Name: Adaw Alor Yai Koul

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Q1

Monitoring and Evaluation are always portrayed as being one and the same thing yet that are different “Discuss the truthfulness of this statement.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are two activities that are more often than not taken together. Each one feeds into the other to complete a vital aspect of strategic communication planning.

Two questions best represent the differences between monitoring and evaluation (Piotrow et al. 1997):

* Are things going all right? (Monitoring)
* So, did it work? (Evaluation)

Monitoring literally means watching, observing, checking, or keeping track of a process for a special purpose. The output of monitoring consists of observation and description of how the communication project/program is being conducted.

Evaluation, on the other hand, means determining the value, significance, or worth of something through careful appraisal and study. It looks at the interpretation of data about the communication program's results or changes or impact over time.

The importance of monitoring and evaluation was impressed upon the Communication Team at the very start of the project. The questions posed in this module were also posed to, and answered with, them. Project or program monitoring looks at how the communication project or program is being implemented, specifically in terms of coverage and delivery. Data about program inputs, activities, and results are collected periodically or at specified times during implementation. For example, are project activities carried out on time? Is money spent on specifically allocated items at the time it is needed? Is the project achieving positive results on specific activities? If the answer to each of these questions is no, then what factors are causing the difficulties? Likewise, are there some positive notes that the project could capitalize on for further gains?

Monitoring is especially useful in three areas of program implementation:

* Management
* Evaluation
* Accountability

Monitoring for management makes it possible for managers of communication programs to keep track of how the program is being implemented.

This is particularly important at the early stages of the program so that whatever feedback is obtained could be used to make the necessary changes.

A manager who fails to monitor a program to gather coverage and process information misses out on the opportunity to *start*desirable activities, *change*directions when necessary, and *stop*doing unproductive activities (Piotrow *et al*. 1997).

Monitoring for evaluation contributes to the accurate interpretation of final evaluation results. It ensures that the correct parameters are monitored and measured. Is the appropriate information being given and to the right users of information?

If a program is monitored carefully, problems concerning what to keep track of and how to gather data that would contribute to evaluation results will be identified early on.

Monitoring for evaluation also contributes significantly to program diffusion and expansion. Keeping track of the essential features of the communication program enables program implementers to describe them in detail for possible replication later.

Monitoring for accountability is carried out as an expression of program implementers' responsibility to those who are contributing to the undertaking. These include governments, donors, boards of trustees, pressure groups, and taxpayers themselves.

Careful monitoring shows to these groups that scarce resources for the communication program are being watched closely.

Evaluation is generally looked at as an investigation designed to determine the effectiveness of the communication program in terms of meeting its objectives (Torres and Velasco 2005).

Evaluation entails the following:

* Distinguishing measured change in results of activities that can be attributed to the program intervention;
* Analyzing inputs and activities to determine their contribution to results; and
* Ascribing value judgment to data and information in general.

Q2

Discuss the effects of Monitoring and Evaluation in project management.

**Provide constant feedback** on the extent to which the projects are achieving their goals.

**Identify potential problems** at an early stage and propose possible solutions.

**Monitor the accessibility of the project** to all sectors of the target population.

**Monitor the efficiency** with which the different components of the project are being implemented and suggest improvements.

**Evaluate the extent to which the project is able to achieve its general objectives.**

**Provide guidelines** for the planning of future projects (Bamberger 4).

**Influence sector assistance strategy**. Relevant analysis from project and policy evaluation can highlight the outcomes of previous interventions, and the strengths and weaknesses of their implementation.

**Improve project design**. Use of project design tools such as the logframe (logical framework) results in systematic selection of indicators for monitoring project performance. The process of selecting indicators for monitoring is a test of the soundness of project objectives and can lead to improvements in project design.

**Incorporate views of stakeholders**. Awareness is growing that participation by project beneficiaries in design and implementation brings greater “ownership” of project objectives and encourages the sustainability of project benefits. Ownership brings accountability. Objectives should be set and indicators selected in consultation with stakeholders, so that objectives and targets are jointly “owned”. The emergence of recorded benefits early on helps reinforce ownership, and early warning of emerging problems allows action to be taken before costs rise.

**Show need for mid-course corrections**. A reliable flow of information during implementation enables managers to keep track of progress and adjust operations to take account of experience (OED). (Michael & Hewitt 1986)

Q3.

What are the advantages of conducting Monitoring and Evaluation?

Monitoring systems provide managers and other stakeholders with regular information on progress relative to targets and outcomes. This enables managers to keep track of

Progress, identify any problems, and alter operations to take account of experience, and develop any budgetary requests and justify them. This enables the early identification of problems so that solutions can be proposed. It is considered to be a critical part of good management.

Periodic evaluation is also considered to be good practice, and can be used to investigate and analyses why targets are or are not being achieved. It looks at the cause and effect of situations and trends that are recorded within monitoring.

Periodic and formal evaluation are vital for internal reporting and auditing, and are also requested by funding agencies – often as mid-term and final evaluations. External stakeholders and funding agencies, who are accountable to donors or are part of the public sector, need to see results and demonstrable impacts.

However, it should be recognized that ongoing or ‘informal’ evaluation should always be available as a tool to managers, not only to meet the requirements of governments and donors, but also as a means of understanding when and why things are going right or wrong during project implementation.

M&E is also important for incorporating the views of stakeholders, particularly the target population and can be a further mechanism to encourage participation and increased ownership of a project. (Adapted from OECD (2002) Casley and Kumar (1987)

Q4.

Outline in details the guidelines to an effective project evaluation.

Process evaluation is used to assess the elements of program development and delivery, that is, the quality, appropriateness and reach of the program. This type of evaluation can be used during the entire life of the program, from planning through to the end of delivery. During planning and piloting stages, process evaluation will focus on the quality and appropriateness of the materials and approaches being developed. Once the program is in the implementation stage, process evaluation can be useful in tracking the reach of the program and the level of implementation of all aspects of the program, and in identifying potential or emerging problems. These can then be quickly resolved with minimal impact on the program. More information about process evaluation can be accessed in Hawe et al. (1990) Evaluating health promotion: a guide for workers. While the department requires only one type of process indicator (reach) reporting, including other process indicators will help refine your program by identifying enablers and barriers to successful program planning and implementation. Other process indicators include client satisfaction and facilitator reports. Process evaluation data is critical in understanding, interpreting and explaining much of the data collected through impact and outcome evaluation.

Impact evaluation is used to measure immediate program effects and, therefore, can be used at the completion of stages of implementation (that is, after sessions, at monthly intervals and/or at the completion of the program). This type of evaluation assesses the degree to which program objectives were met. Therefore, it is important that program objectives are developed and written in a way that enables later judgements about whether and to what extent they have been achieved. Writing ‘SMART’ objectives is covered below. Figure 2 indicates a number of areas that are can be assessed through impact evaluation: changes in health literacy, behaviors or behavioral intentions, social action, service delivery, organizational change, environmental change or policy development. For more information about impact evaluation refer to Measuring health promotion impacts: a guide to impact evaluation in integrated health promotion (Department of Human Services 2003b) or Hawe et al. (1990).

Outcome evaluation is used to measure the longer-term effects of programs and is related to judgements about whether, or to what extent, a program goal has been achieved. The long-term effects may include reductions in incidence or prevalence of health conditions, changes in mortality, sustained behavior change, or improvements in quality of life, equity or environmental conditions. This resource focuses on process (reach) and impact evaluation. While agencies/organization’s/partnerships are not required to undertake outcome evaluation, they are encouraged to document any relevant outcome findings where possible.

Q5.

“Monitoring and Evaluation are the heart of the principles and practices of project management”: Discuss.

Q6.

Discuss the benefits of effective stakeholder participation in an evaluation exercise.

* **It gives you a better perspective on both the initial needs of the project's beneficiaries, and on its ultimate effects.** If stakeholders, including projectbeneficiaries, are involved from the beginning in determining what needs to beevaluated and why - not to mention what the focus of the project needs to be -you're much more likely to aim your work in the right direction, to correctlydetermine whether your project is effective or not, and to understand how tochange it to make it more so.
* **It can get you information you wouldn't get otherwise**. When project direction and evaluation depend, at least in part, on information from people in the community, that information will often be more forthcoming if it's asked for by someone familiar. Community people interviewing their friends and neighbors may get information that an outside person wouldn't be offered.
* **It tells you what worked and what didn't from the perspective of those most directly involved - beneficiaries and staff**. Those implementing the project and those who are directly affected by it are most capable of sorting out the effective from the ineffective.
* **It can tell you why something does or doesn't work**. Beneficiaries are often able to explain exactly why they didn't respond to a particular technique or approach, thus giving you a better chance to adjust it properly.
* **It results in a more effective project**. For the reasons just described, you're much more apt to start out in the right direction, and to know when you need to change direction if you haven't. The consequence is a project that addresses the appropriate issues in the appropriate way, and accomplishes what it sets out to do.
* **It empowers stakeholders**. Participatory evaluation gives those who are often not consulted - line staff and beneficiaries particularly - the chance to be full partners in determining the direction and effectiveness of a project.
* **It can provide a voice for those who are often not heard**. Project beneficiaries are often low-income people with relatively low levels of education, who seldom have – and often do not think they have a right to - the chance to speak for themselves. By involving them from the beginning in project evaluation, you assure that their voices are heard, and they learn that they have the ability and the right to speak for them.
* **It teaches skills that can be used in employment and other areas of life**. In addition to the development of basic skills and specific research capabilities, participatory evaluation encourages critical thinking, collaboration, problem-solving, independent action; meeting deadlines...all skills valued by employers, and useful in family life, education, civic participation, and other areas.
* **It bolsters self-confidence and self-esteem in those who may have little of either.** This category can include not only project beneficiaries, but also others who may, because of circumstance, have been given little reason to believe in their own competence or value to society. The opportunity to engage in a meaningful and challenging activity, and to be treated as a colleague by professionals, can make a huge difference for folks who are seldom granted respect or given a chance to prove themselves.
* **It demonstrates to people ways in which they can take more control of their lives**. Working with professionals and others to complete a complex task with real-world consequences can show people how they can take action to influence people and events.
* **It encourages stakeholder ownership of the project.** If those involved feel the project is theirs, rather than something imposed on them by others, they will work hard both in implementing it, and in conducting a thorough and informative evaluation in order to improve it.
* **It can spark creativity in everyone involved**. For those who have never been involved in anything similar, a participatory evaluation can be a revelation, opening doors to a completely new way of thinking and looking at the world. To those who have taken part in evaluation before, the opportunity to exchange ideas with people who may have new ways of looking at the familiar can lead to a fresh perspective on what may have seemed to be a settled issue.
* **It encourages working collaboratively**. For participatory evaluation to work well, it has to be viewed by everyone involved as a collaboration, where each participant brings specific tools and skills to the effort, and everyone is valued for what she can contribute. Collaboration of this sort not only leads to many of the advantages described above, but also fosters a more collaborative spirit for the future as well, leading to other successful community projects.
* **It fits into a larger participatory effort**. When community assessment and the planning of a project have been a collaboration among project beneficiaries, staff, and community members, it only makes sense to include evaluation in the overall plan, and to approach it in the same way as the rest of the project. In order to conduct a good evaluation, its planning should be part of the overall planning of the project. Furthermore, participatory process generally matches well with the philosophy of community-based or grass roots groups or organizations.

With all these positive aspects, participatory evaluation carries some negative ones as well. Whether its disadvantages outweigh its advantages depend on your

Q7.

Describe the following terms as used in project Monitoring and Evaluation:

1. Project Monitoring: Project Monitoring refers to the process of keeping track of all project-related metrics including team performance and task duration, identifying potential problems and taking corrective actions necessary to ensure that the project is within scope, on budget and meets the specified deadlines. To simply put, project monitoring is overseeing all tasks and keeping an eye on project activities to make sure you are implementing the project as planned.
2. Project Evaluation: It is a way to evaluate the specific projects and activities community groups may take part in, rather than to evaluate an entire organization or comprehensive community initiative
3. Primary stakeholder: are those who meant to benefit from a program SSamme, or in the case of a situation assessment, those directly affected by a situation/issue.
4. Scope Creep: is continues and incremented changes that lead to an uncontrolled and unauthorized growth in the project’s scope
5. Impact assessment:  is a structured a process for considering the implications, for people and their environment, of proposed actions while there is still an opportunity to modify (or even, if appropriate, abandon) the proposals. It is applied at all levels of decision-making, from policies to specific projects.

Q8.

Why is it important to conclude M&E activity by writing a report?

1) For accountability: demonstrating to donors, taxpayers, beneficiaries and implementing partners that expenditure, actions and results are as agreed or can reasonably be expected in the situation.

(2) For operational management: provision of the information needed to co-ordinate the human, financial and physical resources committed to the project or programme, and to improve performance

(3) For strategic management: provision of information to inform setting and adjustment of objectives and strategies.

(4) For capacity building: building the capacity, self-reliance and confidence of beneficiaries and implementing staff and partners to effectively initiate and implement development initiatives.

(Adapted from OECD (2002) Casley and Kumar (1987)

Q9.

Discuss the steps in writing and presenting an Evaluation report.

Steps in the process

1. Define Report Requirements in the Evaluation Statement of Work and Final Work Plan All evaluation statements of work (SOW) should clearly define requirements and expectations for the final evaluation report. All of the items in Table 1 must be included as requirements for the final report. Ensure that all requirements in the SOW are also included in the final evaluation work plan that is put in place once the evaluation team is on board. Adjustments can be made at this time, as long as the minimum requirements are met, and additions can be included such as defining when the first draft will be due, how many days USAID will have to review and provide comments, and when the final report will be submitted.

2. Review First Draft Program Offices must ensure that evaluation draft reports are assessed for quality by management and through an in-house peer technical review and comments provided to the evaluation teams. USAID staff may consider including implementing partners and other direct stakeholders in the review process. Tools such as the USAID Evaluation Report Checklist can be used.

3. Final Draft and Statement of Differences Evaluation reports are independent products and therefore the evaluation team leader reviews the comments and determines which to incorporate into the final draft. Once the final draft is submitted to the USAID mission or office, the content should not be changed without the permission of the evaluation team leader. USAID, other funders, implementing partners, and other members of the evaluation team can decide to include a Statement of Differences as an annex to the report, if there are differences related to the evaluation findings or recommendations.

4. Submit to DEC and Share Findings Widely USAID Program Offices must ensure that evaluation final reports (or reports submitted by evaluators to USAID as their final drafts) are submitted within three months of completion to the Development Experience Clearinghouse at http://dec.usaid.gov. USAID staff can do the actual submission or the evaluation team with USAID concurrence has provided (once an opportunity for USAID or others to include a Statement of Differences, if appropriate). In addition to submission to the DEC, USAID should also consider how to share the evaluation report widely to facilitate broader learning. This could include posting the report on the USAID mission website, translating a summary into local language, and hosting presentations of the evaluation findings.

5. Use Evaluation Findings to Inform Decisions USAID must integrate evaluation findings into decision making about strategies, program priorities, and project design. While the Program Office in a mission should ensure this happens, it is the responsibility of all USAID staff.

CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

General Style When writing a report, the evaluation team must always remember the primary audience: project and program managers, policymakers, and direct stakeholders. The style of writing should be easy to understand and concise while making sure to address the evaluation questions and issues with accurate and data-driven findings, justifiable conclusions, and practical recommendations. Report Sections and Content At a minimum, all reports should include the following sections: Executive Summary (3 to 4 pages); Evaluation Purpose and Questions (1 to 2 pages); Project Background (1to 3 pages); Evaluation Methods and Limitations (1 to 3 pages, with full version provided in an annex); Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations (15 to 25 pages); and, Annexes. Reports may include additional content, split the sections up differently, or present the sections in a different order.

• Executive Summary The Executive Summary, between three to four pages in length, should stand alone as an abbreviated version of the report. All content of the full report should be summarized, and the Executive Summary should contain no new information.

• Evaluation Purpose and Questions the evaluation purpose should be clearly defined at the beginning of the report. It should describe in about one page or less why the evaluation is being conducted now, how the findings are expected to be used, what specific decisions will be informed by the evaluation, and who the main audiences are for the evaluation report. The evaluation questions are linked to the purpose, and should be listed here. Good practice is to limit the questions to three to five that are clear, focused, and that will directly inform specific decisions.

• Project Background This section should summarize the project being evaluated in one to three pages, including the original problem the project is designed to address, any changes that have occurred since the project was started, a description of the beneficiary population, geographic area of the project, and the underlying development hypothesis, or causal logic, of the project or the broader program of which the project is a part. If a results framework (for strategies, objectives or programs) or logical framework (for projects) is available, this should be included here. For projects designed under the project design guidance released in 2011, the evaluation team should have access to the final Project Appraisal Document and related annexes (which includes a logical framework and original monitoring and evaluation plans, among other things). This information provides important context for understanding the evaluation purpose, questions, methods, findings and conclusions.

• Methods and Limitations this section should provide a detailed description within one to three pages of the evaluation methods and why they were chosen. If more space is needed, additional detailed information on the methods should be provided in an annex. The reader needs to understand what the evaluation team did and why to make an informed judgment about the credibility of the findings and conclusions and the underlying evaluation design including the data collection and analysis methods. Evaluation methods should correspond directly to the questions being asked and should generate the highest quality and most credible evidence possible, taking into consideration time, budget and other practical considerations. This section should provide information on all aspects of the evaluation design and methods, including tradeoffs that led to selection of specific data collection and analysis methods, a description of data availability and quality, and sampling strategies (purposive, random, etc.), including how interview subjects or site visits were selected. Just as important as describing the evaluation methods is describing any limitations in data collection and analysis, data quality, access to data sources, or any other factors that may result in bias. To show the. (USAID 2012)

Q10.

Identify and explain any four features or characteristics of a project.

1. A single definable purpose, end-item or result. This is usually specified in terms of cost, schedule and performance requirements.
2. Every project is unique. It requires the doing of something different, something that was not done previously. Even in what are often called “routine” projects such as home construction, the variables such as terrain, access, zoning laws, labor market, public services and local utilities make each project different. A project is a one-time, once-off activity, never to be repeated exactly the same way again.
3. Projects are temporary activities. A project is an ad hoc organization of staff, material, equipment and facilities that is put together to accomplish a goal. This goal is within a specific time frame. Once the goal is achieved, the organization created for it is disbanded or sometimes it is reconstituted to begin work on a new goal (project).
4. Projects cut across organizational lines. Projects always cut across the regular organizational lines and structures within a firm. They do this because the project needs to draw from the skills and the talents of multiple professions and departments within the firm and sometimes even from other organizations. The complexity of advanced technology often leads to additional project difficulties, as they create task interdependencies that may introduce new and unique problems.

(Stanly 2015)

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