

d·i·e

Deutsches Institut für
Entwicklungspolitik



German Development
Institute

Bridging the Gaps: An Integrated Approach to Assessing Aid Effectiveness

Digital Development Dialogue (3D) - “Aid Effectiveness for the Next Decade: How Will the Debate on Aid Effectiveness Evolve in the Upcoming Years?”

Heiner Janus
28. January 2021



Does aid contribute to development?

- **Renewed relevance of aid effectiveness:**
 - Development actors want to understand and improve their contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
 - National interests “returned” and populist parties on the radical right fundamentally question the relevance of aid, leading public debates in donor countries.
- **But compartmentalised policy and research communities (briefing paper with Paul Marschall and Hannes Öhler: [here](#))**
 - 1) macro effects of aid;
 - 2) global principles for development cooperation;
 - 3) the structure and instruments of organisations;
 - 4) the impact of individual interventions.





1) Macro effects of aid

- cross-country studies analysing the effects of aid on economic growth and other development indicators to understand contribution of aid to socio-economic development at country level.
- Newer studies go beyond economic growth focus and consider development multi-dimensionally and at different levels (e.g. sub-national level).
- Mostly a research community, but with strong links to political decisions on aid allocation.

2) Global principles for development cooperation

- Policymakers have translated macro-level findings into a set of best practices, prominently enshrined in the [2005 Paris Principles](#).
- Underlying assumption: reducing aid fragmentation and improving the division of labour among donors, could increase the developmental impact of aid.
- Newer efforts by GPEDC (Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation) to promote effectiveness principles as a multi-stakeholder initiative but political uphill battle.
- Mostly a policy community, but has links to research on effectiveness principles.



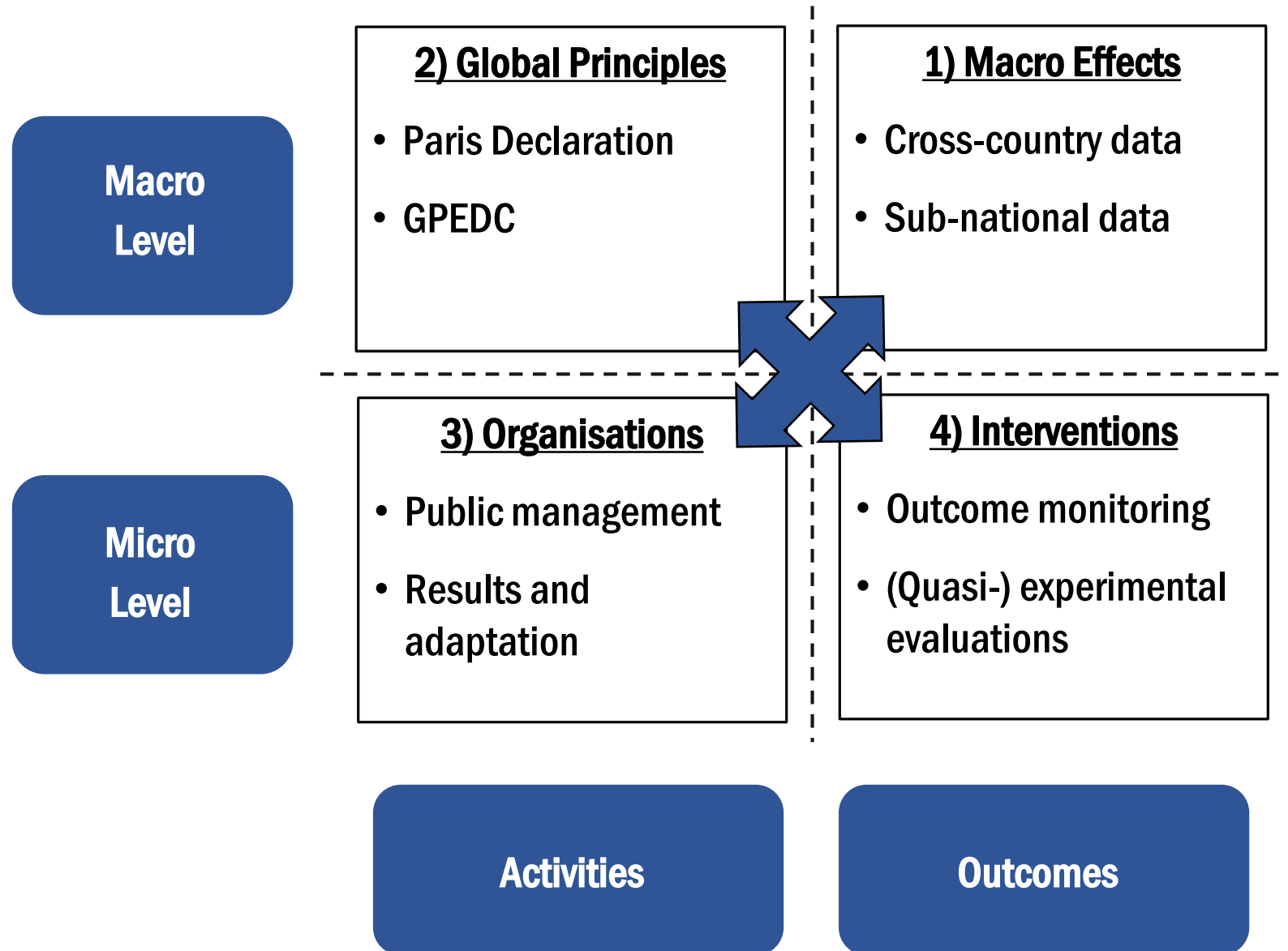
3) Organisations

- Organisational effectiveness encompasses development bureaucracies and ways to manage them, exploring linkages between donor organisational behaviour and aid effectiveness.
- Different public management tools are used by donor organisations to organise their work
- Current debate is about finding an appropriate balance results-based management and adaptive development ideas.
- Mixed community of researchers and practitioners.

4) Impact of individual interventions

- Focus lies on the impacts of development interventions (projects/programmes) in terms of establishing causal relations between specific interventions and socio-economic outcomes at the micro-level.
- Previously focus on outcome monitoring, but increasingly rise of experimental and (quasi-) experimental designs, in particular randomised controlled trials (RCTs), plus systematic reviews.
- Mostly a research community, but with strong influences on the design of development interventions.

Four policy and research communities working on aid effectiveness





- **Reporting of development outcomes and impacts:**
 - At the **organisational level**, there are strong incentives to introduce indicators and aggregate results at the outcome or even impact level.
 - Yet, such an undertaking is problematic. Researchers working on impact assessments at the **intervention level** emphasise that outcomes can only be attributed to certain aid interventions by employing rigorous (quasi-) experimental evaluation designs.
 - Research on the **macro effects** of aid indicates that unintended macroeconomic side effects of aid need to be taken into account in order to identify the actual impacts of aid at the country level.
 - **Integrated approach:** Development coherent monitoring and results reporting that is better geared towards communicating with the public as well as informing organisational level. Another benefit could be a more active collaboration among the different organisational units within development organisations (monitoring, evaluation, data management, and strategic planning units).



- For **policymakers**, an integrated approach to aid effectiveness can lead to
 - better coordination within development organisations,
 - better coherence with other policy fields relevant to sustainable development,
 - and an improved communication of development cooperation results to the public.
- For **researchers**, this approach can help to
 - reach a broader audience (including practitioners),
 - connect with related knowledge communities and enhance inter- and transdisciplinary research on aid effectiveness,
 - prepare development policy actors for upcoming disruptions (decreasing relevance of aid as a financial resource and “new” actors)
- Overall, practitioners and scholars working on aid effectiveness should exchange knowledge with colleagues working in other policy fields that contribute to the SDGs and provide global public goods.



Thank you!

Twitter: [@HeinerJanus](https://twitter.com/HeinerJanus)

Email: Heiner.Janus@die-gdi.de

The German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE)

Tulpenfeld 6

D-53113 Bonn

Telefon: +49 (0)228-949 27-0

DIE@die-gdi.de

www.die-gdi.de

