MODULE I ASSIGMENT

By Busiri Julius Korsuk

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

Monitoring is the continuous, systematic collection of data which is processed into usable information that helps in the assessment of progress towards the achievement of the objectives, outcomes and impacts of an intervention or project (Frankel & Gage, 2007). Monitoring often involves monthly to quarterly reporting on activities, outputs, activities and use of resources such as people, time, money, and materials (Casley & Kumar, 1987).

On the other hand, evaluation is the objective and systematic assessment of a project, intervention, programme or policy (whether ongoing or completed) with regard to its design, implementation and results (Osman, 2002). The aim of evaluation is to determine the relevance and fulfillment of objectives, level of efficiency and effectiveness, impact and as well sustainability (DAC, 2002). Evaluation also analyses the reasons for any discrepancy in achievement if any (El Mulla, Grunwald, Shaker, & Talal, 2011)**.**

In combination, monitoring and evaluation are a formidable tool for informing good programmatic practice by:

i. Signaling potential weaknesses in programme design, allowing adjustments to be made in time. Typically, formative evaluation is used to ensure that the direction chosen is correct as well as the right mix of strategies and resources.
ii. Checking any changes (positive or negative) to the target group that may be resulting from programme activities by providing the only consolidated source of information showcasing project progress
iii. Providing unique information that can identify what works, what does not, and the reasons why. This allow various stakeholders to learn from each other's experiences, building on expertise and knowledge for higher effectiveness and efficiency.

iv. Providing a basis for questioning and testing assumptions and therefore assessing the crucial link between beneficiaries, implementers and decision-makers.
v. Generating reports that contribute to more transparency and accountability, and therefore allowing for a more robust basis for raising funds, lobbying and advocacy for policy change.

In conclusion, the monitoring and evaluation process is important for the development sector and NGOs as it is a way for actors to show stakeholders how a project/programme is being implemented and received, and how effective the project is.

Q2: Describe the fundamental similarities and differences between Monitoring and Evaluation.

First and foremost, both monitoring evaluation are ideally intended to be systematic and objective processes with specific goals. In both processes, observation and collection of data is done in similar ways such as questionnaires, checklists, focus group discussion, minutes of meetings, site visits for direct observation and document review. (El Mulla, Grunwald, Shaker, & Talal, 2011)

Secondly the principle of reflection is critical in both monitoring and evaluation. After data analysis, the findings are reflected upon within the broader perspective of the project implementation taking into consideration both internal and external factors. Thereafter, appropriate lessons can be drowned and recommendations for action are suggested. The action points are hence integrated into future planning. This process applies to both monitoring and evaluation. (El Mulla, Grunwald, Shaker, & Talal, 2011)

In relation to the above, as a result of recommendations, the end result of both monitoring and evaluation is decision making regarding new action to be taken to ensure improvements. Therefore both monitoring and evaluation are tools for progressive improvement in all interventions. (El Mulla, Grunwald, Shaker, & Talal, 2011)

Lastly, as a matter of focus, both monitoring and evaluation overlap in the area of outcomes and outputs. This is so in a sense that outputs and outcomes can be monitored on an ongoing basis and evaluated at the end of the programme.

However, monitoring and evaluation have some fundamental difference as shown in the table below.

Aspect	**Monitoring**	**Evaluation**
Timing	Happens as a continuous process alongside implementation of project activities.	Happens periodic at major milestones such as mid-term, end of the project.
Methodology	Provides for assessment of the track of activities and documents progress of the project	Provides for in-depth analysis with comparison of planned versus achieved
Focus	Focuses on inputs, activities and outputs, and implementation processes for example level of participation of beneficiaries.	Focuses on outputs in relation to inputs, results in relation to cost, processes used to achieve results; overall relevance; outcomes, impact and sustainability.
Scope	Captures information about planned results	Captures data on both planned and unplanned results
Purpose	Answers the question about what inputs were used, what activities were implemented and the results achieved.	Answers the questions why and how results were achieved or not. Contributes to building theories and models for change.
Result	Alerts managers to problems and provides options for corrective actions.	Provides managers with strategy and policy options
Responsibility/Duty bearer	Self-assessment by programme managers, supervisors, community stakeholders and donors.	Internal and /or external analysis by programme managers, supervisors, community stakeholders, donors and or even external evaluators.
Conformity	Usually accepts project design	Usually free to challenge project design

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

Formative evaluation (also referred to as a baseline survey) is an assessment carried out before an actual project is implemented. Depending on the aim of the project, formative evaluation is conducted mainly to review the existing status quo in the targeted population, which in turn informs project focus. This in turn forms the basis for project evaluation later on.

Formative evaluation examines the way the project is unfolding, or the “form” it is taking in terms of what is being done, when and how it is being done. In so doing, formative evaluation (process evaluation) focuses on project implementation by describing how the project operates and what services it delivers. Just as a monitoring system, it keeps track of the variation of the project implementation from its original design. When strategies are changed, as part of formative evaluation these tweaks are supposed to be documented as well as the reasons for the changes. Typically, it is an ongoing activity during the life of the project and often involves qualitative measurement of various aspects of the project through interviews, focus groups, and observations.

On the other hand, summative evaluation (also known as the end-term evaluation) is an assessment carried out immediately at project conclusion. Summative evaluation is carried out to assess project outcomes in comparison to the results at baseline. Summative evaluation generally informs stakeholders about the project success and lessons learnt. The summative evaluation is conducted at specific intervals, when data become available. Summative evaluation (as its name implies) summarizes the impact of what has been done and the results may help determine whether the project receives continued funding.

While formative evaluation addresses how change occurs, summative evaluation (outcome evaluation) measures the nature and/or extent of change made by a project or intervention. This includes but not limited to progress toward desired goals, objectives, and outcomes, interim impacts of a project after a specific period of operation, and overall results of a project’s effort. In summary, summative evaluation seeks to answer the question, “What difference did the project make?” For that matter, summative evaluation typically uses quantitative instrumentation such as survey questionnaires, percentages, and test scores and the results are usually in a quantifiable form such as percentages.

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

Both formative and summative evaluation aim to answer the following broad question. It is important to note that while formative evaluation is inherently prospective by design, summative evaluation tends to have retrospective inkling. Therefore, the tense in which these key questions can be asked will largely be future tense for formative evaluation and past tense for summative evaluation.

- **Relevance:**

  While assessing relevance, evaluators attempt to determine the extent to which the project or intervention will be or has been appropriate for the actual needs of the target beneficiaries. Therefore, following key questions can be considered to answer the question of relevance: Are or were the objective of the project/intervention valid? Are or were the activities and outputs of the project/intervention consistent with the goal on the project?

- **Effectiveness:**

  While assessing effectiveness, evaluators try to ascertain the extent to which an intervention or project may achieve or has achieved its planned objectives. Therefore, the following key questions can be posed while answering the question of effectiveness: To what extent were the objectives achieved or are likely to be achieved? What are or were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?

- **Efficiency:**

  While assessing efficiency, generally the evaluators attempt to measure how the extent of achievement of the outputs compares with the inputs. In economic terms high efficiency would mean using the least amount of resources for the most output possible. In some cases, it may require one to compare alternative strategies and measure the cost of how each of them achieves the same outputs. To measure efficiency of a project or intervention, the following questions should be considered: Were or will the selected activities produce the best outcome with the least cost? Are or were the set objectives achieved in the least time possible?

- **Impact:**

  While assessing impact, evaluators generally look at the positive and negative changes that occur due to the intervention or project. These changes can be either directly or indirectly, intended or unintended but as long as the can plausibly be seen to result from the project implementation. These changes may be seen in various ways for example in the local social, economic, environmental and other development indicators. Therefore, the following questions are pertinent while assessing impact: What may or has happened as a result of the project or intervention? What real difference will be made or has been made by the intervention to the beneficiaries? How many beneficiaries will be or have been affected?

- **Sustainability:**

  While measuring sustainability, evaluators are concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to supersede the current funding or technical support. Therefore, the following questions should be asked: To what extent will or did the benefits of a project or intervention continue after the current support/ funding has ceased? What major factors may or have influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the project or intervention?

However, generally if the intervention is complex by design or is being implemented in a complex environment, evaluators should consider questions that address the context such as: what were the reasons for adaption of the project design and what emergence activities and outcomes were adapted or dropped? What other different perspectives and inter-relationships could affect the project success, sustainability and transferability.

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

As a model, the pretest-posttest technique is common for assessing the change in extension programming (Rockwell & Kohn, 1989). Usually, a pretest assessment is issued to participants before starting the program to measure the variable(s) of interest, then the project or intervention is executed. Afterwards, a posttest assessment is administered to measure the same variable(s) as were in the pretest (Allen & Nimon, 2007). Afterwards, the net effect of the project or intervention is determined by calculating the differences between the two measures (Pratt, McGuigan, & Katzev, 2000). Suitable as it is in some instances, the pretest-posttest model has its own shortfalls as discussed below.

One of the major constraints related to this model is that it takes a lot of time. First of all, there is need for enough time to create a set of questions that all together make a valid and reliable questionnaire to assess factual knowledge objectively. Secondly, since the test is administrated in two phases, it requires twice as much time as would be if it was to be administered once (Pratt, McGuigan, & Katzev, 2000).

The second bottleneck lies in the model's dependence on strict attendance by participants to both the pretest and the posttest. However, in some circumstances it is not possible for the same participants to be present at both instances (Howard, et al., 1979). This therefore means that statistically the available data for analysis becomes reduced. For that matter, the power of all the analytical tests that are done for example the paired t-test reduces.

Finally, there is a high possibility of measurement error introduced through response-shift bias. Due to difference in levels of awareness and knowledge before and after the intervention, participants may not be in position to objectively responds to some of the questions. This is likely to affect the participants ability to properly assess their baseline status (Allen & Nimon, 2007). In any case, for meaningful pretest-posttest comparisons to happen, a participant has to use the same frame of reference to measure himself against at both pretest and posttest. When this is not possible, it makes the pretest-posttest comparison invalid (Howard, Evaluation Review, 1980).

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., Grunwald, E., Shaker, M., & Talal, A. N. (2011). *Monitoring and Evaluation for TVET-related Development Interventions.* Cairo: Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

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 chapal 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-report 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.

Rockwell, S., & Kohn, H. (1989). Post-then-pre evaluation: Measuring behaviour change more accuraely. *Journal of Extension, 27*(2), 1-7.

Umhlaba Development Services. (2017). *Introduction to Monitoring and Evaluation Using the Logical FrameWork Approach.* Johannesburg: European Commission Civil Society fund in Ethiopia.