

Acknowledgments

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Preface

The Reality of Aid Network presents this 2011 Report as a contribution to the preparatory work for the Fourth High Level Forum (HLF4) on Aid Effectiveness to be held in Busan, South Korea in November 2011.

This special report presents a body of evidence on progress in implementing the international reform agenda to increase aid effectiveness under the framework of the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action. It provides analysis on what has happened on the ground and is based on a wide and diverse range of information sources, such as national research, official meetings and interviews with various development actors.

The main focus of this report has been, deliberately, on two issues critical to measure, from the perspective of The Reality of Aid – how much progress has been made on democratic ownership and development outcomes for people.

The contents of this “shadow report” show how democratic ownership and the positive results of development for the most excluded and vulnerable groups are closely related. But it is also full of examples of how in many cases the policies and practices implemented in the current international development cooperation framework affect democratic ownership and obstruct progress and achieving effective development results for the benefit of vast sectors of the poor and marginalized.

Universally valid conclusions about progress in terms of democratic ownership and obtaining effective development results from the implementation of the reform agenda of Paris and Accra are extremely difficult not only because of their complex nature and extent and the wide diversity of national contexts in which they are applied. However, evidence from this report, which includes assessments from 32 countries, suggests that reforms must address not only long-standing issues in the practices of donors, but also key issues of governance and accountability in developing countries.

The HLF4 represents a unique opportunity to advance in this direction. To this end, the results of Busan will have to go beyond what was achieved so far and taking into account the achievements and limitations of the aid reforms of Paris and Accra, and move effectively towards a “third reform agenda” paying special attention to the objectives of

democratic ownership and the achievement of results for the goals of poverty reduction and development based on the full enjoyment of human rights by everyone. We hope that this report from The Reality of Aid will contribute to enrich the debate, present a wide range of evidence from international, national and local development actors, and underscore proposals to stimulate reflection and the search for alternatives around a more comprehensive view of international cooperation and define a future plan of action to make it more effective in terms of democratic ownership and development outcomes for aid recipients.

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