MODULE V
INSTITUTIONALISING PME

Contents

CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

This module focuses on the following aspects: It begins by situating the PME processes within development interventions and looks at how monitoring, evaluation and learning are central to understanding development interventions and making them more effective. The debate about whether PME is primarily about accountability or about learning has been a long-standing one. This module focuses on that debate and expands the understanding of both learning and accountability. It then looks at what institutionalising is and how does one institutionalise PME. The challenges in doing so are dealt with in some detail. How does one institutionalise learning within PME is looked at and finally the module some pointers for reflection and conversations within your organisation.

CHAPTER-2

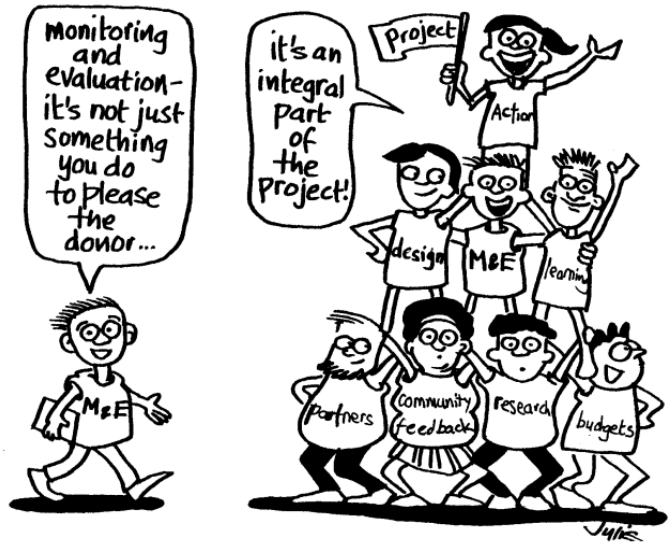
SITUATING THE PME PROCESS WITHIN DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS

Here we are speaking about development interventions from the perspective of funded "Not for Profit"(NPO) or as we call them Non Governmental organisations (NGO). This is also increasingly referred to as the third sector, which includes both funders and NGOs. In that context, four factors that influence the third sector performance are:

- Global discourses on development and environment – and the frameworks of these dissertations that the funder and NGO both subscribe to. Examples of such discourses are rights based frameworks, human rights based frameworks, welfare oriented frameworks, etc.
- The relationship between NGOs and funders –the extent to which the relationship is of partnership or of a power relationship.
- The management processes and systems – for planning, implementing, reporting and monitoring
- The processes of organisational learning that exist within the NGO, within the funder organisation and at the level of communities.

At the NGO level, managing any development intervention involves four interlinked tasks:

1. Guiding the strategy – assessing whether an initiative is heading towards its objectives and goals (Outcomes and impacts) and, if not, quickly adjusting the strategy or even the objectives.
2. Ensuring effective operations – managing financial, physical and human resources to ensure that the outputs are achieved.
3. Establishing information gathering and management mechanisms – ensuring that systems are in place to provide the information needed, and encourage learning.
4. Creating a learning environment – establishing relationships with all involved in order to build trust, stimulate innovation, and foster commitment.



Therefore whether speaking of the relationship between funders and NGOs or about the managing of NGOs themselves, aspects of PME as well as the aspect of learning feature as central elements.

CHAPTER-3

ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING AS TWIN GOALS OF PME - A DEBATE

The issue of greater accountability of third sector organisations has gathered strength, particularly as many of these organisations depend on public money to deliver their results. This demand has led to a trend to "professionalise" third sector organisations as the hope (Or assumption, rather) is that the more professional the organisation, the more accountable it is likely to be. This has resulted in the dominance of business models particularly areas of social entrepreneurship. Even in the more traditional forms of development work the increasing use of the language of performance, a focus on outcomes, and the quest for an evidence base for investment of public money are all increasingly shaping the character of third sector monitoring and evaluation practices. While one key focus of monitoring and evaluation is to find appropriate ways to hold NGOs accountable, there seems to be growing recognition of the need for situating learning as another key focus of PME.

In theory, (*Let's call this Mode A*) why NGO's articulate and measure their effects and changes is a combination of accountability and learning. Thus, they are interested in measuring these in order to:

1. Assess if they reached what they set out to do.
2. Be accountable, particularly for public funds.
3. Check that resources are utilised properly and efficiently.
4. See if change actually happened.
5. Understand how change happens in order to intervene more effectively.
6. Learn how to develop and modify their understanding of how change happens.
7. Shift from a mode of activity based planning to a more strategic outlook on planning.

In practice (*Mode B*) however what largely guides NGO's to measure achievements or outcomes is more likely to be

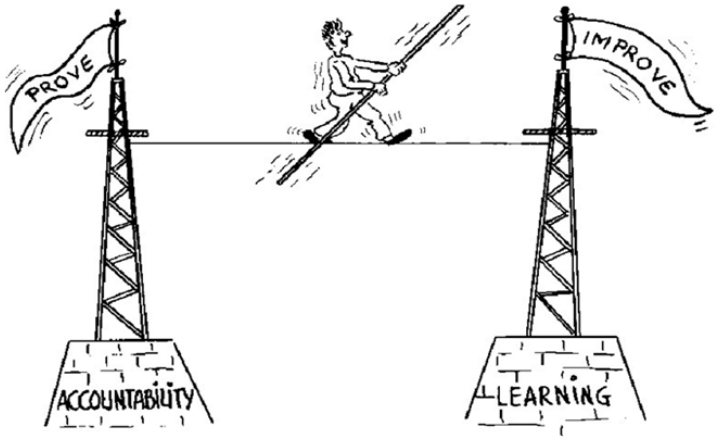
1. Because the funders want it.
2. To sustain funding or compete for funding.

The key to check whether an NGO operates from Mode A or Mode B is the extent to which they have institutionalised PME processes and the extent to which they are learning from these. The indicators for this would be:

1. To what extent are their primary stakeholders (sometimes referred to as "target groups") involved in setting goals, shaping frameworks of assessment or designing and involved in assessment processes
2. How much do they share their results and assessments with their primary stakeholders – e.g. communities they work with and for?
3. What are spaces for critical reflection and for recasting their 'Theories of Change' (Understanding of how change happens in their particular context or situation)

Not everything that counts can be counted and not everything that can be counted counts - Albert Einstein

There has often been a debate as to whether PME is primarily to ensure accountability or primarily to ensure learning. And indeed if the two goals can co-exist!



Source: Terry Smutylo & Daniel Morales-Gomez

If PME is necessary and in fact exists to ensure accountability, the question then is what accountability and to whom? If intended to encourage learning processes, then what kind of learning's, by whom, and at what levels?

According to a research report titled 'Accountability and Learning: Developing Monitoring and Evaluation in the Third Sector' by Charities Evaluation Services (Ellis

J, 2008), focusing on the third sector in the UK, three-quarters of the survey respondents reported several organisational benefits from monitoring and evaluation. But, the research report emphasised, that wider evidence suggests that there is still a predominant belief that monitoring and evaluation is done mainly for the benefit of funders and regulators.

This is somewhat reinforced by externally derived targets and performance measures – when the targets are set by funders more than by the organisation itself. In the research study, some funders recognized that further learning might be positively discouraged when both, funders and NGOs wanted to demonstrate success – i.e. there was pressure to demonstrate success.

How development projects and programmes define success and articulate desired changes becomes important. Project objectives and indicators in the bid to be SMART (A usual description of –specific, measureable, accountable, replicable, timely) tend to focus on what can be measured or at least described in tangible terms. There are quantitative and measurable goals such as increase in the afforested area, or increase in annual income of women headed families or watershed management plans developed, number of women in *panchayats*. However when the goal is social change it is not always that goals are quantitative or easily measurable.

The recognition that all development work is ultimately aiming toward social change makes both the objectives and the process of measurement far more complex. Social change projects are necessarily located in understanding social power analysis – the shifts in ideological underpinnings and the hierarchies that are essential to them, the institutions and structures that perpetuate these, new structures and institutions that challenge or demolish these. Thus working on feudal or patriarchal or caste or class based hierarchies for instance would be the longer-term goal if social change is what is desired. However this is too long term to be fitted in project based funding or project timeframes. Therefore most development projects tend to settle for more material or measurable goals or shifts. These shifts also need to take into account the fact that even for these shifts to take place there are more complex and progressive changes in the behaviour of the actors involved.

Thus aiming for social change in the long term requires at least to some extent the ability to identify key actors, resistances, relationships and mapping the forces that perpetuate inequality and differential access to resources, mapping social power relations and the consequent shifts. It requires surfacing assumptions and continuously refining and building on theories of change.

In fact, results are about not just shifts in power relations but also about learning about how shifts in power relations take place. Thus learning becomes a key result and a key strategy in the empowering process and therefore becomes a central component of the PME process as well.

Irene Guijit (Guijit I 2008) refers to what is seen as the seeming incompatibility between the twin goals of accountability and learning in M&E systems."Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is a common site of a tug-of-war between the need for 'accountability' and the desire to ensure 'learning'. Often neither term is defined very clearly. Official policies that profess the importance of learning are often contradicted by bureaucratic protocols and accounting systems which demand proof of results against pre-set targets. In the process, data are distorted (Or obtained with much pain) and learning is aborted (Or is too haphazard to make a difference)".She suggests that before these two aspects are concluded as incompatible it is important to understand what accountability means and what learning is about.

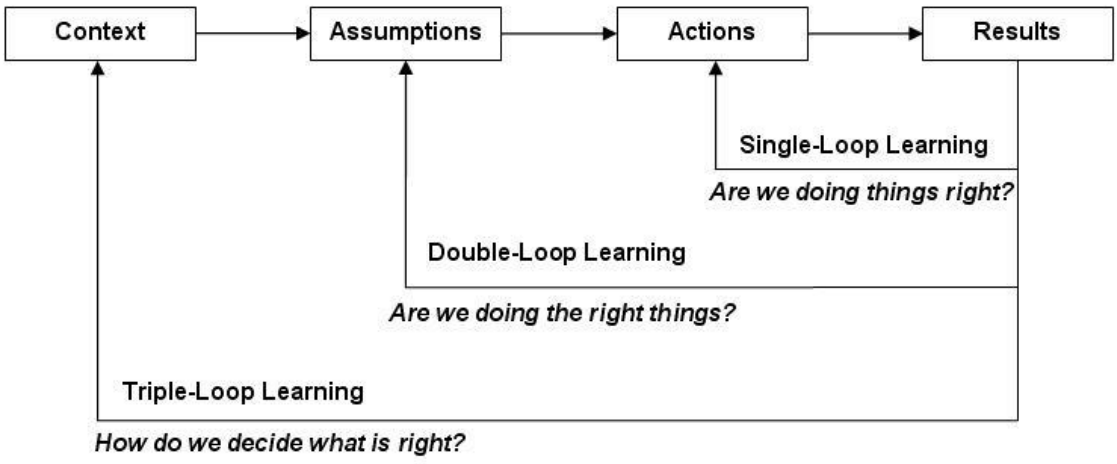
CHAPTER-4

UNDERSTANDING LEARNING PROCESSES

Learning in the context of development interventions has several interpretations. One of these is that learning is the process of continual reflection about visions, strategies, actions and contexts that enable continual readjustments.

Chris Argyris (Argyris C, 1977) a pioneer in organisational learning processes noted that learning is a process of detecting and correcting 'error'. Error, he explained, is any feature of knowledge or knowing that inhibits learning. He introduced the idea of different kinds or levels of learning that are possible within any context. Argyris called this single, double and triple loop learning, to draw our attention to the processes by which these different kinds of learning take place.

Single loop learning and questioning focuses on 'are we doing things well' without necessarily questioning the assumptions that lie (and are often hidden) beneath this question. Double loop questioning wonders 'are we doing the right things' which forces a first level exploration of assumptions. Triple loop questioning bumps it up to another level by asking 'How do we know what it is "right' to do?"



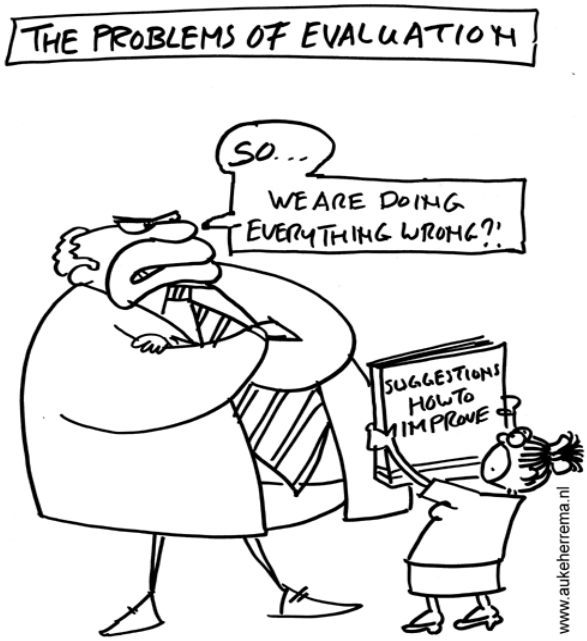
Organisations often manage to accomplish single loop learning and their monitoring and evaluation systems are designed for that. However, what PME systems need to work on is to integrate processes of double and triple loop learning as well.

Argyris explains with a simple example: "Single loop learning can be compared with a thermostat that learns when it is too hot or too cold and then turns the heat on or off. It is able to perform this task because it can receive information (about the temperature of the room) and therefore turn it on or off. If the thermostat could question itself as to whether it should set itself at 68 degrees it would be capable not only of detecting error but of questioning the underlying policies and goals as well as its own programme.

That is a second and more comprehensive enquiry and hence may be called double loop learning." Double and triple loop levels of learning by their nature imply a more strategic view of planning and implementation of programme. Single loop learning would be about increasing efficiency at the activity level of doing things well, but does not allow for a deeper inquiry.

So what makes double loop learning less common? Argyris explains that organisational employees often find themselves in a double bind. There are stated and unstated organisational norms that encourage and frown upon the transparent discussion about errors or what is not going OK, or about uncovering and revisiting assumptions that individual and the system seem to be operating from. In order to deal with this "organisational game playing", indirect messages are given. Gossip or petty politics is the way of communication about difficult issues. People rarely speak up in meetings. These kind of behaviours lead to a work culture that prevent themselves or anyone else challenging their actions or the assumptions on which these are based. In short, learning is inhibited.

There are many NGOs that claim they are participative and transparent, but when staff challenge or raise questions those in leadership are not happy. Often staff is worried that too many questions or challenges will lead to a backlash on them. Thus the difference between stated and practiced values is to be examined.



Merely conducting capacity building workshops, or mandating increased participation in forums does not ensure learning in the organisation. Learning can happen only when people are able to access their assumptions, face the contradictions and dilemmas, learn to work with both advocacy and inquiry, and explore both feelings and the thinking behind feelings.

Learning entails not just pragmatic problem-solving but also reflection on the process by which this happens. Seen like this, learning requires capacities for critical reflection, identifying assumptions, seeking evidence about what is going well or not, exploring perspectives and multiple lines of evidence, relating evidence to expectations, and analysing and negotiating possible consequences.

When considering learning in terms of levels in the organisation, (Community, collectives, field, and different levels in the organisation) there are additional capacities needed. These include facilitation, convening relevant people, process design, creative thinking and conflict resolution.

CHAPTER-5

UNDERSTANDING ACCOUNTABILITY

If learning is understood in the way described above, the connection to and potential for synergy with accountability can become clearer. But this also calls for are thinking of how accountability is currently portrayed.

What is currently understood as accountability is "answerability". When promises are made or finances are raised on behalf of a group of people or a cause, it is considered justified to expect some feedback on how the money was used and if promises were kept. This also implies a relationship of power - because to define accountability principles requires us to define who has the power to call for an account, and who is obligated to give an account of their actions.

When considering accountability, the capacities needed include the ability to formulate clear performance expectations, gather and analyse evidence to understand effectiveness, draw conclusions about consequences, and engage in a dialogue with those holding to account.

Another view or perhaps an additional dimension of accountability is that accountability can also be taken to mean taking responsibility for oneself. The ability to articulate clearly the basis of strategic decisions, the underlying theory of change, the decisions and interventions that followed this and, of course, how money was spent. Such strategic accountability seeks to answer the question: "Did we act as strategically and effectively as possible?" This perspective is what helps accountability and learning to converge.

CHAPTER-6

INSTITUTIONALISING PME SYSTEMS

"Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?" Alice speaks to the Cheshire Cat. "That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.

– Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland

Institutionalisation refers to the process of embedding some concept (For example a belief, norm, social role, particular value or mode of behaviour) within an organisation, social system or society as a whole. The term may also be used in a political sense to apply to the creation or organisation of governmental institutions or particular bodies responsible for overseeing or implementing policy, for example in welfare or development. So we have educational institutions, institutions to deliver justice such as the courts, governance institutions at various levels such as the panchyats and municipal councils to the houses of parliament. (Ref Wikipedia:https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Institutionalisation)

Each of these institutions grows over a period of time and develops a certain way of working or a culture. For instance various governance bodies in our country currently are known to be bureaucratic and even corrupt. Educational institutions are seen to chase after money more than being student centric. Some *panchayats* have been able to institutionalise more gender aware norms and have transparent and accountable ways of working.

In the organisational sphere, to institutionalise something (Usually a value and policy a practice or an activity) typically means to establish it as a convention or norm in an organisation or culture.

While the purpose of institutionalising is initiated as a value or ideology based act, if adequate checks and balances are not built in, institutions can also become bureaucratic, authoritarian or totalitarian. Hence the ability of institutions or the institutionalising process to have an inbuilt system of voice, learning, and check and balance becomes critical, in order that what is institutionalised, does not in turn, become oppressive.

For example, many NGO's have founders who are charismatic individuals. Their charisma helps start the idea of the NGO. Over time however, others in the system find it difficult to differ and the organisation is not able to assess and align its relevance. The founder also stays on, finding it difficult to handover to others and allow new ideas or ways of working to revitalize the organisation.

Many development agencies and NGOs underestimate the importance of learning. They fear negative evaluations because they may be seen as evidence of failure, rather than as opportunities for learning. Rigorous PME processes are avoided and in the process valuable learning opportunities are missed condemning the system to keep repeating what may be ineffective or less effective ways of working. This is commonplace where either the insights from external evaluations or the findings form PME processes are brushed aside or it is business as usual!

(cartoons from the UK HE STEM Evaluation Masterclass)

There are at least two factors that make learning in organisations involved in development particularly challenging.

1. First, they frequently lack clear-cut external feedback mechanisms indicators that the commercial organisations have such as turnover, profit and market

share that can inform and direct the learning process. The goals of development organisations are often stated in ambiguous terms, which makes it difficult for them to see or agree on the direction learning should take, as it is not clearly defined what 'good performance 'or 'good results' looks like. This is where a robust PME system has a role to play in more clearly or specifically defining what is to be changed and how this can be identified. (Theory of Change, Outcome Mapping, Outcome and Impact Orientation are methods aimed to do this)

2. Second, complacency can go unpunished for a longer period of time than is possible in commercial business. This is because NGO's need to take a conscious decision to analyse performance and identify where and how improvements can be made as external feedback is not readily forthcoming. Failure to perform is not immediately or even in the short term punished, because for these organisations survival depends, to a large extent, on ideological beliefs and political affiliations in turn leading to financial support in the form of funding. Hence the development of new insights and the introduction of important changes can be postponed for longer periods.

However like the mythical '*parable of the boiled frog*[1]', unless monitoring evaluation and learning are institutionalised, NGOs will not have ways of recognising either changes in context or the ineffectiveness of their ways and will like the frog get slowly and comfortably boiled.

[1]Peter Senge, in his book The Fifth Discipline, offers the parable of the "boiled frog" to help us understand organization learning disabilities. The frog in the parable is not used to gradual changes in its environment and will not react to a gradual rise in temperature.

CHAPTER-7

CHALLENGES IN INSTITUTIONALISING PME SYSTEMS

a. PME systems usually respond to project funding requirements and end up being developed based on funder requirements. If an organisation has multiple funders and mostly project based funding the development of consistent practice across the organisation and the development of an integrated system becomes difficult. Thus while a particular project may have learnt something, there is no guarantee or even a system by which this learning spreads across to other parts /projects of the organisation. This then may result in loss of learning across the organisation – particularly learning between projects and learning about organisational impact. It may also result in reinventing the wheel, or committing the same mistakes again and again!

b. Funding requirements continue to dominate PME and the funders also have a role in the extent to which NGOs are able to institutionalise PME. Short-term nature of funding and reporting timescales end up being counter-productive to institutionalising robust and consistent PME systems. Also, with the increasing demand for impact information and shrinking of funds, NGOs often agree on a level of impact that cannot be realised or measured feasibly.

c. With multiple funders and each having their own frameworks of monitoring and reporting, NGO's also find reporting requirements over burdensome and are not able to build an integrated system that can be institutionalised for their requirements.

   In one case a large human rights organisation had over 10 large funders and several small project funds. Any attempt to institutionalise a PME system was problematic as each funder had a different requirement and framework, and working for consensus among the key funders was not a viable option in the view of the NGO.

d. Funders often do not link monitoring requirements proportionately to the size of an organisation or the level of funding, the type of organisation or the stage of its lifestyle and its own resources in terms of people when expecting PME data. Thus paradoxically heavy reporting requirements may act as a disincentive to learning and strategic improvement because the NGO sees PME largely as a funding requirement and because too much time goes into monitoring data and reporting. In smaller organisations it typically falls on the director and the finance person to finalise reports.

e. Differing location of monitoring and evaluation responsibilities is another challenge. The CES research (Ellis J 2008) on M&E practices found that restricting monitoring and evaluation responsibilities to management or finance and fundraising functions, rather than integration within core functions, could reinforce the priority given to compliance over learning. Specialist posts could provide valuable input but did not in themselves ensure integration of monitoring, evaluation and learning and in fact could discourage it. Very often a PME section or a PME officer ends up with the function or person taking on the job of compiling the reports. They do not see their role as facilitators of a process of learning from the PME process.

f. Budgeting time, money and people resources for PME: International programmes often recommend 10 to 15% of budgets for PME processes but this ranges from as low as 2% to 15%. Often the high expectations from monitoring and evaluation are not matched with the considerable amount of time and resources required to institutionalise an integrated and learning focused PME system and culture. Budgeting for the monitoring expenditure would include for data collection, data processing, data analysis and writing up results. This should be realistically assessed before the tools are applied on a large scale. The main resources required are: people's time, necessary skills, material costs and logistics. Review meetings also require staff time. Also budgeting for capacity building, for hand-holding of the institutionalising or M&E, the recognition that this is not a onetime process as staff turnover may imply capacity building at frequent intervals.

g. Championing or supporting the PME process is another key requirement for institutionalising it. Are key actors involved in monitoring and review? What is the message sent to the whole system about the place for PME within the organisation? This in turn will influence the support for PME at different levels within the organisation.

   It is not as if the senior leadership are the only champions of the PME process. In fact it is the project team that is usually the first set of actors who clearly express a need for monitoring changes their project brings about at a higher level (At the outcome and impacts level). This usually comes about when there is an orientation to project staff about outcome and impact orientation, its value addition to their work, particularly their increased ability to plan and implement more strategically. In such a case project team members tend to be motivated, and see the value in investing time and effort in monitoring changes and developing systems for monitoring higher-level changes.

h. Data flow and communication channels and participation of different groups in the organisation in PME is the next challenge. How much data that comes up from the monitoring process is available to different levels in the system. How the explorations and meaning making around this data are designed. Does the right to confront and assess belong only to some people? These questions relate to both the design of the system and to the culture of the organisation

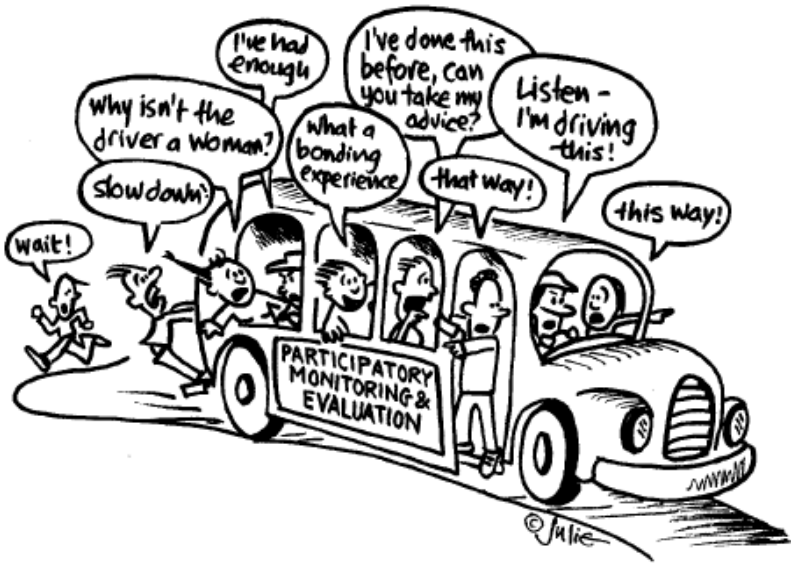
   While communication becomes a critical need of any organisation process, it is vital in the case of PME. The danger of learning being in silos is always present. In a large and complex project with many components carefully thought out communication channels are preconditions for a sharing, disseminating and learning as well as project management. Often this is the most taken for granted part of the PME process but is the most vital poor communication is like building a dam over a potential river of flowing learning! Communication should be also monitored on a regular basis; it gives us a hint about our relationships within the team but also with the communities and with outsiders.

i. Participatory monitoring often becomes a technique and is not seen as a necessary and core component of institutionalising the PME process. Participatory methods imply a continuous dialogue between actors. It is a value

and a core level of trust is a prerequisite for any participatory process to be meaningful and contributory. The willingness to be transparent with information, the openness to multiple perspectives, the time and pace such a process needs, must be considered very seriously before deciding or committing to participatory monitoring.

j. The involvement of communities in PME is a key design issue but this cannot be glossed over merely as an ideological issue. It requires careful planning and some reality-oriented implementation.
   - The capacity building for monitoring.
   - The willingness and time and space for communities to do this.
   - In case there are existing community based organizations then the level to which they are institutionally organised is another factor.
   - Will this process require monetary resources?
   - How are the tools and indicators decided to enable genuine community involvement and empowerment
   - What support systems do they need?

A notional commitment to participatory process sometimes allows for a certain level of involvement of communities but draws the line at their genuinely influencing development decisions.



k. Creating a platform or a forum where the community insights and that of the NGO are pooled together for joint interpretation and insights is another important point. The design of these spaces requires careful thought as the language, tools, ways of discussion and meaning making at the NGO level and the community level are very different.

l. It is important also that the organisation does not go overboard in its monitoring enthusiasm or evangelism. Any organisation has an optimum capacity for monitoring and going overboard will also result in monitoring fatigue! Sometimes organisations develop immense amount of baseline data, or get into minute details about data capture. Therefore questions like:
   - How do we want to use the results of monitoring?
   - How much of time and effort should which people spend on which parts of the system?
   - Where does learning take place? How does learning from different parts link to other parts?

Will help determine the institutional energy and investment in the system.

CHAPTER-8

CHALLENGES IN INSTITUTIONALISING LEARNING WITHIN PME

By working to make learning processes the heart of PME, one works on organisation culture, structures, processes and values. In short this is a way to work on organisational development itself. Several elements characterise the way in which learning is institutionalised within PME systems:

a. The first creating the space for M&E related work and to ensure that this space is not quickly sacrificed when other urgent work comes up. Organisations may meet for a few days every quarter or perhaps just one day a month. The point is that learning only happens with dedicated space. It is a distinct activity in its own right.

b. Second is timing. Learning is best done when there is experience to learn from. Learning thus follows the rhythm of experience. The cycles of learning spaces and process thus need to follow the cycles of experience – if too early there is not enough experience to learn from, and if too late the freshness and detail in the experience gets lost and more generalized learning ensues.

c. Championing: As in the case of the PME process the championing of learning by those in leadership become a crucial signal for the organisation. Are those in leadership serious about learning? Are they demonstrating the competencies and values required building a culture of genuine learning, or is only lip service being paid to the learning agenda?

d. The other staff inevitable watches for signals from those in leadership – and they watch for both the overt or obvious signals as well as the covert or more hidden signals to decipher if the leadership is genuinely committed to learning or if this is lip service. Based on this the individuals decide to how much and even whether to invest and take the risks required for authentic learning.

   Creating any new culture and discipline requires practice, persistence and adaptation. To get through the early stages, especially, responsibility for ensuring

that learning happens cannot be delegated to people who do not have the authority to make it happen. These processes demand huge investments, with important strategic and operational implications. If the leadership is not actively involved and explicitly supporting these processes, they are unlikely to work.

e. Involvement and participation: Who learns and who should learn from the PME is the issue here. Very often this is just a thin slice of the organisation – the M&E department, or the senior team. However, both the monitoring process and learning can be institutionalised if the experiences are rendered transparent and everyone has the possibility to learn. It is the power relations within an organisation will influence what and whose learning is valued and shared, and therefore a careful design of the PME process is critical to work with assumptions and realities about how power relations work in the organisation.

f. Developing the needed skills and competences: The 'inputs' that this requires are also the 'outputs' – trust, confidentiality, collegiality, respect, and listening without judgment. Developing these capacities will not happen automatically but must be worked with to develop.

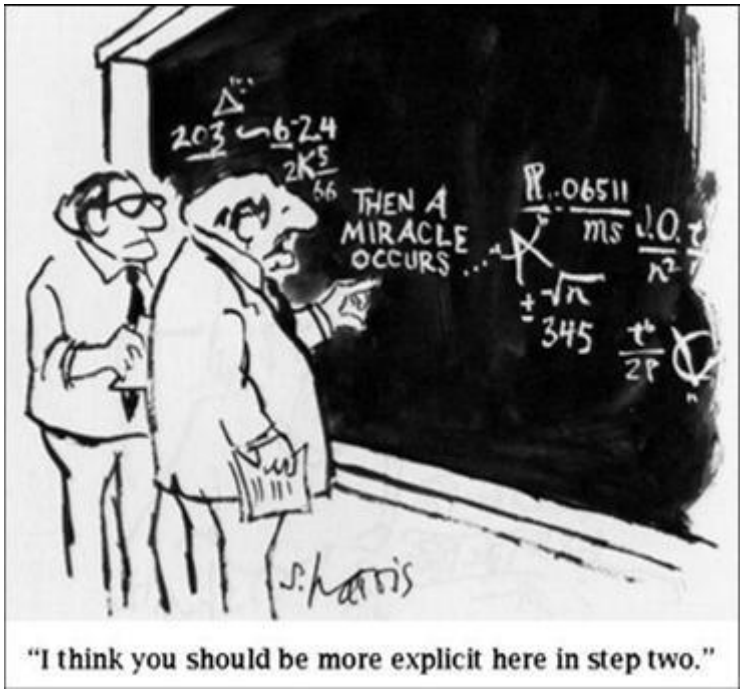
g. Organisational learning requires both individual and collective learning processes that purposely work towards changed organisational behaviour. In practice, there is often a focus on the information-based dimension of learning, characterised by the increasing adoption of knowledge management strategies among NGOs. This focus can underestimate the significance of the personal, relational, contextual, intellectual, formal and informal dimensions of collective learning processes.

h. Another challenge in bringing learning central to the M & E is to consciously build in the resources to ensure that it is central. This implies budgeting time, money and building the capacity for learning centred PME. Often organisations consider financial resources as the only "resource" that matters. But often allocating time becomes the huge constraint.

i. Irene Guijit (Guijt I, 2010) refers to this "The most heard refrain from organisations seeking to be learning-oriented is 'we don't have time'. Reflection requires time to

gather evidence, meet, analyse, agree and embed in new practices and policies. A culture of doing and delivering is common in development, and so reflection and learning have to be highly functional. This is compounded by overly ambitious goal-setting by development organisations themselves". Thus, learning becomes a nice to have side effect of PME but not an essential core component of the system.

j. Organisations need to have clear processes set aside for learning – concrete, creative and visible learning mechanisms need to be identified. Usually the PME learning space ends up being about report writing where material facts, activities are reported. A few members of the organisation focus on writing a report and the focus is often based on donor frameworks and requirements.



"I think you should be more explicit here in step two."

k. The focus on learning is often one among several questions in a report and this is answered routinely by the NGOs. Funders also rarely engage in deep conversations about what learning is taking place and the anxiety is about completing projects, utilising funds and delivering results.

l. Thus very often the person who really develop insights about the system are external consultants who are sent in to evaluate projects as they have or are given the luxury of time and structures of making sense of the data and developing

insights. The tragedy is that the same funds or at least a proportion of it could have been used by the organisation itself as an investment in the learning process.

m. Furthermore, reporting cycles, with their short time scales, act to increase the reporting focus on targets, outputs and early outcomes. They also led organisations to prioritise monitoring as a performance measurement activity and were a disincentive to a focus on longer-term changes and reflective review and learning. Thus the double and triple loop aspects of learning: Develop analysis and understanding about why an intervention works, for whom, and in what conditions, gets lower priority.

CHAPTER-9

REFLECTION

Here are some questions for you to reflect on and even open up for discussion in your organisation:

- What is your organisations development philosophy? Where does monitoring and evaluation fit in to this philosophy? Is the development philosophy stable or does it change based on funder priorities?
- Trace its history and see if the PME system that is currently there went through any shifts and changes. If so what were they and what internal or external contexts influenced these shifts?
- Reflect on to extent to which your current PME system focuses on increasing accountability and /or increasing learning? Are there any tensions between these two goals? From what do such tensions emerge?
- Try to gather examples of different levels of learning in your organisation as per Chris Argyris framework. Where and how does single, double and even triple loop learning take place? Map the spaces and the people involved in this kind of learning.
- Draw the organisation structure in one colour pen, and then over if draw the PME system of the organisation. Try to understand which parts of the organisation are involved in monitoring, in review and in reporting. Draw these in three sets of colours to get a visual map of the involvement of different parts of the organisation. Do you think all parts of the organisation are involved? Are there some gaps? If so what would you recommend?
- What aspects of your organisation culture clearly and openly support learning? Describe them. Think of some stories or examples to describe this? Are there aspects of your organisation's current work culture that are not supporting of a healthy learning environment? What do you think can be done to change this?
- Are communities your organisation works with also involved in PME? What role do they play and how does PME contribute to their empowerment? How do they influence the organisations learning?
- Go through the list of challenges in institutionalising PME systems. Which of these challenges was your organisation able to overcome? Which of these still exist?

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