

African Centre for Project Management
PGD-Monitoring and Evaluation
Assignment 1

By Kiden Betty Beneya

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

Monitoring and Evaluation is a process of continuous gathering of information and assessment of it in order to determine whether progress is being made towards pre-specified goals and objectives, and to highlight whether there are any unintended (positive or negative) effects from a project and its activities. It is an integral part of the project cycle and of good management practice (Osman, 2002). A well-functioning Monitoring and Evaluation system is a critical part of good project/programme management and accountability. Timely and reliable Monitoring and Evaluation support good programming by;

- i. Providing information to support project/programme implementation, with accurate, evidence-based reporting that informs management and decision-makers to guide and improve project/programme performance (IFRC, 2011)
- ii. Provide opportunities for stakeholder feedback, especially beneficiaries, to provide inputs into and perceptions of our work, modelling openness to criticism and willingness to learn from experiences and to adapt to changing needs (IFRC, 2011). For example, when quarterly reports are sent to the donors and other stakeholders about the status of the project.
- iii. Providing information to uphold accountability and compliance by demonstrating whether or not our work has been carried out as agreed and in line with established standard fundamental principles if any and with any other donor requirements (IFRC, 2011). For example, when the donors required that certain steps are taken as part of compliance, this can be assessed based on the results of monitoring and evaluation.
- iv. Enabling project/programme implementers to Promote and celebrate their work by highlighting their accomplishments and achievements thereby building morale and contributing to resource mobilization (Frankel & Gage, 2007)

- v. Providing information that Contributes to organizational learning, knowledge sharing by reflecting upon, sharing experiences and lessons so that we can gain the full benefit from what we do and how we do it (Frankel & Gage, 2007). For example, monitoring visit provide an opportunity to listen to the beneficiaries' perspective and opinions about the project.

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

By definition, monitoring is the continuous collection of data on specified indicators to assess for a development intervention (project, programme or policy) its implementation in relation to activity schedules and expenditure of allocated funds, and its progress and achievements in relation to its objectives (Casley & Kumar, 1987). On the other hand, by definition, evaluation is the periodic assessment of the design, implementation, outcomes and impact of a development intervention. It should assess the relevance and achievement of objectives, implementation performance in terms of effectiveness and efficiency, and the nature, distribution and sustainability of impacts (Casley & Kumar, 1987)

By process, monitoring of a program or intervention involves the collection of routine data that measure progress toward achieving program objectives. It is used to track changes in program performance over time. Its purpose is to permit stakeholders to make informed decisions regarding the effectiveness of programs and the efficient use of resources. (Frankel & Gage, 2007). On the other hand, as a process evaluation measures how well the program activities have met expected objectives and/or the extent to which changes in outcomes can be attributed to the program or intervention? The difference in the outcome of interest between having and not having the program or intervention is known as its "impact," (Frankel & Gage, 2007)

By timing, according to UNDP (2009) monitoring is a continuing function that aims primarily to provide management and main stakeholder's information on an on-going intervention in the achievement of results. However, evaluation is a selective exercise that attempts to systematically and objectively assess progress towards and the achievement of an outcome.

Similarities between monitoring and evaluation

What monitoring and evaluation have in common is that they are both reflective processes aimed at learning from experience. (El Mulla, Mahmouds, Alwan, & Grunwald, 2011). They follow the same basic processes Such as;

- i. Observation and collection of information. Data is collected in different way such as surveys, focused group discussions, meetings with beneficiaries and project staff, direct observation of the project outs and outcomes among others. (El Mulla, Mahmouds, Alwan, & Grunwald, 2011)
- ii. Reflection (analysis and assessment of findings). The principle of reflection can be carried out at many different levels of a development intervention; that is individual, organization, local networks up to the national scale. For example, in a case of organization reflection, when an action has been identified that we should reflect on, the team carries out a widespread of data collection on that particular action, group analyses of the data is done and reflected on, lessons are drowned and recommendations for action are brought forward, the lessons are then integrated into future action, then innovations to a wider spread network. This process applies to both monitoring and evaluation. (El Mulla, Mahmouds, Alwan, & Grunwald, 2011)
- iii. Decision making regarding new action to be taken. In both monitoring and evaluation, once a new action is realized, a decision has to be taken by a project manager or other project team members depending on the level of seriousness. This is done to improve the implementation of the activities (El Mulla, Mahmouds, Alwan, & Grunwald, 2011)

Key Differences between Monitoring and Evaluation

The difference between monitoring and evaluation can be drawn clearly on the following premises:

- Aim: The aim of monitoring is to check whether the implementation of a development intervention is on track and to serve as a basis for evaluation. The aim of evaluation is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability (Particip, 2002)

- **Frequency:** Monitoring is carried out as a continuous process with frequent reflection loops that scrutinizes the activities and progress of the project and also finds out the deviations that occur while undertaking the project. As against, evaluation is a periodical activity that makes inferences about the relevance and effectiveness of the project or program (Particip, 2002)
- **Responsibility:** Responsibility for monitoring usually lies with the staff or stakeholders responsible for implementation, while evaluation is usually the responsibility of senior management
- **Timing:** Monitoring is a short-term process that is concerned with the collection of information regarding the success of the project. Conversely, evaluation is a long-term process, which not only records the information but also assesses the outcomes and impact of the project (Umhlaba Development Services, 2017)
- **Scope:** Monitoring tends to focus on certain aspects of the intervention, such as use of funds, activities, outputs and the use of outputs. Its reference is the operational plan. Evaluation has a wider scope. It deals with more strategic issues and assesses the achievement of the outcome and further impacts. In complex processes involving different levels and many stakeholders, monitoring takes place at each individual level, while evaluation tries to link the lessons learned across the different levels (Umhlaba Development Services, 2017)
- **Personnel:** Monitoring is usually carried out by the people who are directly involved in its implementation process. In contrast, evaluation can be conducted by internal staff of the organization, i.e. managers or it can also be carried out by independent external party, who can give their impartial views on the project or program. (Particip, 2002)
- **Focus:** Monitoring focuses on improving the overall efficiency of the project, by removing bottlenecks, while the project is under process. Unlike, evaluation which stresses on improving the effectiveness of the project, by making the comparison with the established standards.
- **Nature:** Monitoring is observational in nature for example, when we go for a monitoring visit to a project side, we can see the physical outs, activities being carried out among others while evaluation is judgmental meaning, we only compare the situation before and after

the project and makes conclusions. We generally look at the changes that happen as a result of the project while evaluating.

- Process: Monitoring is carried out through regular meetings, focused group discussions, interviews, monthly and quarterly reviews of activities, outputs and inputs among others while evaluation is carried out through extraordinary meetings and additional data collection done through surveys among others. (Umhlaba Development Services, 2017)
- Written outputs: Monitoring is done through regular written reports and updates to project users, management and donors while evaluation is done through written report with recommendations for changes to project. This is presented in workshops to different stakeholders like the donors and senior staff among others

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

Formative evaluation is an assessment carried out prior to actual implementation of a project or intervention. Formative evaluation is intended to improve performance. Often formative research continues during the implementation phase of a project or intervention. During formative assessment, the status of the targeted population is determined hence refocusing the project aims and strategies. While formative research lays the foundation for evaluation, it can also be conducted for other reasons such as compliance, legal requirements or as part of a larger evaluation initiative among others (DAC, 2002). Formative evaluation progressively assesses the turn of events during project implementation with regard to what is being done, when it is done and how.

On the other hand, summative evaluation is the study conducted at the end of an intervention (or a phase of that intervention) to determine the extent to which anticipated outcomes were produced. It is conducted at specific intervals, when data become available. It is intended to provide information about the worth of the project or programme. (DAC, 2002). Summative evaluation may also be referred to as end-term evaluation. Summative evaluation generally provides information about project success and lessons learnt.

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

Both formative and summative evaluation aim to answer the following broad question.

- **Relevance:** The question of relevance relates to inquiries that seek to assess the extent to which the project or intervention is responsive to the priority needs of the target group. In evaluating the relevance of a programme or a project, it is useful to consider the following questions: Are the objective of the project/intervention still valid? Are the activities and outputs of the project/intervention in line with the broad objective or goal?
- **Effectiveness:** The question of effectiveness seeks to ascertain the extent to which an intervention or project achieves its intended objectives. In evaluating the effectiveness of a project or intervention, the following questions have to be considered: To what extent were the objectives achieved/are likely to be achieved? What were the main factors affecting the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?
- **Efficiency:** the question of efficiency relates to the measures the outputs in relation to the inputs. It is an economic measure which signifies that the intervention uses the least resources to achieve the desired results. Efficiency generally requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving the same outputs, to see whether the most efficient process has been adopted. When evaluating the efficiency of a project or intervention the questions should be considered: Were activities cost-effective? Were the set objectives achieved in the least time possible?
- **Impact:** The question of impact looks at the positive and negative changes that result from the intervention or project either directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. This involves the main impacts and effects resulting from the activity on the local social, economic, environmental and other development indicators. When evaluating the impact of a project or intervention, the following questions should be asked: What has happened as a result of the project or intervention? What real difference has the activity made to the beneficiaries? How many beneficiaries have been affected?

- Sustainability: The question of sustainability is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after the funding has been withdrawn. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially sustainable. When evaluating the sustainability of a programme or a project, the following questions should be asked: To what extent did the benefits of a programme or project continue after donor funding ceased? What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the programme or project?

Q5: Explain the main limitations of the pretest-post-test model of evaluation

By definition, the pretest-posttest model is a technique for capturing change that happens as a result of an intervention (Allen & Nimon, 2007). In this model, a pretest is given to participants prior to starting the program to measure the variable(s) of interest, the program (or intervention) is implemented, and then a posttest is administered to measure the same variable(s) of interest again (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). With measurements being collected at the beginning and end of the program, program effects are often revealed by calculating the differences between the two measures (Pratt, McGuigan, & Katzev, 2000). This model has some limitations as explained below.

- Attendance concerns: as a matter of principle, meaningful pretest-posttest comparisons require the same participants for the pretest to also attend the posttest. Short of that, the data available for analyses is reduced and therefore weakening the power of all the analytical test done thereafter. Unfortunately, inconsistency in attendance is very common especially in highly mobile intervention population (Pratt, McGuigan, & Katzev, 2000).
- Time constraints: the technique requires a lot of time to create reliable and valid questions that can assess the change in a factual and objective manner. In addition, more time is consumed in administering the questionnaires at pretest and posttest junctures (Pratt, McGuigan, & Katzev, 2000)
- Measurement error through response-shift bias: significant pretest-posttest comparisons can only happen if a participant uses the same frame of reference to measure himself against at both pretest and posttest. In the absence of this, it makes the pretest-posttest comparison invalid (Howard, 1980). It is also possible that the inadequacy of information

that the participant has prior to the intervention may affect their ability to properly judge their status at baseline (Howard, et al., 1979)

References

- Allen, J. M., & Nimon, K. (2007). Retrospective pretest: A practical technique for professional development evaluation. *Journal of industrial Teacher Education*, 44.
- Casley, d. J., & Kumar, K. (1987). *Project Monitoring and Evaluation in Agriculture*. Washington DC: World Bank.
- DAC. (2002). *Glossary of key terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management*. Paris: OECD.
- El Mulla, K., Mahmouds, S., Alwan, N. T., & Grunwald, E. (2011). *Monitoring and Evaluation for TVET-related Development Interventions*. Cairo: Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.
- Frankel, N., & Gage, A. (2007). *M&E Fundamentals*. USA: University of North Carolina at chapel Hill.
- Gall, M. D., Gall, J., & Borg, W. (2003). *Educational research* (7th Edition ed.). New York: Allyn and Bacon.
- Howard, G. (1980). *Response shift bias: A problem in evaluating intervention with pre/post self-reports*. New York: Sage. doi:10.1177/0193841X8000400105
- Howard, G., Ralph, K., Gulanick, N., Maxwell, S., Nace, D., & Gerber, S. (1979). Internal invalidity in pretest=posttest self=reprt evaluations and the re-evaluation of retrospective pretests. *Applied Psychological Measurements*, 3(1), 1-23.
- IFRC. (2011). *project/programme Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)*. Geneva: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.
- Osman, I. (2002). *Handbook for Monitoring and Evaluation*. Geneva: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.
- Particip, G. (2002). *Project Cycle Management Hand Book*. Germany: European Commision-European Aid.
- Pratt, C., McGuigan, W., & Katzev, A. (2000). Measuring program outcomes: Using retrospective pretest methodology. *American Journal of Education*, 21(3), 341-349.
- Umhlaba Development Services. (2017). *Introduction to Monitoring and Evaluation Using the Logical FrameWork Approach*. Johannesburg: European Commission Civil Society fund in Ethiopia.