**MODULE 3 Questions:**

**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)

**Introduction**

Monitoring & evaluation is a process of continual gathering of information and assessment of its 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 a good management practices.

Planning can be defined as the process of setting goals, developing strategies, outlining the implementation and allocating resources to achieve those goals. It is important to note that planning involves looking at a number of different processes.

Therefore this assignment explains in detail the value of M & E and the key planning steps for setting up an M & E plan.

Thus, the key important reasons for M & E can be summarized under the following headings:

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 & 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 implement development initiatives.

Steps in developing an M & E plan

1. Identify the purpose & scope of the M & E system
2. Plan for data collection and management
3. Plan for data design
4. Plan for information reporting & utilization
5. Plan for M & E human resources & capacity building
6. Prepare for M & E budget

In conclusion, M & E provides a flow of information for internal use by managers, and for external use by stakeholders who expect to see results, want to see demonstrable impacts and require accountability and trustworthiness on the part of the public sector.

*Resources & Reference*

1. Evaluation Toolbox. Step by Step Guide to create your M & E plan. Retrieved from: hpttps://evaluationtoolbox.net.au/indes.phd
2. InfoDev.Developing a monitoring & evaluation plan for ICT for Education. Retrieved from: <https://www.infodev.org>
3. FHI360. Developing a monitoring & evaluation work plan. Retrieved from: https://www. <https://www.fhi360.org/sites/default/files/media>
4. United Nations. Template for M & E plan. Retrieved from. <https://www.un.cv/files/Template%20>M & E %20 plan.pdf

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

**Introduction**

Programs and project must be designed, planned & implemented using a participatory approach where all stakeholders are involved throughout the program/project life cycle, thus, this question clarifies the significance and different modalities of stakeholder participation in program monitoring and evaluation. Its content is based on review of evaluation literature from academic world and international development agencies and NGOs such as the Institute of Development studies SUSSEX, UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF and Catholic Relief Services.

**Who are the stakeholders?**

Monitoring & Evaluation stakeholders are those people who have a stake in the programme. They are persons who take decisions using the monitoring and evaluation data and findings.

**Types of the stakeholders**.

The community whose situation the programme seeks to change; project filed staff who implement activities; programme managers who oversee programme implementation; funders and other Decision-makers who decided the course of action related to the programme. Supporters, critics and other stakeholders who influence the programme environment.

Therefore, the engagement of stakeholders during planning continues to be relevant for monitoring and evaluating stages for the following reasons:

* The stakeholders, who set the vision and the prioritized that vision during the planning stage, have the best ideas on how the results would continue to remain relevant to them. They must therefore be involved in identifying the information or feedback that is needed during implementation which determine the parameters for monitoring & evaluation.
* Having set the vision priority results and initial parameters for monitoring and evaluation the key stakeholders are best placed to ensure that the programmatic initiatives planned would deliver what was intended and the way it was intended.

In conclusion, through all the stages of planning, monitoring & evaluating, learning & improving, it is vital to engage stakeholders, promote buy-in and commitment, and motivate action. Therefore, a strong results – management process aims to engage stakeholders in thinking as openly and creatively as possible about what they want to achieve and encourages them to organize themselves to achieve what they have agreed on including putting in place a process to monitor and evaluate progress and use the information to improve performance.

**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. (10 mrks)

**Introduction**

In resources allocation, competing interest determine what is allocated for what is an organization. Sometimes M & E doesn’t get enough due to importance attached to it. In M & E resources are set for use continuously in monitoring activities and periodically for evaluations. In same instance we have seen projects allocate resources for monitoring only. This cast doubts on such an organization’s willingness to learn from the benefits of evaluation as we know them. Monitoring & evaluations activities need time and money. Finances are used to pay salaries for M & E personnel training in M & E related issues, buying software and hardware resources and so on. *Taylor-Powell et al, (2008)* argues that resources necessary for M & E may also include what is issued to hire evaluation expertise, buy evaluation reference materials & facilitate evaluation champions.

**Financial capacity** to do M & E is critical for any work to be undertaken. Credibility of information gathered from M & E system that is underfunded would be questioned more so on the quality of that information. More likely is the fact that crucial data may have been left out. As *Woodhill, (2005)* points out utilization of such data many not be meaningful. Therefore, financial resources for monitoring and evaluation should be estimated realistically at the time of planning for monitoring & evaluation. While it is critical to plan for monitoring & evaluation together, resources for each function should be separate. In practice, each project should have two separate budget lines for its monitoring & evaluation agree in advance with partners *(Handbook for PM&E for Development Results UNDP)*

The most commonly observed financial mechanism is to draw resources together from relevant projects as follow:

* Create a separate monitoring & evaluation fund facility or project associated with outcome or a program to which all the constituent projects would contribute through transfer of some project funds. This facility could be located in the same entity that manages the outcome or program.
* Mobilize funds form partners directly for an outcome or program monitori g and evaluation facility.
* Allocate required funds annually for each outcome on the basis of planned costs of monitoring and evaluation from overall program budget to the facility or funds.

**Human capacity** to do M & E refers to the ability of persons mandated to carry out M & E activities. This ability includes a variety of skills and knowledge to steer each step in an M & E organizations need to invest in skilled personnel to run M & E either by 1) hiring already trained people, which many be very difficult for most projects to achieve because few people n are skilled in conventional M & E; 2) training the people you need either on-the-job or through external courses; 3) hire external consultants for focused inputs *(IFAD, 2002).* Ability together and interpret data to make it usable and the ability to themselves use the same is the key element of investing resources in M & E personnel *(Briceno, 2010)*

In conclusion, the above is a clear demonstration that M & E system will succeed when organization consider having sufficient resources allocated to its functions. This was verified by a study by CLEAR (Centre for Learning on Evaluation & Results) of African monitoring and evaluation system in2012 in which they noted that the weight to resources allocated to monitoring system in Ghana, Kenya & Benin is demonstrated by the extensive reporting mechanism in place. They noted that lead agencies collate information from other department to collect quality information. The study concluded that in all these cases, considerable human & financial resources are put into development of these departments (CLEAR, 2012)

*References*

1. Briceno, B (2010). Defining the type of M & E system; clients, intended uses, and Actual Utilization, Retrieved from https//openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/11079
2. CLEAR, (2012). African monitoring & evaluation system. Exploratory case studies. Graduate school of public and development management, university of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

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

**Introduction**

Monitoring & Evaluation of any programme or intervention is vital to determine whether it works, to help refine programme delivery, and to provide evidence for continuing support of the programme. Evaluation will not only provide feedback on the effectiveness of a programme but will also help to determine whether the programme is appropriate for the target population, whether there are any problem with its implementation and support and whether there are any ongoing concerns that need to be resolved as the programme is implemented.

Below are the key questions that monitoring & evaluation seeks to answer:

* Are the pre-identified outputs being produced as planned and efficiently?
* What are the issues, risks and challenges that we face or foresee that need to be taken in to account to ensure the achievement of the results.
* What decisions need to be made concerning changes to the already planned work in subsequent stages?
* Will the planned and delivered outputs continue to be relevant for the achievement of the envisioned outcomes?
* Are the outcomes we envisaged remaining relevant and effective for the achieving the overall national priorities, goals & impacts?
* What are we learning?

To answer the above questions, Income Generating Activity (IGA) project for economic reintegration & reunion of the children with their families in Juba, South Sudan has been used as an example.

**PROJECT LOCATION**

The project is going to be implemented in several areas of south Sudan. It will be based in Juba Central Equatoria State, but the groups of people will be diverse from all states.

**OBJECTIVE OF THE PROJECT**

To start up income generating activities as a way to ensure the economic reintegration of children into the society and facilitate the reunification of the children with their families.

**THE PROJECT RATIONALE**

South Sudan is one of the African countries with a long history of civil conflicts. The prolonged war claimed millions of lives and many were left physically disabled and mentally traumatized. Due to such many families were torn apart and the vulnerable children were left on the street with no one to tend to them. It is against this background that this project (IGA) was initiated with an overall objective of improving the living condition of the disadvantaged, vulnerable and suffering children by empowering and equipping their parents and guardians with the necessary skills, knowledge and experience for sustainable livelihood and development.

**THE PROJECT**

**PROBLEMS ADDRESSED AND SOLUTIONS**

The income generating activity aims at addressing the following problems;

Unemployment. The project will aim to decreasing the problem of people within south Sudan community especially returnees and the local population.

The project will also help in supporting the children of such beneficiaries in their education. A stable source of income for the guardians and parents will enable them to carter for the basic needs of their children.

The project also aims at encouraging financial independence among the society specially the families of the street children.

The project will also enable the beneficiaries to raise their standard of living by being able to carter for their basic needs.

**PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES**

The problems and challenges that may arise from the project include the following;

Lack of commitment from the participants.

Socially some societies have negative beliefs especially about women in business. Due to such myths and traditions it may discourage the females from indulging in any kind of business.

Economically the problem of insufficient funds may arise which may not see the business to the end.

Politically some areas may be unstable and as a result may not be conducive for any business operations.

However there are also opportunities arising as a result of the project;

Economically the beneficiaries will be in position to generate income and as a result carter for their basic needs.

It could also create employment opportunities not only to the beneficiaries but also the society as a whole.

It also will help in the growth of the country’s economy.

The project could to some extent reduce on instability within the country. This is because some instability is caused as a result of some individuals being redundant in the society, but given what to do whether it’s direct or indirect employment people will keep busy hence decreasing on some of the unlawful activities.

**OTHER ALTERNATIVES**

However there were alternative approaches that had been suggested such as that of supporting the children in school. This approach was affected because of some limiting factors related to children accommodation. Due to that reason the income generating activity was seen as a better approach to support both the children and their families.

**BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT**

The expected benefits of the project include the following;

The beneficiaries will be in position to earn income that will carter for their basic needs

There will be employment opportunities both to the beneficiaries and the general public as a whole.

In the long run it will facilitate in the growth of the country’s economy

The project also encourages financial independence among the individuals

The beneficiaries of the project will be the parents of the street children and the local population whereby all males and females will benefit irrespective of ethnicity, gender or disability.

**THE SELECTION CRITERIA**

The selection criteria used to identify the beneficiaries were the level of needs of children who were being supported by IBIS in their education. We took on that approach to see that the children remain in school even when the education programme could no longer support them, then their parents and guardians would still be in position to provide for them if they are empowered through the income generating activity.

The indirect beneficiaries of the project will be the local population who will get employment from the established businesses of the beneficiaries.

The needs of the vulnerable group especially for the case of women will be addressed in that they will be self-employed and thus will be in position to tend for the needs of their families especially their children.

**BENEFICIARY PARTICIPATION**

The beneficiaries of the project will be directly involved in that they will be attending regular trainings that will facilitate in the growth of their business entities. There will also be constant support from staff members who will help to monitor and evaluate on the progress of the beneficiaries business and offer advice accordingly. The beneficiaries will also be given the contacts of the office so that they can readily air out their views, opinions, problems and challenges they face.

**STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION AND ANALYSIS**

The stakeholders of the project will be encouraged to participate actively in the project by receiving timely and adequate reports pertaining the progress of the project. There will also be events that will be organized and during such gatherings they will have the opportunity to interact with the beneficiaries.

The effect of the project to the stakeholders will also be that they will gain a positive image within the south Sudan community hence easing their work in the region.

**CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES**

Gender- wise both men and women will benefit from the project and incase of any inequality issues arising it will be dealt with accordingly. Gender issues that could arise is that of most communities not allowing women to indulge in many business related activity. For such a case we would try educating such communities on the importance of helping especially the female to develop economically and in that way encourage gender equality.

The sustainability/exit strategy

The project will strengthen and underpin the unemployment problem in south Sudan and especially amongst the beneficiaries.

Some of the established businesses after growth in the long run will be able to carter for the basic needs of the beneficiaries. The growth of such enterprises will be done by equipping the individuals with adequate business knowledge and also encouraging the individuals to have a saving culture which will keep them going even when funding stops.

**The impact**

The impact of the project is that it will improve the lives of the beneficiaries since they will be having a source of income which will provide for their basic needs and the problem of unemployment will have been reduced.

**Lessons learnt**

The lack of commitment from the members will be solved by encouraging them on the importance of the project right from the orientation day.

The limited funds may be solved by allocating the funds to lucrative and yet cost effective businesses.

The staff members will be oriented on how to cope with various cultures.

**RISK ANALYSIS AND UNDERTAKINGS**

Risk is the chance that actual outcome will be different from the expected i.e. it is the possibility of losing some or all of the original investment in a project.

**RISK ASSESSMENT**

Methodology of risk assessment

The steps followed included:

* Identification of threats in the environment
* Assessment of the vulnerability of the project to the threats
* Determination of risk
* Identifying ways to reduce the risk
* Undertaking risk reduction measures

The risks identified included the following:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| TYPE OF RISK | LIKELIHOOD OF OCCURENCE | CONSEQUENCES OF RISK |
| **Political risk**  It represents the likelihood that a government will change its policies. | Likely | -Shut down of activities  -increase in poverty levels  -slowing down of the economy  -increase in crime levels  -Legal and regulatory compliance  -taxation |
| **financial risk** | Very likely | -budget deficits  -fraud |
| **Social risk** | Very likely | -lack of support from family to do business  -poor attitude to entrepreneurship |
| **Market risk**  It represents the day to day fluctuations in prices of commodities. | Very likely | -Fluctuations in demand and supply of goods and services. |
| **Business risk** | Very likely | -fraud  -business failure |
| **Foreign exchange risk**  It represents fluctuation in the currency exchange rates. | Very likely | -depreciation in the value of the south Sudanese pound to other currencies. E.g. US. Dollar and sterling pounds. |

**MINIMIZING RISK TO PROJECT**

The steps that have been taken to mitigate the risk include:

* Diversification

The implementers of the project will diversify in terms of sponsorship of projects. We shall grant capital to businesses in different sectors with varying level of risk. This will help to reduce risk in case of adverse economic conditions that might affect an entire sector. This will reduce systematic and unsystematic risks. E. g tea cafes, retail shops, market vending, charcoal business and clothes businesses among others.

* Insurance

SCA shall encourage the beneficiaries to insure their businesses against losses arising from business risks. This will help avoid huge losses or shut down arising from lack of cash or liquid assets.

* Retention

The project shall retain and budget for some risks such as default risk by issuing startup capital as a grant instead of loan. This will encourage many people to join the project and develop a sense of responsibility, productivity, self-reliance and economic development.

**MINIMIZING RISK TO STAFF/ASSETS**

* Transparency

By encouraging regular reporting and accountability among members, we shall be able to find out how individual businesses are performing and give technical advice where necessary to ensure growth of these ventures.

* Designing new business process with adequate built in risk control and containment measures from the start.

SCA shall set a framework that will enable the beneficiaries to manage their assets and staff members efficiently. This will begin with careful selection of the participants to be given the grant to ensure committed and hardworking people come for the program. It will then be followed by adequate business skills training for 3 weeks where we shall use power points, questionnaires, face to face discussions, books and observation methods to collect information during the exercise. Thereafter, the lump sum grant of USD 5000 will be disbursed to the qualified candidates to start businesses. The monitoring and evaluation of these ventures will take place in November after the training and startup. Among the business measures will be proper accounting system to avoid fraud among staff members, threat of firing to avoid stealing, operating in safe areas to reduce robberies or hazards such as floods and hiring competent workers.

* Risk avoidance

For particularly high risk ventures, we shall avoid sponsoring them to avoid loss. E. g sell of arms and conducting business in highly unstable political areas are not encouraged.

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

**Introduction**

An assumption is the act of taking something for granted or supposing. In a project sense, an assumption is something we establish as true for the purpose of allowing us to precede with our project work, usually during the planning and estimating phase. Assumption enables the project for move forward without absolutely certain information. For example, when performing the project planning we might assume that a certain point in time we have access to 10 resources, even though at the early planning stage we are not actually sure where we are going to get these resources.

**Path change ways**

All projects are designed and funded for purpose of achieving a positive change in the lives of the intended beneficiaries or community. This is essence of the programming concept – path way to change”. Although change can be complex, it can be helpful to present your program and strategy in the form of a change pathway, or an impact chain. This is description of how your project activities will contribute to your desired outcomes (your objectives), which will in turn contribute to final impacts (your aims/goal). *(M & E module 3 notes)*

**Change assumption**

A change pathway/impact chain can be useful because it reveals the interrelationships between activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts and therefore also your change assumptions or theory about how you think change will be achieved. *(M & E module 3 notes)*

These assumptions are often implicit rather than explicit so you may not even be aware of them. If you have not already done so it’s worth taking time in your organization to discuss them to see whether you are all in agreement, whether they seem plausible and/or whether you might need to investigate them more. You could test them against existing theories of change evidence and/or your practical experience or the experience of other group (M & E module 3 notes).

Therefore, a project based solely on this change assumption runs the risk of not meeting desired outcomes. Conversely community groups are sometimes hugely ambitious and assume they have the capacity to achieve their objectives when in fact change generally requires action by a range of actors. Mapping out your change pathway and identifying your change assumptions can help you work out what contribution you can make and what contribution others need to make.