were important in the process of the SDGs and in fact comprise the whole of Goal 17, overarching all of the means of achieving the other 16 Goals. Partnerships must be inclusive and based on a universal sense of respect. Encouraging partnerships is essential, and they should include an emphasis on solidarity and respect. The SDGs focus on the most vulnerable areas which should also be a priority for Brazil-UK

partnerships with Sub-Saharan Africa.

19. Brazil and the UK need to find the right kind of partnerships, reflecting what works and what has not worked. The two countries will need to define common priorities at a time in which multilateralism is under threat and contestation. One area in which Brazil and the UK can offer positive insights is related to inter-city networks. This is particularly important because cities are collaborating to monitor the achievement of the SDGs and Africa will be the most rapidly urbanising area in the near future.
20. The scope of the SDGs is of particular importance to the Brazil-UK partnership. Brazil takes the principle of universality of the SDGs very seriously and the discussion about the implementation of the SDGs raises some fundamental existential questions on how development cooperation is provided. It forces actors to reflect on not just about the dynamics between 'donors' and 'recipients' but about the role of nation states as the primary executors of aid. As it is, there is a perception that actors are stuck in a 19th century approach to 21st century problems. The debate is still dominated by the agencies and their bureaucracies, but there is a need to engage with the private sector to execute the challenges associated with the SDGs. Important issues include Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and productive investment. There is the need to promote greater awareness of the SDGs within the private sector (especially in Brazil) as well as to promote greater engagement with civil society. Engagement with civil society should involve more than just consultations since civil society organizations can play a fundamental role in monitoring the successful implementation of the SDGs.
21. The SDGs also impact one of the most important aspects associated with trilateral cooperation, ie the learning component, in which partners understand that the process is more about learning from each than being effective. Nonetheless, when it comes to the SDGs, one important reflection comes to mind: "are the partners allowed to take the time to focus on the process and in the learning if they have to commit to achieving the goals by 2030?"
22. It is very complicated to talk about efficiency when discussing the SDGs and the 2030 agenda because it is more important to focus on the policies that are shared than actual efficiency. In the Brazilian case, the question of how Brazil's experience can inspire others is not about efficiency but the opportunity to engage in different policy spaces. This aspect raises the importance of the multi-direction of learning. For Northern donors, this raises the issue of how open these actors are to changing those aspects and learning from Southern partners, including Brazil and Sub-Saharan Africa.

The role of the private sector in development cooperation

23. Economic growth is essential for private growth but it is difficult to combine poverty eradication with commercial intentions. It is also difficult to leverage resources from the private sector for development since many of the resources actually go to countries that are already able to attract private resources, including middle income countries and not the countries mostly in need.
24. Trade has taken a prominent role in the context of UK aid after the vote to leave the European Union – based on the idea that no country can defeat poverty without economic growth. In its partnership with Brazil, DFID works with the Brazilian Agricultural Research Enterprise (EMBRAPA) and the World Food Programme Centre of Excellence against Hunger to create sustainable livelihoods in SSA on food security, connecting producers to markets locally. In other contexts, such as Ethiopia, DFID is engaged in the development of industrial parks to develop the country's export capacity in the textile sector via the Red Sea. This does not reflect a return to tied aid but the recognition that trade is an important route by which these countries can empower themselves.
25. When discussing the role of the private sector in the context of development cooperation, it is important to be aware that not all private investment is necessarily

good. Actors have to apply eligibility criteria, which can include the hiring of local workforce, the provision of credit facilities and the promotion of local entrepreneurship. All these activities could be supported by development cooperation initiatives. Private sector engagement in development cooperation should not be understood as simply being about bringing foreign private companies to countries in the global South, including SSA.

Measurement and evaluation of cooperation

26. The initial Official Development Assistance (ODA) definition was intended to measure aid flows and to create an identity of 'donors' and 'recipients' but there are some recent changes that come to play. In 2015, the UN developed a concept of development cooperation which includes other official flows including concessional financial flows, in-kind transfer, capacity support and policy change, all of which contribute towards stretching the definition beyond ODA.
27. Within Total Official Support for Sustainable Development (TOSSD) there is now a process of 'Southernisation' of development cooperation, in which Northern/DAC donors are much closer to the Chinese or Indian models now. This tendency refutes the thesis that 'emerging' donors would adapt to the logic of Northern donors. The emerging discourse of transparency related to the provision of development cooperation should also be unpacked since it hides certain aspects associated with the provision of development cooperation, creating the conditions for Northern actors to operate in a given way in a highly competitive development cooperation environment.
28. The UK and Brazil paradigms for measuring cooperation are different and one cannot use the same measurement criteria for SSC and for Northern aid. Actors within the South, including governments and think tanks have tried to come up with an appropriate way of measuring SSC that includes the quantity, different definitions of SSC and differences in reporting volumes. In the typical UK model of vertical evaluation, there is an emphasis on results and impact. Under this model, there is clarity of results and objectives that one wants to achieve, done only on the recipient side. In the measurement of SSC, one of the challenges is the inclusion of SSC as part of broader foreign policy strategies. In certain circumstances, actors are reluctant to verbalise these objectives. Since SSC is described as much more about solidarity and relationship building, it becomes very difficult to quantify.
29. Within measurement and evaluation, data and information are extremely important not only because of the need to incorporate quantitative and qualitative aspects but also for the provision of accountability and transparency to domestic and international constituencies. Despite the differences between the UK and the Brazilian approaches to the provision of cooperation, the two countries share a common need to improve the execution of their cooperation. It may even be true to state that because of their differences, it is important for the two countries to engage in a space wherein they can approach mutual understanding and cooperation.
30. Within the context of measurement and evaluation, there are strengths and differences in the different methodologies used by Brazil and the UK. It is important for actors to be aware that one methodology might apply in one country and not in other countries. In addition, partner countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have different contexts and data availability varies between countries.
31. Actors need to be aware that paying attention to measurement and evaluation is neither a neutral exercise nor a technical issue but an important political issue. This raises meaningful questions such as: "how do you conduct evaluation? How to you measure success?" The issues take greater significance given the global efforts regarding discussions related to fragile states, self-assessment and external assessment at the OECD. Another set of important questions raised by drawing attention to the political nature of measurement and evaluation includes: "who should do the evaluations? Who is the target audience of measurement and evaluation

initiatives?” These questions reflect the importance of addressing and including new techniques for measurement, such as those that give access to remote sensing data, which have the potential to transform how measurement and evaluation takes place.

32. One final consideration involves the recognition that within development cooperation, before evaluation starts, special consideration should be given to the intended outcomes, especially around the categories of individuals are being targeted by the specific projects. Once the categories are clearly defined, it is possible to consider if triangular cooperation has been a successful input into the end result.

Social programmes and effective knowledge sharing

33. Regarding social programmes, it is important to focus on institutional capacity building in order for partner countries to be able to provide services, especially when partner countries lack sufficient productive capacity. It is equally important to stress the importance of a rights based approach for social policies in general. For knowledge and experience sharing to take place it is important to have the necessary policy space and constant dialogue with the partners involved. The lack of basic physical, human and financial resources has an impact on the effectiveness of sharing knowledge about social policies.
34. Within knowledge sharing, there are challenges related to the difficulties in systematising good practice and then sharing it. For example, what is internationally considered as good practice might not be viewed as good domestic policy. It is important to recognise that knowledge sharing does not take place in a vacuum. Important questions have to be raised in this aspect, such as: “who legitimises the knowledge sharing processes? Where are the funds that allow for knowledge sharing taking place? What is being shared? Who is doing it? Why and how?”

Conclusion

There are certainly differences in the ways in which Brazil and the UK provide cooperation and in the way that this cooperation is measured and evaluated. Nonetheless, the positive aspects associated with an institutional memory of UK cooperation in Brazil and a history of engagement on trilateral cooperation in Africa encourages a positive scenario for further cooperation. This cooperation is particularly important since the UK and Brazil can work together to partner with Sub-Saharan countries in Africa in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals themselves and with their partner countries.

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