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**Course: PDG in Monitoring and Evaluation**

**Module 1 – Project Monitoring and Evaluation**

**Q1: Explain in about 350 words why M&E informs good programming practice. (10 marks)**

Monitoring is a continuous process which allows a project to collect, record and analyze data and information (Mulwa, 2008). Evaluation on the other hand is a periodic exercise carried out to examine broader aspects of an intervention. Normally, most projects use the main OECD indicators of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact evaluates a project (ADA, 2009). This information is used to judge the worth of the intervention .There are various types of evaluation; ex-ante (prior to action), in vivo (during implementation) and ex post evaluation (Gudda, 2011). Both monitoring and evaluation (M&E) contribute to good programming mainly because they fulfill the following

- Due to the systematic application, monitoring and evaluation helps to track implementation and the aims of the programme and gauge if it is achieving.
- Ensures that an intervention is relevant, for example in the case of ex ante evaluation and support while monitoring can help to ascertain that the intervention is still relevant or some changes need to be made.
- In regard to policy, monitoring and evaluation plays a key role in generating information for evidence for good policy and programming. UNICEF (2004) notes that monitoring and evaluation helps in “evidence based policy making, evidence based management and evidence based accountability”. When evidence is used in policy making and programming this contributes to good programme and impact.
- They support decision making about the progress (or lack thereof) of a project or intervention and contribute to improve performance. Since monitoring goes beyond only looking at what the project had delivered , but also at other areas such as soft assistance, and generates information which programme managers use for decision making,

“monitoring becomes even more important as a tool for decision-making and learning and is indispensable in providing information and data for evaluations”. (UNDP, 2002)

- Monitoring and evaluation produces learning for project teams, organizations and donors and is used to guide future programming (IFRC, 2011)

In conclusion, it is fair to say that high quality projects are built on careful monitoring of activities and outcomes of those projects in order to track the impact of those projects to the intended population (CRS, 2011)

## **Q2: Describe the fundamental similarities and differences between Monitoring and Evaluation. (10 marks)**

As noted above, one of the functions of M&E is to ensure good programming and the project or action delivers the intended results. It is also correct to say that a good evaluation relies on good monitoring. However, there are a number of difference between monitoring and evaluation.

According to (Hunter, 2009), regarding the **timing/ frequency**, on monitoring takes throughout the project and is record through progress reports while evaluation is carried out at their midterm or at conclusion of a project. Regarding the **main purpose**, Hunter also notes that an evaluation serves to analyze the effectiveness and to affect future while monitoring looks at efficiency and advices on adjustments to me made to the work plan in order to deliver. This is also echoed by (Adhikari, 2017), who notes that the main goals of evaluation is an **in-depth assessment** of a programme that has been competed or at midterm ( past ) while monitoring is about the day to day systematic routine collection of information ( present )

On the part of who takes part in the two processes, monitoring is usually **done by the team members** and users of the project, while an evaluation is carried out by **an external person of firm** due to the need for neutrality in the assessing of the impact of the action implemented (Adhikari, 2017)

The process of morning calls for **regular meetings, field visits, monthly** and quarterly reviews and evaluation is **organized through specific meeting and additional exercise to collect data**

in qualitative and quantitative in order to look at all facets of the project which may or may not have contributed to achievement of intended results.

**Q3:** Describe the difference between formative and summative evaluation process and explain the time of each process in the life of a project. (10 marks)

There are different types of evaluations. **Formative evaluations** are used during the development of a new programme and ensure that a programme is feasible, appropriate and acceptable. It can also help to know when and some modifications are needed or to pinpoint potential implementation barriers. They take place also when a project is on progress and they identify needs and gaps in programmes (CDC, nd). When done at implementation place, it helps to improve the project and it is meant for stakeholders and the project team (Humble, 2007): These evaluations are also referred to as baseline surveys and serve to review the status of the affected population (Odhiambo, 2013).

**Summative evaluations**, also known as external evaluations, outcome evaluation are carried out after a project has ended and it is based on already identified goals with the aim to ascertain if the programme achieved its objectives. Humble (2007) notes that it is meant for all including project team, stakeholders and it sums up projects effectiveness. Odhiambo (2013) highlights that summative evaluation also serve to document success stories and lessons learnt.

**Q4: With brief explanations, outline the key questions both formative and summative evaluations seek to answer. (10 marks)**

As noted above, formative evaluation are used during the development of new programmes and at implementation stage. There are key questions below as highlighted by Hunter (2009)

**a) To what extent do the activities correspond with those presented in the proposal?**

This is meant to find out if the project stayed within its scope. In a way, it helps to ensure that needs were clearly identified and the project is staying within its scope to meet those needs.

**b) If they do not correspond, why were changes made? And were the changes justified?**

Sometimes along the implementation of the project, it can be that changes in context mean that the pre-planned activities are no longer relevant or that they need to be changed in order to be aligned to the present needs. It is important to highlight here that often time, these changes the approval of the donor

**c) Did the project follow the timeline presented in the proposal?**

Timeline in project delivery is important as it ensures that the activities planned are implemented on time , in order to give rise to the planned achievable milestones of the project. In the , respecting timelines can also help to ensure the quality of the project, especially on the aspect that activities are not rushed for sake of implementation, but they need meet the required quality standard.

**d) Have the personnel that carried out the activities out been suitable?**

Personnel provide the needed human resources to meet objectives and with the needed quality. It is relevant to, often times, it can be difficult to get the needed human resources, but efforts should be made to demonstrate that even when the personnel working in the project are not the most qualified, that they gap does not adversely affect the project, and even more importantly, to demonstrate that effort was made to support the personnel hired to perform their role effectively.

**e) Are the project's actual costs in line with initial budget allocations?**

This is key to determining how well the project was designed and budget allocated. IT helps to not only be prudent use of funds, but to ensure that activities implemented can be justified, there is a cost efficiency inbuilt within the project.

**f) To what extent is the project moving towards the anticipated goals and objectives?**

This key in any project implementation, that there us evidence to show, efforts, planning and clarity of milestones to ears objectives and the findings support the steer it more towards that direction. A well-conceived and designed project, should be achieved an acceptable level of objectives, all internal and external challenges considered.

**g) What challenges and obstacles have been identified? And how have they been dealt with?**

All projects meet various obstacles along the way. These can be internal, for example, in finding the right human resources for project implementation. They can also be external, for example, stakeholder's lack of support for project, changing political climate etc., all of which can have negative effect on the implementation of a project. Important is how the project leadership identifies those obstacles and puts measures in place to mitigate the effects.

**h) What are the main strengths and weaknesses of the project?**

When a project is going through an implementation it is easier to see the strengths and are and build on them. In the same breath, identifying weakness is important in order to make changes as needed or to mitigate the weaknesses in order to move towards achieving the project objectives.

**The following are some of the questions a summative evaluation seeks to address as noted by**

**a) Did the program reach its goals and objectives?**

Every project has specific objectives that led to developing the proposal. It is important to know if the goals were met and to what extent.

Finding out the project accomplished is a kind of stock take. Sometimes there can also be a linked to what the programme accomplished which was not set out at the start of project – the unintended results

**b) What impact did the program have on its recipients? What were the outcomes? Who benefited from the program?**

This seeks to address the question of beneficiaries of the project and how the intervention affected them. All projects aim to achieve positive results and this should identify if the originally beneficiaries remained the target and how what the outcomes were. This is linked to project goals and objectives. Unfortunately, at times, a project can have negative intended consequences. It is important to identify those outcomes and learn the lessons from it.

c) What should be improved/changed in the program?

A key aspect of lesson learning is on assessing and reflecting on the project which has concluded in order to take stock of the use the knowledge for future programming and to share good practices.

d) **Does the benefit of the program warrant the cost?**

The question of cost is a key one for many donors and implementers. At times, a project can have very positive results but the can be questioned due to cost, hence the question of value for money and cost efficiency needs to be addressed in the summative evaluation.

**Q5: Explain the main limitations of the pretest-post-test model of evaluation (10mrks)**

The main premise of this model is that a particular situation would remain unchanged without administering the intervention. In experimental research, pretest-posttest models are used to compare groups/ measuring change resulting from an intervention (Dimitrov & Rumrill, 2003).

Although this method may uses tools for data collection and analysis, cautions that the results may be inaccurate because participants may have limited at the beginning, which makes it hard for them to assess baseline behavior

Some the constraints of this model include

**Time constraints:** related to development of instruments and for **programme delivery/ administering the data collection instruments** regarding attendance where for the evaluation to be meaningful, participation must be present at the beginning and end of the programme and it is also difficult to be accurate due to response shift-biases (O'Leary & Israel, 2013). This biases can make it difficult to show the link and attribution of change to the intervention programme as other factors might also come into play