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Q1: Explain the value of M&E in about 100 words and outline key planning steps for setting up an M&E plan (10 mrks)

The importance and value of Monitoring and evaluation are so crucial for the success of any project. To begin with M&E does not only connote pre-identified results in the development plan but are also vital for the achievement of intended results and provide a fact base to inform corrective decision making.

In addition, M&E are vital management tools to support an organization's commitment to accountability for results, resources entrusted to it, and organizational learning. Furthermore, both feed into the overall program management processes and make an essential contribution to the ability to manage for development results.

The success of M&E in a project can only be achieved if the following vital planning measures are put in place:

Firstly, it is pertinent to be aware of your intervention's desired results well and have in question (Goal)- such as: what is the main aim/ goal?

Secondly, to be conscious of strategies you will employ to meet your objectives in a project.

Thirdly, outline strategies which will enable you to realise the desired results, in other words what activities will be employed by you.

In addition, know and allocate resources for M&E, that is what are the budget and other needed inputs which will propel realization of the project.

Apart from the above, it is important to know your target group/communities who will benefit from this project.

More still, another vital stage is to ensure proper selection of your indicators at all the project levels of: inputs, outputs, outcomes, impact.

The last key planning steps in setting up M&E plan is the Identification of the ideal monitoring frame that you will use.

Q2: Describe the relevance of stakeholder participation in M&E (10 mrks)

In recent times, participation of a broader range of stakeholders in M&E has been increasingly recognised as being a critical factor in use of M&E conclusions, recommendations and lessons. A stakeholder is anyone who has a "stake" in the programme or project being assessed. It can be anyone directly affected, anyone who can influence or anyone who wants an answer regarding a project. Stakeholders' participation in M&E are therefore relevant for the success of a project for the following reasons.

Firstly, when stakeholder participate in M&E it redistributes power for making decisions and gives this power to the people who are direct beneficiaries of the project (Mulwa, 2008). When stakeholders participate in M & E it recognises that local people have knowledge and experience and can review the project objectively. A project that has been participatory during initiation, planning and implementation ought to be appraised in the same way and stakeholders should be key players in all the phases (Mulwa, 2008). Mulwa emphasizes that the process ensures local ownership and commitment not only to the exercise and its outcome but more importantly, to the future of the programme evolution. In other words stakeholders are best placed to ensure that the programmatic initiatives planned would deliver what was intended and the way it was intended.

Another relevance of stakeholder participation in monitoring and evaluation is that it enables effective communication for various other objectives. For example it facilitates communication of early gains such as to increase endorsement and enlist engagement of those who are not yet participants. In addition, it ensures access of early products and services of initiatives for intended beneficiaries. Again it mobilize additional resources to fill resource gaps, and ensure effective use of lessons learned in future decision making.

Apart from the above, it is vital to note that availability of project funds alone does not guarantee success of the project. Therefore, the participation of stakeholder is vital during the M&E stages. In short, according to (Philip et al, 2008) stakeholders participation in M&E allows mechanism for receiving feedback and ideas for corrective actions which makes the project adaptable; strengthens ownership; leads to learning by all actors and widens knowledge base necessary for assessing and taking corrective actions if need be. In fact, (Mulwa, 2008) suggest stakeholders should also be involved throughout the entire project life .

Q3: It is imperative that sufficient resources are allocated to the conduct of M&E in a program. Discuss this assertion in about 350 words.

There is no doubt that it is imperative that sufficient resources are allocated to the conduct of M&E program. This is solely because the success of any M&E program also relies in the allocation of these resources .This is so because absence of adequate resources pave way to poor quality monitoring and evaluation. Therefore, in order to ensure effective and quality monitoring and evaluation, vital to set aside not only adequate financial resources but also human resources at the planning stage. The required financial and human resources for monitoring and evaluation should be considered within the overall costs of delivering the agreed results and not as additional costs. Below is depicted the importance of the allocation of sufficient Financial and human resources in conducting M&E.

To begin with financial resources should be estimated realistically at the time of planning for monitoring and evaluation. While it is critical to plan for monitoring and evaluation together, resources for each function should be separate. In practice, each project should have two separate

budget lines for its monitoring and evaluation agreed in advance with partners. This helps the organization and its partners be more realistic in budgeting. It will also reduce the risk of running out of resources for evaluation, which often takes place towards the end of implementation. Monitoring and evaluation costs associated with projects can be identified relatively easily and be charged directly to the respective project budgets with prior agreement among partners through inclusion in the project budget or Annual Work Plan (AWP) signed by partners. In common practice, sourcing and securing financial resources for monitoring and evaluation of outcomes for programs can pose additional challenges, as there is not one project where these costs can be directly charged. The most commonly observed financing mechanism is to draw resources together from relevant projects. Some additional possibilities include:

Mobilize funds from partners directly for an outcome or program monitoring and evaluation facility.etc

On the other hand, with regards to human resources they are as vital as financial resources in order to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation, even after securing adequate financial resources. Therefore, in order to ensure high quality monitoring and evaluation, there should be: dedicated staff time. This is so because for monitoring and evaluation to be effective a staff or all should be dedicated for a function. In addition, human resources should be made up of Skilled personnel. Skilled personnel here imply Staff entrusted with monitoring should have required technical expertise in the area. Besides this in case of shortages it is advisable that skill levels should be augmented to meet the needs and with ongoing investments in developing such capacity within the office as necessary.

Q4: What are the key considerations and questions that both monitoring and evaluation seeks to answer? Explain giving project examples. (10 Marks)

Monitoring and evaluation are two components or tools which are very crucial for realization of a project or program within a given community. In order for M&E to be used effectively, they both need to take into consideration and seek answers to the following vital questions.

To begin with monitoring, it needs to take into question key questions such as What are the issues, risks and challenges that we face or foresee that need to be taken into account to ensure the achievement of results?

Again it needs to question the fact that What decisions need to be made concerning changes to the already planned work in subsequent stages?

More still, Will the planned and delivered outputs continue to be relevant for the achievement of the envisioned outcomes?

Furthermore, are the outcomes we envisaged remaining relevant and effective for achieving the overall national priorities, goals and impacts?

Like monitoring, evaluation is an integral part of program management and a critical management tool. Evaluation complements monitoring by providing an independent and in-depth assessment of what worked and what did not work, and why this was the case. The benefits of using evaluations are multiple such as

A quality evaluation provides feedback that can be used to improve programming, policy and strategy.

Again, evaluation also identifies unintended results and consequences of development initiatives, which may not be obvious in regular monitoring as the latter focuses on the implementation of the development plan.

Lastly, Information generated from evaluations contributes to organizational learning as well as the global knowledge base on development effectiveness. In fast evolving development contexts or in emerging, ongoing or post-crisis environments, the development plan needs to be dynamic and revised and improved over time.

Q5: Explain the relationship between change assumptions” and impact in a project. (10Mrks)

Pathway to change

It is vital to note that all project has aim to change and affect lives and communities in a positive manner. Though the concept of change might have lots of complexibility, it is however vital to present your program and strategy in the form of a change pathway, or an impact chain. This is a description of how your project activities will contribute to your desired outcomes (your objectives); which will in turn contribute to final impacts goal.

Change assumption of the theory of Change articulates the assumptions about the process through which change will occur, and specifies the ways in which all of the required early and intermediate outcomes related to achieving a desired long-term change will be brought about and documented as they occur (Anderson, 2006) .On the other hand, an Impact Pathway scheme is used as the base for monitoring and evaluation and describes in detail the output (i.e. the direct and tangible results) to outcome (e.g. changes in awareness, skills or understanding resulting from use of research results) and impact relations, with verifiable and preferably measurable indicators for output and outcome.

Based on the above description, a change pathway/ impact chain are not only for a project but both portray the vital interrelationships between activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts. Therefore, it reveals how one perceived change assumptions and how this will impact communities thereby realizing aims of a project.

The more well-founded your change assumptions at the start the greater your impact is likely to be. Thus, an excellent drafted change assumption will produce greater impact for a project. Therefore, change assumption precede the expected impact in a project.

Bibliography

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