



**International
Initiative for
Impact Evaluation**

DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES: AN ANALYSIS OF PRSPs

Summary

- This note reports the analysis of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers from 60 low-income countries to identify national development priorities.
- The most common priority areas are: quality primary and secondary education; agriculture (land/conservation, livestock, market access and technology), water supply and sanitation, small and medium enterprises, and health (HIV/AIDs, communicable disease, and infant and child health).
- Priorities vary across region, so some issues will not be relevant in all countries.

Introduction

3ie seeks to answer enduring questions of development. Identification of these questions, which will determine 3ie's work program in the coming years, should be informed by priorities in developing countries. This note identifies those priorities as identified in Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSPs).

PRSPs arose out of the enhanced-Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) debt relief initiative. To qualify for debt relief a country had to present a PRSP, although a slighter document called an Interim-PRSP would be acceptable in the first instance. PRSPs replaced the earlier macroeconomic conditionality documents in theory produced by the government but in practice written by World Bank and IMF staff. A full PRSP was intended to be the product of a broad consultative process.

Both these elements of a PRSP – local ownership and consultative processes - are somewhat contested. PRSPs contain at their core a focus on macro policies which bears the imprint of the Bank and the Fund. There is a consistency across documents which would not be expected if they were truly homegrown – contrasting strongly with genuinely national statements produced in earlier years such as Tanzania's Arusha Declaration or Zambia's Mulungushi Declaration. The breadth and depth of consultation has varied, but parliamentarians have usually been superficially involved. One assessment of the African experience (Booth, 2004) concludes that PRSPs do not fully live up to their rhetoric but the process is an improvement on what went before, and hence more representative of national development priorities. However, based on a study in Kenya, Swallow (2005) warns that local priorities may not be well-represented in policy statements at

other levels.¹ But some discrepancy is expected on account of local variations representing different livelihoods. Moreover, it can be argued that village level participatory priority ranking will under-invest in public goods, so some discrepancy is expected.

The data

Sixty countries have completed PRSPs. We have used the most recent PRSP available, which is therefore the full PRSP where both interim and full PRSPs have been produced. Over half (34) of the 60 PRSPs come from sub Saharan Africa (Table A.1), followed by Central Asia (8) and Latin America (7). It should be remembered that PRSPs are prepared only in low-income countries.

Coding was based on 198 disaggregated categories grouped under 20 sectoral headings (a small number of categories repeated themselves under different headings). These categories were identified through an analysis of PRSPs carried out independently by two researchers.² For each PRSP the presence of a category was coded as 1, or 0 if there was no mention of the issue. Coding was performed through a combination of Acrobat and manual searches.

Findings

At the aggregate sectoral level nearly everything is a priority. Six sectors are mentioned as important in all PRSPs and most the remainder in at least 90 percent of cases (Table A.2). The few exceptions are those issues which are not relevant in some countries – mining, conflict and disaster. There has been no change over time other than the growth in importance of conflict and conflict prevention (Table A.3), which is a “composition effect” (countries in which these are important issues have entered the group of PRSP countries).

Of more interest is the disaggregated analysis. Leaving aside the macro cases, of most importance (appearing in the top 20) are education (both primary and secondary, with an emphasis on skills development), agriculture (technology, market access, livestock and land\conservation), water supply and sanitation (WSS), small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and health (HIV/AIDS appears most frequently, but infant and child health and communicable diseases are also in the top 20 and maternal health just outside); see Table A.5. The cross-cutting theme of gender also appears, which can be taken as a signal to not neglect the gender aspect of any question.

These priorities do vary across region (Table A.5). Priority areas in at least three regions (defined as being identified in at least 90 percent of PRSPs for that region) are primary and secondary education (and learning outcomes), agriculture (technology, land\conservation and livestock), HIV/AIDS, WSS, SMEs.

References

Booth, David (2004) *Fighting Poverty in Africa: Are PRSPs Making a Difference?*. London: Overseas Development Institute.

Swallow, Brent (2005) ‘Potential for Poverty Reduction Strategies to Address Community Priorities:Case Study of Kenya’ *World Development* **33**(2): 301-321.

¹ He finds that local priorities at the PRSP do match, but district-level PRSPs do not, and nor does the PRSP Implementation Plan,

² The main coding was done by Shaheen Akter; Morgan Rota assisted in the development of the categories.

Statistical Annex

Table A.1 Regional breakdown

Region		Freq.	Percent
East Asia and Pacific	EAP	4	7
Europe and Central Asia	ECA	8	13
Latin America and Caribbean	LAC	7	12
Middle East and North Africa	MENA	1	2
South Asia	SA	6	10
Sub Saharan Africa	SSA	34	57
Total		60	100

Table A.2 Sectoral priorities (percent of PRSPs mentioning at least one category under the named sector)

	EAP	ECA	LAC	MENA	SA	SSA	Total
Agriculture and rural development	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Education and training	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Governance	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Health, nutrition and population	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Macroeconomic conditions	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Private sector development	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Energy	100	88	100	100	100	100	98
Environment	100	100	100	100	100	97	98
Financial services	100	88	100	100	100	100	98
Water supply and sanitation	100	88	100	100	100	97	97
Infrastructure	100	88	100	100	100	94	95
Social development	100	100	100	100	83	94	95
Technology	100	88	86	100	100	97	95
Trade and tourism	100	100	100	100	83	94	95
Urban development	100	75	100	100	100	97	95
Gender	100	63	57	100	100	100	90
Water resource management	100	63	71	100	100	82	82
Disaster and emergency	100	75	71	0	83	76	77
Conflict and conflict prevention	75	63	43	0	67	88	75
Mining	50	50	29	0	50	68	57

Table A.3 Sectoral priorities by period

	2000-02	2003-05	2006-08	Total
Agriculture and rural development	100	100	100	100
Education and training	100	100	100	100
Governance	100	100	100	100
Health, nutrition and population	100	100	100	100
Macroeconomic conditions	100	100	100	100
Private sector development	100	100	100	100
Energy	92	100	100	98
Environment	100	100	95	98
Financial services	92	100	100	98
Water supply and sanitation	92	100	95	97
Infrastructure	92	96	95	95
Social sectors	83	96	100	95
Technology	92	92	100	95
Trade and tourism	100	92	95	95
Urban development	92	96	95	95
Gender	83	92	91	90
Water resource management	75	85	82	82
Disaster and emergency	67	88	68	77
Conflict and conflict prevention	33	85	86	75
Mining	58	54	59	57

Table A.4 Category-level priorities (percent of PRSPs in which category is mentioned)

Rank	Category	Percent
1	Skills development/training	97
2	Fiscal policy	95
3	Agricultural technology	93
4	Agricultural trade (market access)	92
5	Primary education	92
6	Conservation measures	92
7	HIV/AIDS	92
8	Secondary education	90
9	Small and medium enterprises	90
10	Clean/safe water (domestic supply)/access	90
11	Gender and Development	90
12	Revenue Collection/Resource mobilization	90
13	Sanitation services	88
14	Land policy	83
15	Livestock and animal resources (vet services)	83
16	Learning outcomes/education quality	83
17	Child (and infant) health	83
18	Communicable diseases	83
19	Law and justice institutions (strengthening or reform)	83
20	Vocational training	82
21	Basic health services	82
22	Transport	82
23	Small and medium enterprises (policy)	82
24	Communications/ Telecommunications	80

Rank	Category	Percent
	Decentralization and sub-national regional	
25	economics	80
26	Tourism	80
27	Rural finance (microfinance)	78
28	Natural resource management	78
29	Maternal health (safe motherhood)	78
30	Rural roads	78
31	Budget management	78
32	Improve transparency of government institutions	78
33	Agroprocessing and rural industries	77
34	Forests and Forestry	77
35	Electricity distribution/access	75
36	Monetary policy	75
37	Public Private Partnerships	75
38	Female education	73
39	Immunization	73
40	Non-formal/adult education	72
41	Education infrastructure/financing	72
42	Reproductive health/family planning	72
43	Quality health services	72
44	Administrative and civil service review/reform	72
45	Employment generation (public sector)	72
46	Irrigation	70
47	Teacher quality/training	70
48	Science and technology	70
49	Microfinance	70
50	ICTs	70
51	Housing	70
52	Forests and Forestry	68
53	Natural resource management	68
54	Biodiversity	68
55	Employment generation (private sector)	68
56	Privatization	68
57	Tertiary education	67
58	Curriculum development	67
59	Public sector efficiency	67
60	Market access	67
61	Diversification	65
62	Fisheries and Aquaculture	65
63	Road maintenance	65
64	External debt	65
65	Safety nets	65
66	Social risk management (social security)	65
67	Private sector development	63
68	Anticorruption	63
69	Renewable energy technologies	62
70	Banking reform	62
71	Business development services	62
72	Improved Regulatory Environment	62

Rank	Category	Percent
73	Solid waste management	62
74	Rural water supply	62
75	Extension	60
76	Waste management	60
77	Child nutrition	60
78	Public health	60
79	Investment climate	60
80	Science and technology education	60
81	Agricultural research	58
82	Early childhood development (pre-primary)	58
83	Rural electrification	58
84	Community driven development/social funds	58
85	Health financing/insurance	57
86	Mining	57
87	Irrigation	57
88	Urban water supply	57
89	Producer organizations	55
90	Nutrition	55
91	Regulatory environment (institutions and governance)	55
92	Research and development	55
93	Trade policy (external)	55
94	Health Infrastructure	53
95	Land resource management	53
96	International capital flows/foreign investment	53
97	Regulatory environment (institutions and governance)	53
98	High value crops	52
99	Rural non-farm self-employment/sector	52
100	Water resource management	52
101	Air transport	52
102	Waterways/port	52
103	Power generation	50
104	Clean energy/energy efficiency	48
105	Oil and gas	48
106	Disability	48
107	Urban environment	48
108	Biodiversity	47
109	Literacy	47
110	Financial accountability	47
111	Public works	47
112	Conditional cash transfers	45
113	Pensions	45
114	Exchange rates	43
115	Diversification of export base	43
116	Dams and reservoirs	43
117	Intensification/commercial farms	40
118	Infrastructure general	40
119	Regional Cooperation	40
120	Hygiene promotion	40

Rank	Category	Percent
121	Environmental health/quality	38
122	Non-bank financial market	38
123	Investment climate	38
124	Renewable energy technologies	38
125	Urban planning	38
126	Policing/controlling illegal activity	37
127	Conflict and post-conflict	37
128	Rail transport	37
129	Drainage control	37
130	Women in agriculture	35
131	Disaster risk management	35
132	Public Finance	35
133	Law enforcement	33
134	Cultural heritage	33
135	Industrial pollution	33
136	Rural finance (microfinance)	33
137	Drought	32
138	Wildlife protection	32
139	Capital markets	32
140	Malaria	32
141	Child labour	32
142	Risk insurance	32
143	Flooding	30
144	Urban services	30
145	Education for people with disabilities	28
146	Clean energy/energy efficiency	28
147	Disability	28
148	Water efficiency	28
149	Teacher recruitment reform	27
150	Non-communicable diseases	27
151	Drug pricing policy	27
152	Aid management	25
153	Health sector reform	23
154	Hospital reform	23
155	Food and emergency aid	23
156	Law Enforcement- Anti human-trafficking	22
157	Refugee/IDP (re)settlement programs	22
158	Internal debt	22
159	Law enforcement	22
160	Corporate governance	22
161	Smallholder agriculture	21
162	Air quality	20
163	Coastal and marine management	20
164	Recycling	20
165	Accidents (including road safety)	20
166	Groundwater	20
167	Watershed management	20
168	Ethnic Minorities	19
169	Disarmament/Demobilization programs	18

Rank	Category	Percent
170	E-governance	18
171	National Defense/Integrated National Army	17
172	Disaster preparedness	17
173	Control desertification	17
174	Voice and participation of stakeholders	17
175	Commodity risk management	15
176	Early warning and information	15
177	Power sector reform	15
178	Municipal finance	13
179	Water supply institutional reform	13
180	Law enforcement- Counter Narcotics	12
181	Women entrepreneurs	12
182	River basin management	12
183	Cultural heritage	10
184	Earthquake	10
185	Cyclone/storm	10
186	Biotechnology	8
187	Veterans	8
188	GMOs	7
189	Indoor air quality	7
190	Small-scale mining	7
191	Strengthening traditional medicine	5
192	Law Enforcement- control small arms/ armed groups	5
193	River erosion	5
194	Illegal exploitation	5
195	Local economic development	5
196	Famine	3
197	Early warning of macroeconomic information	3
198	Tsunami	2

Table A.5 Regional variation in priorities: categories in which at least 90 percent of PRSPs for the region mention the category

	SSA	LAC	EAP	ECA	SA	Total
Agricultural trade (market access)	0	1	1	0	1	4
Primary education	1	1	1	0	1	4
Clean/safe water (domestic supply)/access	0	1	1	0	1	3
Conservation measures	1	0	1	0	1	3
Fiscal policy	1	1	1	0	0	3
Gender and Development	1	0	1	0	1	3
HIV/AIDS	1	0	1	0	1	3
Land policy	0	1	1	0	1	3
Learning outcomes/education quality	0	1	1	0	1	3
Livestock and animal resources (vet services)	1	0	1	0	1	3
Sanitation services	1	0	1	0	1	3
Secondary education	0	1	1	0	1	3
Skills development/training	1	1	1	0	0	3
Small and medium enterprises	1	0	1	1	0	3
Administrative and civil service	0	0	1	0	1	2

review/reform						
Agricultural technology	1	0	0	0	1	2
Child (and infant) health	0	0	1	0	1	2
Curriculum development	0	0	1	0	1	2
Education infrastructure/financing	0	1	1	0	0	2
Irrigation	0	1	0	0	1	2
Maternal health (safe motherhood)	0	0	1	1	0	2
Non-formal/adult	0	1	0	0	1	2
Revenue Collection/Resource mobilization	1	0	1	0	0	2
Small and medium enterprises	0	0	1	1	0	2
Teacher quality/training	0	0	1	0	1	2
Tourism	0	1	1	0	0	2
Vocational	0	0	1	0	1	2
Agroprocessing and rural industries	0	0	1	0	0	1
Basic health services	0	1	0	0	0	1
Biodiversity	0	0	1	0	0	1
Budget management	1	0	0	0	0	1
Communicable diseases	0	0	0	0	1	1
Communications/ Telecommunications	0	0	0	0	1	1
Community driven development/social funds	0	0	0	1	0	1
Decentralization and subnational regional economics	1	0	0	0	0	1
Diversification	0	0	0	0	1	1
Early childhood development (pre-primary)	0	0	1	0	0	1
Electricity distribution/access	0	0	1	0	0	1
Female education	0	0	1	0	0	1
Flooding	0	0	1	0	0	1
Forests and Forestry	0	0	1	0	0	1
Forests and Forestry	0	0	1	0	0	1
High value crops	0	0	0	0	1	1
International capital flows/foreign investment	0	0	1	0	0	1
Investment climate	0	1	0	0	0	1
Irrigation	0	0	0	0	1	1
Law and justice institutions (strengthening or reform)	0	1	0	0	0	1
Market access	0	0	1	0	0	1
Natural resource management	0	0	1	0	0	1
Pensions	0	0	0	1	0	1
Private sector development	0	0	1	0	0	1
Quality health services	0	0	1	0	0	1
Reproductive health/family planning	0	0	1	0	0	1
Road maintenance	0	0	1	0	0	1
Rural electrification	0	0	0	0	1	1
Rural finance (microfinance)	0	0	1	0	0	1
Rural roads	0	0	0	0	1	1
Safety nets	0	0	1	0	0	1
Social risk management (social security)	0	0	1	0	0	1
Transport	0	0	1	0	0	1