



School of online and distance learning

**COURSE: PGD IN MONITORING AND  
EVALUATION**

**MODULE ONE ASSESSMENT TEST**

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## **Module 1 Questions:**

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

There is a saying that for a bending, growing young tree to be straightened, it must be done at its initial stages of growth rather than doing it when the tree has grown because it will become quite impossible to make it straight. This is because a tree can be flexible at its young stage hence enabling the essence of making it grow straight. When it grows old or midway, it develops hard tissues making it difficult to even bend thus correctional efforts become futile.

This same scenario above applies equally to a project. When mischiefs are realized at the beginning of a project cycle, it becomes easy to employ straightening measures. But when its noticed towards the end, it becomes extremely difficult to correct. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) therefore becomes a good practice in programming because it gives the project a sense of direction and makes it easy to establish whether the project is achieving set targets. For instance, by monitoring the development of the project you will easily understand whether strategic changes need to be made and act accordingly to achieve the desired purpose.

It is therefore important to note that Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is a process that helps improve performance and achieve results. Its goal is to improve current and future management of outputs, outcomes and impact. In some cases, especially in South Sudan, donors may be compelled to stop funding if standard M&E procedures are not administered in a project because they think it breeds corruption and other related financial malpractices. In some organizations like the World bank, USAID, European Union for instance, donors set Monitoring and Evaluation standards and mechanisms as a precondition for funding before releasing funds for a project. This will mean that the implementer of the project must be cautious all the time in meeting such M&E guidelines and engulf them into their reporting doctrine for sustainability of the project or else the funding will be discontinued.

The Monitoring and Evaluation practice thus helps assess progress of the program towards achieving its laid down targets through periodic reports and analysis during the project implementation span in order to inform and guide key stakeholders as well as program implementers and directors.

So, in a bigger picture, organizations or institutions through routine Monitoring and Evaluation exercises can know whether the project is propelling in the right direction or otherwise bring in timely measures or changes that shifts the project focus on achieving the set objectives and audience rather than the reverse.

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

The common ground for monitoring and evaluation is that they are both management tools. For monitoring, data and information collection for tracking progress according to the terms of reference is gathered periodically which is not the case in evaluations for which the data and information collection is happening during or in view of the evaluation.

There is often a sisterly relationship between monitoring and Evaluation as pertaining to a project implementation. Monitoring is a regular and systematic intervention that is done throughout the program intervention. When monitoring reports are produced and generated, they usually feed into the evaluation process. So they both need each other in order to achieve tangible outcome in a project.

**Whereas;**

Monitoring is a short-term assessment and does not take into consideration the outcomes and impact unlike the evaluation process which also assesses the outcomes and sometime longer-term impact. This impact assessment occurs sometimes after the end of a project, even though it is rare because of its cost and of the difficulty to determine whether the project is responsible of the observed results.

On the other hand, the main distinctive factor between Monitoring and Evaluation is their timing and focus on assessment. Monitoring exercise is ongoing and tend to focus mainly on what is happening, whereas Evaluations are conducted at specific points in time to assess how well it happened and the difference it made.

**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 evaluations (process evaluations) examine the development of the project and may lead to changes in the way the project is structured and carried out. Those types of evaluations are often called interim evaluations. One of the most commonly used formative evaluations is the midterm evaluation which is done in the middle of a project cycle.

Summative evaluations (also called outcome or impact evaluations) address the second set of issues. They look at what a project has accomplished in terms of its target goals. This type of evaluation can be done in two forms viz: -

**End time evaluation:** This type of evaluation intends to establish the situation when external aid is terminated and to identify the possible need for follow up activities either by donors or project staff.

**Ex-post evaluations** are carried out two to five years after external support is terminated. The main purpose is to assess what lasting impact the project has had and to extract lessons of experience.

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

**Formative evaluation questions: -**

This type of evaluation involves a systematic collection of information (often throughout the project cycle) to assist in decision-making during the planning or implementation stages of a program. The following are the key questions that formative evaluations seek to answers.

- ✓ To what extent do the activities and strategies correspond with those presented in the plan?
- ✓ If they are not in harmony, why are there changes? Are the changes justified?
- ✓ To what extent did the project follow the timeline presented in the work plan?
- ✓ Are activities carried out by the appropriate personnel?
- ✓ To what extent are project actual costs in line with initial budget allocations?
- ✓ To what extent is the project moving toward the anticipated goals and objectives of the project?

- ✓ Which of the activities or strategies are more effective in moving toward achieving the goals and objectives?
- ✓ What barriers were identified?
- ✓ How and to what extent were they dealt with?
- ✓ What are the main strengths and weaknesses of the project?
- ✓ To what extent are beneficiaries of the project active in decision-making and implementation?
- ✓ To what extent do project beneficiaries have access to services provided by the project?
- ✓ What are the obstacles?
- ✓ To what extent are the project beneficiaries satisfied with project services?

### **Summative evaluations: -**

The main purpose of this type of evaluation is to assess what lasting impact the project has had and to extract lessons of experience. Summative evaluations are usually carried out as a program is ending or after completion of a program to sum up the achievements, impact and lessons learned. They are useful for planning follow-up activities or related future programs. In this case, both quantitative (data expressed in numbers) and qualitative data (data represented in narratives or words) can be very fruitful.

Summative evaluation questions include the following:

- ✓ To what extent did the project meet its overall goals and objectives?
- ✓ What impact did the project have on the lives of beneficiaries?
- ✓ Was the project equally effective for all beneficiaries?
- ✓ What components were the most effective?
- ✓ What significant unintended impacts did the project have?
- ✓ Is the project replicable?
- ✓ Is the project sustainable?

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

The main disadvantage of the pre and posttest model is that it lacks scientific rigor or basis for that matter. There are many biases that might take place between the pretest and the posttest that could affect the results, and therefore, weaken the direct connection between project interventions and project outcomes or impact. In other words, changes in the situation before and after project implementation might be attributed to other external factors.