

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM: CASE STUDY 1

In country A, a UN agency supported the introduction of a new Management Information System to help run Social Protection. This was being conducted at the same time as a major project aimed at reforming social programs. Unfortunately, there was still no consensus on the practical details of the new programs.

As such the initiative was confronted with the following difficulties:

- The rules of the existing programs were not clear; the regulations were outdated and were not uniformly applied. It was felt that there was in fact discretion and political interference on judging entitlement and granting benefits in the existing programs.
- The existing programs were felt to be inefficient and were being phased down, so there was no great incentive to spend too much time and resources in codifying them.
- The commitment of the government to reforming social protection programs was dwindling in the context of increased budget strains due to economic crisis.
- There was no clarity on the details of the new programs.
- Government wanted to include both cash and in kind programs as well as modules for case management of social welfare services (e.g. early education programs, disabled people integration workshops, child protection case management) into the new system, which increased the complexity of the MIS.
- There was little access to statistics on the programs and almost no access to financial data. The data the team saw showed little take up or funding of some programs in a few regions, especially by central government.
- There were different initiatives at the Ministry level being conducted separately from the automation program aimed at collecting information and re-registering beneficiaries into existing programs.
- The information collected from the ongoing process run by the statistics department showed that the registration of beneficiaries was poorly done (insufficiency of quality of data collected, poor data entry in records) and beneficiary records were poorly kept (bad storing conditions, no systematic filing system)
- The level of literacy of welfare officers at local level was low, particularly in IT systems.
- There was a certain level of decentralization of decision making in social programs at intermediary levels of regional government. As a consequence, it was difficult to assess the situation at decentralized levels because not all subnational levels were eager to see a national system of social benefits come into place.
- In addition, there was no structure at local/municipal level to deliver social programs this was also under review. But progress was slow due to slow progress in the implementation of decentralization laws.

QUESTIONS

- 1) Are these problems familiar? What problems do you think resulted from each of the items above?
- 2) Many fears existed around the context set out above:
 - Government feared that system would require a lot of financial investment to hire qualified people to operate the systems at local level
 - There were fears of inability to maintain the systems locally
 - The government was concerned about the safeguard of integrity of information contained in the database
 - It was concerned about the possible misuse of the information, by making it widely accessible, including to public or media
- 3) Do you feel that each of these concerns is valid?
- 4) If so, why? And if not, why not?



MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM: CASE STUDY 2

Country B ran two distinct initiatives supporting the introduction of a MIS. One was meant to improve administration, the other the operations of Social Programs. Soon it became evident that the two were going to be conflicting as they were different sides of the same coin.

The administration was not isolated from the running of the programs. In fact the running of the programs should be the essential part of the MIS, as statistics, planning, legal, logistics, human resources and policy departments relied massively on program data.

Information needed to run the administration relied on the data made available by programs. However, these were two different streams of work, tasked to different consultancies which resulted in conflicting implementation and overlap of mandates.

QUESTIONS

- 1) Discuss this situation, and reflect on flaws in the approach.
- 2) Describe conflicting interests in terms of implementing the MIS.



MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM: CASE STUDY 3

An international organization promoted a widely integrated system of social protection in a country. International consultants indicated that there was a unique opportunity for the country to leapfrog by using modern technologies and modernizing social assistance delivery systems spread across several ministries. However,

- An early assessment revealed that the e-government initiative to introduce a government intranet for all departments was progressing slowly. As a result many departments and public agencies developed their own distinct IT systems.
- The penetration of a dedicated e government platform to provinces was very limited to a few pilot provinces and would continue to be so for a long time.
- Because social protection programs were divided between different ministries, there was competition and even rivalry between government agencies for a role in coordination of social protection.
- Interoperability between the systems was non existent
- Targeting was different, sometimes there would be overlapping of benefits and beneficiaries. The international organization saw an opportunity to apply a uniform selection process, focusing assistance on the poorest.

QUESTIONS

Do you think that the International organization's idea to implement a widely integrated system using modern technology is a good one? If so, why? And if not, why not?

