

CONTINENTAL POLICY TARGETING AND THE NEPADISATION PROCESS: ISSUES, TRENDS AND OPTIONS

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the use of public administration approaches to targeting policy for continental development. The paper argues that it is vitally important for participation in the re-vitalization of the governance and leadership imperatives in both the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Although the paper supports the idea of the founding principles of the NEPAD concept within the framework of the AU, it further contends that the need for a systematic and continental public administrative policy making process must be in the forefront of decision making. The paper further argues that at the same time, sound leadership and governance infrastructures must be put in place to attract viable economic co-operation between African states. This is paramount towards the development of the African continent. At the same time, the paper circumvents to argue that regional imperatives towards development must be evident, as it must serve as the fundamental role in the welfare of the people of Africa. It is within this framework that targeted public policies towards development are paramount; and this must be supported by regional projects within the confines of the African Union.

INTRODUCTION

Most African governments, international agencies, and other policy makers in the area of policy-making and development, often emphasize policy targeting as a strategy for implementing programs and projects. For governments in Africa, and with the NEPAD initiative, uneven development and complex patterns of social and class differentiation, the need to ensure fiscal budgetary discipline and an effective peer review mechanism among other factors, have made it necessary for the adoption of targeting as a methodological approach to address development. For instance, policy targeting has often been emphasized in poverty alleviation programs or projects. Not only

is targeting widely recognized as a means for implementing policies, but also for ensuring an equitable distribution of projects such as infrastructure and the NEPAD initiative. "The marginalization of Africa in every aspect, and its current high level of poverty are no longer in doubt... The issue arising out of these is how to arrest this downward trend and put Africa back firmly on the world's development agenda..." (Nkuhlu 2002:2). However, recent experiences with program implementation through targeting in some African countries, suggest that targeting tends to be a highly sensitive issue and a potential source of tensions particularly in multi-ethnic, multi-layered public bureaucracies or relatively diverse societies. Therefore, it is thought that separate targeting policies are required as a part of a comprehensive national development strategy.

The assumption that an African country tends to be characterized by uneven development among its component units, regions or groups of people implies that such areas or groups which were considered 'backward' should be targeted when implementing programs and projects aimed at ensuring equitable development of the country. Gordon Sullivan and Michael Harper once stated that "if an organization is to strive towards the achievement of set objectives, the possibility lies in breaking down outmoded structures and creating an organization that can thrive in tomorrow's uncertainty..." (1996:84). More often than not, targeting results in controversies and criticisms from other sections or groups who see targeting as a means of concentrating national resources in the development of specific areas while neglecting others. Thus targeting could be a major source of political and/or ethnic tension in countries where ethnic and tribal sentiments often play major roles in issues concerning development and resource allocation. In support of this notion, African Heads of State and Governments participating in the African Union agreed to address the issues of *Democracy and Good Political Governance, Economic and Corporate Governance, Socio-Economic Development and an African Peer Review Mechanism* (NEPAD 2002:4). These are some of the very important and key features of the principles guiding the NEPAD idea.

The above are simple instances of targeting and its likely implications, and a suggestion that targeting any type of development programs and aids is not completely crisis-free. Nevertheless, some critical issues surrounding program/policy implementation in which targeting is an instrument, are often neglected during the design of such programs or policies. Most development aid programs to African countries appear to have assumed similarities in characteristics among all aid recipients. Often there is no consideration for country-specific issues, such as a society's sensitivity to ethnicity or cultural diversity. It is within this concept that the NEPAD idea must play a vital role in emphasizing the African equation to development and policy re-visitation. The issues of democracy and good governance have a bearing on the rule of law, the equality of all of its citizens, the sustenance of the principles of equality of opportunity for all and the adherence to the principles of the separation of powers, while at the same time, maintaining the independence of the judiciary (NEPAD 2002:4).

Moreover, the inability to separate policy design from its implementation often results in additional or associated costs (financial, social, political, and economic) in development programs during implementation. These are in the form of increased administrative

costs to national governments and, attempts to ensure that a given program reaches its intended or targeted beneficiaries may also raise transaction costs, it may also raise the cost of providing incentives to the economy, and may create an overall reduction in political support. In most cases, such costs are often overlooked during the program and project planning stages, thereby posing severe constraints on a smooth implementation process. In view of these and other reasons, the need for policy targeting as a strategy cannot be overemphasized. In support of the principles of good governance, the policy approach of targeting can be used to address the mechanisms to be put in place when adopting standards, as this will require specific and clear codes of behavior between member states.

NEPAD AND TARGETING STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPMENT AND REFORMS

Conceptually, targeting is intended to answer the question, who benefits from a given development program/project such as NEPAD. It involves the identification of specific beneficiaries of a given development program or project. A given program or project, in this case, is an object of public expenditure. Thus, targeting is a key design principle in public expenditure. It is also a key instrument for policy implementation. Targeting methods are used as a means by which programs such as those intended for poverty alleviation are implemented. In this case, poverty alleviation programs such as the provision of safety nets and income transfer for an identified group of people is an instance of targeting. Here, targeting emphasizes distribution of program benefits to lower income groups. More generally, in an agricultural development policy, an instance of targeting is directing payments to small or financially handicapped, vulnerable or poor farmers, or in public finance, which provides direct credit assistance to micro and small enterprises.

On the other hand, identified beneficiaries of a given project may be a group of people for which the project has been specifically designed. A group of people can be identified in terms of certain characteristics or conditions that make targeting a necessary means, by which, to benefit from such a program/project. These characteristics and conditions have economic, social and spatial-locational dimensions, each making it necessary to target development programs.

The key to decision-making within the domain of public policy galvanizes around political actors. If this attestation is correct, then the basic tenets of public policy making in Africa should hold resonance to democratic processes. Richard Simeon (1976) argues that key five variables which help us to understand why we get the policy that we do is based on the assumption that "the political machinery and the policy-makers at any point in time work within a framework which greatly restricts the alternatives they consider and the range of innovations they make..." and that "this framework, or set of constraints and opportunities, defines a set of problems considered to be important, a set of acceptable solutions or policy responses, and a set of procedures and rules by which they will be considered..." (548-580). In relating this position to what is facing the continent of

Africa, one is forced to reflect on the leadership styles we see across the continent. This calls for some type of harmonization of protocols of leadership engagement.

Firstly, in African public policy, protocols and economies have experienced uneven development of the various segments, units, or regions. Historically, a source of uneven development in African countries can be traced to the development of capitalism, which was experienced by the colonial societies in Africa. This was through African incorporation into an emerging world market and international division of labor, typically initiated during a period of European colonial rule. In this sense, capitalism came to these societies from outside rather than resulting from their internal dynamics. Thus there have been significant fundamental social changes of the chosen characters of capitalist development in African countries. This suggests key connections in the relationship between capitalism and colonialism and also, significant variation in the colonial experience, which resulted in uneven development within African colonies. Therefore uneven development within a given African country can be said to have resulted in links between economic sectors, technology, and social forms of production, in a spatial as well as social division of labor. The development of capitalism thus reshaped pre-existing social divisions, as well as creating new ones. Uneven development thus resulted in social differentiation. It has resulted in social relations of systemic inequality along lines of class, gender, and divisions (e.g. tribal and ethnic), and the process through which these social divisions and relations are created. Therefore, programs aimed at reversing this trend, tend to emphasize targeting areas or groups, which have been left out of development.

Secondly, the crisis of the 'development state' in African countries poses a critical problem. The central role of the state in public administration, development planning and economic management has had a strong resonance in Africa. It was seen as a principal means of managing the economy, directing it away from the interests of financing capital and markets toward meeting national needs and aspirations. The crisis of the developmental state that emanated from this central role of the state in the 1970s and early 1980s in Africa and even recently, in the 90s in South Africa, has resulted in locational and social differentiation in a considerable number of countries. The crisis of the developmental state has had far reaching implications, which resulted from the regular and persistent deprivation being experienced in many African countries. There had been fallen export volumes and values, squeezed import capacity, and problems of food supply, which together escalated external borrowing, followed by a decline in their credit worthiness.

In addition, Henry Barnstein, in 1992, in his study entitled "Agrarian Structures and Change in Sub-Saharan Africa" reports that poor and negative rates of return to investments in development projects increasingly frustrated and embarrassed the aid agencies especially the World Bank, that were centrally involved in their design, funding and management. Thus, the economic crisis of the 1980s tended to accentuate the unemployment situation and drastically undermined real incomes through rapid inflation.

A third condition, which may make targeting a given development program necessary, is what Robert Chambers, in 1988, in his work on poverty in India, referred to as *ascribed deprivation*. This means that certain categories of people in a given country are

more likely to be underdeveloped according to ascribed characteristics such as their gender (usually women), membership of a marginalized or oppressed group, ethnic or minority groups, low castes, tribes, age and politically isolated entities.

Fourthly, targeting mechanisms are also necessary where development experiences in a country can be distinguished spatially. This may be applicable to certain regions, rural localities, or types of rural development experienced. Even some villages may be more underdeveloped than others. Moreover, a group of people or a given location can be distinguished according to their different livelihood strategies in the regions, or the geographical characteristics, such as in arid areas.

The attempt by some African countries to restructure their national budgets and institute elements of good governing principles can also make targeting development programs necessary. Countries are being advised by international financial organizations such as the IMF, the World Bank and G7 countries, to cut expenditure and employ fiscal discipline in their budgets. An implication of this tends to be a reduction in the number of programs or projects that the government will finance. Thus, targeting government expenditure in the most desirable areas may be necessary. But all of these must be coupled with the idea of good governance and democratic principles. To this end, the new notion of human development, which puts people at the center of all development efforts based on exercising choices, cannot be fully captured without targeting. Targeting appears to be a way of putting the human development paradigm into practice.

The above conditions imply that if development programs were designed to ensure equitable welfare, then focusing the benefits on the needy clearly appears to be appropriate. A targeting policy can be designed with the aim of satisfying some stated objectives, which are the desired outcomes in the proposed policy.

Such objectives may include:

- Ensuring the equitable distribution of objects of development programs among major sectors of a given economy, such as micro-finance and credit to farmers;
- Implementing remedies for past discrimination, marginalization, or inequalities in the distribution of development programs;
- Increasing the participation of people in minority areas in the development process;
- Increasing diversity;
- Ensuring efficiency of government expenditure on programs and projects in terms of cost effectiveness and fiscal discipline;
- Ensuring even development of the various segments (regions, ethnic groups, tribes, classes) in a given country;
- Encouraging the participation of targeted group(s) in the factors, which affect them; and,
- Other desired outcomes as may be specified by a given policy maker.

Three requirements or watchwords are necessary in the design and implementation of a targeting policy. These are effectiveness, which ensures that the target group benefits directly from the program; minimal cost, in order to ensure efficiency; and, optimal poli-

tical support, which guarantees the sustainability of the program, and ensures the participation of the interest/pressure groups and stakeholders. Therefore when designing policy for targeting development programs and when considering feasible options for adoption, it is essential that these requirements or criteria be met.

In addition, policy makers in this area should carefully consider the possible use of a racial and ethnic neutral approach that could achieve the same goals while at the same time, using the demand orientated approach, which ensures alternative targeting mechanisms. While it is imperative to enforce fiscal responsibilities in order to reduce risks, the major concern will involve further consideration of the stakeholder issues such as leadership, politics and ethnicity. NEPAD, as a project of the African Union, must ensure flexibility of program distribution by avoiding a strict regional quota system and must subject distribution of projects to demand driven initiatives. The issue of the impact on non-minority regions and groups, as well as the expected extent and duration of the program, can be observed through close monitoring, and coordination of viable programs which must play a pivotal role if NEPAD and its grand initiatives are to succeed.

It is a vital requirement for governments within the NEPAD mandate to monitor and maintain country human development profiles which are based on information and other indicators. These profiles should spell out past achievements, continuing human deprivation, disparities, and future goals. However, it should be noted that this requires rigorous data gathering in order to adequately identify the present and future priority needs of a given section, or region in the country.

Targeting policies should be designed as part of comprehensive national development strategies for poverty alleviation and human development. Effective public policy targeting must be seen as a way of bridging the gap between economic growth and human development. Nevertheless, this requires the participation of all the segments of a given African country, regardless of social or class differentiation or ethnic affiliation. It should constantly seek a viable political strategy to develop national consensus and public support for economic and social reforms. This also requires the decentralization of all development initiatives and the creation of incentives such as tax shelter, which could jump-start the economy and in return, encourage and stimulate private sector initiatives, as well.

POLICY FORMATIONS: ROLE OF NGOS, CBOS, AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

At the national level, international development agencies should be involved in order to reduce political pressures on the government. In this case, inter-governmental units should have access to the agencies in their respective capacities as units of independent regional government. This approach should facilitate the creation of sensitive governance infrastructure between governments and other stakeholders to create an active civil society. NGOs and community groups could also play a vital role in enhancing human development. These groups generally tend to supplement governmental efforts in the provision of services. They can extend certain services to the people and

groups who otherwise have remained under-served. NGOs can also play a vital advocacy role by motivating public opinion and community participation and by helping to shape development priorities.

The demand-oriented targeting option can be seen as a more practicable option compared to other stated options. This is in terms of its potential for ensuring the flexibility of programs through alternative methods, beneficiary participation, the sustainability of programs, the advantage of reaching the intended beneficiaries directly, and in terms of its being socially and politically acceptable to the public. It should be noted, however, that fiscal decentralization that may result from demand oriented targeting, tends to pose a challenge to the targeting of programs in resource-poor regions. Some evidence suggests that the poor in resource-poor regions may not gain from decentralization if revenue assignment does not match new expenditure responsibilities. In future, more analytical work may be required in this area.

The ultimate goal of the Southeast European countries is to provide conditions for sustainable development and enhance the welfare of their respective populations. Efficient use of resources is a critical pre-requisite for transitioning from survival to development, developing modern regional infrastructure, and integrating with the community of developed states. Partnership with developed nations and good governance will provide the driving forces and tools for enhancing the capacity of national institutions to make sound policies for the effective and efficient management of resources. These actions will support the efficient and coordinated interaction between the state, society and business institutions.

NEPAD'S GOAL AND FUTURES POLICY

The strategic goal of the project is to provide for sustainable development in the region by playing a central role in overcoming regional barriers and creating favorable conditions for the penetration of advanced technologies to facilitate efficient use of the local natural resources (depletable and renewable). For this purpose, a Regional Network for Efficient Use of Resources could be established. It will function as a permanent mechanism for introducing municipalities to the principles of demand-side management (DSM), Executive Capacity Building (ECB) and Integrated Resource Planning (IRP). This will assist municipalities in the identification, development and implementation of local and regional investment projects for energy efficiency, efficient use of fuels and water, and other natural resources.

In addition, the network can address areas that need focused examination in municipalities throughout Africa, to improve the prospects of implementing investments for the use of viable resources. These subject areas could include, but should not be limited to the following:

- Tariffs/subsidies/collections;
- Municipal budget/subsidies and project finance;
- District heat restructuring/commercialization/privatization and efficiency;
- Environmental impacts, including global climate change.

- Executive Policy Management Training
- Stabilization of Protocols for regional activities.

OTHER INITIATIVES

The NEPAD initiative should include, at a minimum:

- the development of a database to meet the information needs of project owners, project developers, financing institutions, companies, and experts;
- an improvement in the local capacity for identification, development, and implementation of bankable projects;
- provision of assistance to municipalities in developing and maintaining a pipeline of bankable projects;
- identification of at least three pilot projects in the participating countries; and,
- the creation of centers of excellence in the management and administration of the affairs of the respective states of the AU.

INFORMATION POOL AND CAPACITY BUILDING

For the NEPAD idea to become really functional, it must be realized that the concept of NEPAD is only “a pledge by African leaders, based on a common vision and a firmed shared conviction...” (NEPAD, 2001) among leaders of the African continent. Africa and NEPAD need to create an information pool to address the complex problems of the NEPAD idea. NEPAD needs to create an information database on best practices and disseminate the lessons learned. It needs to initiate an Internet based information exchange system, based on advanced communication technologies. It must develop a computerized database for comparing energy consumption among municipalities, thereby providing useful benchmarks through the provision of information on sources of technical expertise capable of examining specific energy efficiency projects. In this connection, it should be able to provide information on sources of financing, including lenders and equipment vendors. The training of local end users, project developers and bankers on development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of bankable and viable projects for efficient use of resources is a needed imperative. Funke and Nsouli (2003) noted that “weak domestic policies have contributed...” to “...lackluster performance, though factors that are beyond the control of African countries, such as negative terms of trade shocks, have also affected performance...” (2003:5). NEPAD’s overall goals should be focused to some extent on assisting local authorities with the development of local and regional strategies, synergies and action plans to build local institutional environments for their successful implementation. For example, on the energy front, NEPAD and its functionaries should be able to assist the participating countries with some introduction of innovative governance and financial mechanisms and practices in respective countries. The effective utilization of the established Regional Network should be acted upon for the efficient use of resources in the participating countries, as this could help develop a strategy for the transition to self-sufficiency. All of these ideas

could culminate in the creation of a centralized Commission for the AU, which will in turn, serve NEPAD's needs.

Direct outcomes of this effort of NEPAD's continental initiatives will be the procurement of:

- trained local experts on governance, policy, project developers and bankers;
- an established Regional Network for Efficient Use of Africa's Resources to facilitate project identification and implementation;
- a strategy and Action Plan to sustain a political, administrative and policy network as part of a Regional Network;
- a pipeline of national and regional projects for financing and implementation; and;
- identified pilot projects.

A number of indirect outcomes that might be attained could also include:

Joint investment projects for the reconstruction of the region will serve as a basis for communication and collaboration at the local level in the regional blocks of the AU, which will contribute to overcoming the traditional conflicts and the tensions between the countries in the region. Furthermore, an aggregation of regionally based small and medium-size projects will increase the attractiveness to foreign investors and, thereby contribute to the economic development of the region.

In addition, savings (from reduced consumption of fuel, water, raw materials and energy) will allow local authorities and industrial enterprises to satisfy other urgent demands and or allow them to re-invest in new projects for efficient resource utilization.

A center of excellence could emerge through the establishment of a reliable collaborator for international organizations and financial institutions in the implementation of programs for reconstruction and stabilization of the Continent. This will serve as a resource for harmonization of regional policies with AU policies in the various fields of resource utilization, policy training and administrative planning, good governance and leadership issues.

The center of excellence could become a permanent source of ideas on nation-states planning and will facilitate dialogue between local, national, and international organizations at all levels (government, private sector, financial, and public interest). The network could be based on the fundamental concept of partnership and joint actions in the post OAU reconstruction process (AU) to replace a competitive and divisive environment existing between, and sometimes within, the states of the region.

At the end of this process, member countries of the AU will have the capacity to establish and maintain national networks, among others, to develop municipal energy strategies, develop bankable investment projects, and raise funding for their implementation. A strategy for the future development and self-sufficiency of these regional networks will outline the important role of the local municipal networks. After three to five years, it is envisioned that the regional network will limit its function to supporting regional cooperation through the exchange of experience and lessons learned. Thus, the role of the regional network will be to transform existing infrastructures from being a driving force to a catalyst of good governance, which will drive the NEPAD initiative.

FINANCING THE NETWORK

It is envisaged that such Centers of Excellence will be self-sustaining and should consist of a voluntary association of local authorities, NGOs, and other enterprises from participating states.

Initial financial support will be required for:

- founding the network and developing a strategy for Development and an Action Plan for the first years of operation;
- collecting basic information on the resource utilization and efficiency potential in the region;
- building the capacity of local organizations to identify and implement investment projects, and creating a system for peer exchange between the participants; and,
- assisting municipalities in developing an initial package of regional investment projects at the local level.

GOVERNANCE IMPERATIVES

A great number of citizens, although interested in the quality of public services that the state should provide, are not acquainted with the process of creating, preparing and executing the budget. They, therefore constantly demand answers as to how public money is being spent, and are trying to get more actively involved in the budget discussion. Citizens understand that the budget contains funds gathered from all taxpayers, but also that the budget revenues are limited, and that the state fulfills the needs of those who can publicly demonstrate, justify and fight for those needs. Therefore, in order to actively participate in budget discussions, citizens need to become better acquainted with the budget process, its acceptance and execution. On the other hand, government representatives, from the president to those in parliament, need to make suggestions for the best allocation of budget resources with respect to the needs and desires of participating citizens through a guided, yet complex set of procedures.

The goal of this type of infrastructure within the NEPAD initiative will be to improve public services infrastructure at state and local levels by transferring expertise between AU member states. The personnel will also be trained to make use of relevant computer programs across borders. In a similar vein, the capacity building process will strive to develop specific skills concerning, the strengthening of organizational structures in terms of accountability and transparency; monitoring techniques; the development of successful communication strategies; the running of successful public awareness campaigns; the development of efficient relations with the media and an understanding of its rules and operational procedures with the development of sound relations with the community and an understanding of its rules and operational models. All of these can be attained through the promotion of effective leadership and governance styles and the establishment of cooperation with other tiers of government authorities.

CONCLUSION

The culture of cooperation within the NEPAD initiative between AU Member States will further improve the procurement of good governance on the level of self-governing units, local governments and municipalities. Such cooperation could include the exchange and sharing of experience and knowledge acquired through their individual cooperation with local governments. It could also share international best practices both continentally and internationally, and knowledge acquired at various training stages could be widely disseminated with the aim of improving public and community services at the local level through an exchange of expert teams and various forms of internships.

A wider and more direct involvement of citizens in public affairs, in the decision making and problem solving processes on the local community level, through capacity building to establish and develop trans-frontier cooperation and cooperation with local governments in the region, could be envisaged. Some of these initiatives might involve direct targeted lobbying for the acceptance of similar and compatible standards in the countries of the region regarding local government powers and competencies, so as to make their trans-frontier and regional cooperation possible and effective without any special consent and intervention of the central authorities. The absolute buy-ins of different stakeholders through support to small projects directly, could positively influence the cooperation of actors such as local governments, NGOs, trade unions, media in local community building.

Finally, the analyses and suggestions positioned in this paper have brought to light some of the factors, which must be addressed in the AU's attempt to make the NEPAD's initiatives a fruitful one. Although the road to a meaningful collaboration within NEPAD states lies in the future, the present is crucial for Africa's economic and political recovery.

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