

New Norms and Forms of Development: *Foreign Aid and Maternal and Child Health Service Development and Delivery in Nepal*

Research Dissemination Programme

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Social Science



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About the project

- Time-frame: May 2014 - August 2016
- Aim: to generate policy relevant knowledge on the roles and functions of institutions that broker health and development programmes and projects
- Methods and processes: mapping; key informant interviews; in-depth case study of four projects using participant observation & interviews; review of policy documents and reports



Key findings

- external development assistance is a messy assemblage of actors, institutional arrangements and activities informed by the norms: 'value for money' and 'measurable results'.
- for development assistance to function effectively it is not just about the flow of financial resources to a project or a programme but also about networks and key personal and institutional relationships
- there is increasing political pressure to show that the disbursement of resources are linked to the achievement of measurable results.



Socio-political organisation of external development assistance

- a major challenge to get information on what donor-funded institutions do with their financial resources, and where and how they spend it
- a messy assemblage of actors, institutional arrangements and activities involving providing, managing and spending
- Donors critical of Public Finance Management System, and have put forward various institutional modalities including SWAp

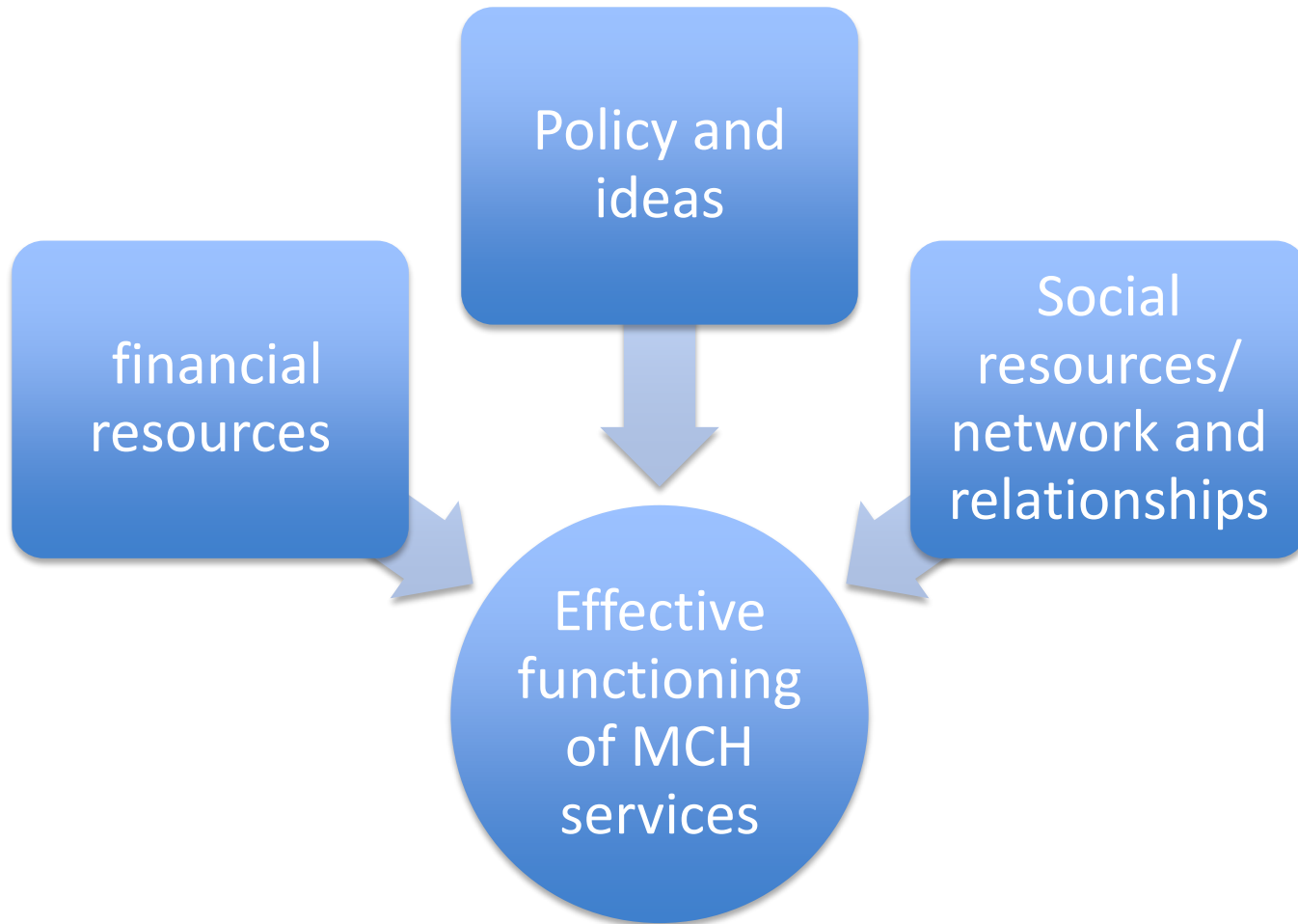
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- Large amount of resources is channeled outside of the government system and runs through private firms and INGOs (remain important even when resources flow through the government system)
- Importance of NGO and local experts, who are often hired as contractors or advisers, in navigating a complex institutional and bureaucratic system.
- Sub-contract to local NGOs as implementing partners— facilitated by Nepali law that does not allow INGOs to implement projects on the ground.

Networks and relationships: key characteristics

- Formal/ informal; individual and institutional
- Operate internationally, nationally and locally
- As valuable as the 'foreign aid' itself in functioning any project

Trust as a key ingredient



Personal reflection/ experience

- **Access:** personal/ professional networks and relationships has eased our access to research field sites
- **Forming new networks and relationships and maintaining them** with stakeholders has been very important

further points

- Boundaries of such networks and relationships are flexible, can take different shapes and forms.
- Challenging task to fully understand such informal networks and relationships.

New norms of value for money, evidence and measurement of results

- profound political pressure to demonstrate the impact and demonstrate that the disbursement of resources are tied to measurable results
 - organised as a set of measurable results;
 - need to show that the costs are directly linked to the achievement of measurable results;
 - organised around generation of evidence through monitoring and evaluation and a results-based framework.
- Little institutional space to undertake innovative work; ignorance of political-economy and socio-cultural milieu

Implications for policy and practice

- preoccupation with metrics and results-based frameworks has reduced the impact to measurable results only; marginalised and rendered invisible politico-economic and sociocultural dimensions
- Direct impact on State capacity in terms of coordination challenges; demoralisation of government staff and aid patronage