**SOPHY MARUTIA JUSTIN. ADMISSION NO. ACPM/CERT/215/2019**

**CERTIFICATE IN MONITORING AND EVALUATION ASSIGNMENT 2**

**ASSIGNMENTS:**

1. What are the qualities of a good indicator? Give an example

Parsons, Gokey & Thorton,(2013, p. 6), define indicators as ‘a quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect the changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of a development actor’’. Another definition is provided by Bakewell, Adams and Pratt (2003) cited in Simister (2015, p. 1) who states that an indicator is ‘’an observable change or event which provides evidence that something has happened – whether an output delivered, immediate effect occurred or long-term change observed’’.

Indicators are critical to a project as they provide evidence of change, and form an important part of most Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems and approaches (Simister, 2015, p. 1). While many types of indicators exist, quantitative and qualitative indicators the most commonly used in M&E (Simister, 2015, p. 1).

**Qualities of a good indicator**

A good indicator should be;

1. ***Relevant:***  A good indicator should be able to enable a project team understand something about a project or system they are working on. The indicator must fit the purpose of measuring aspects of the project it was designed to (Sustainable Measures, n.d.).
2. ***Easy to understand****:* While developing indicators for a given project, measures should be put in place to ensure that the indicators are easy to understand such that even persons who are not experts can work with them with ease(Sustainable Measures, n.d.).
3. Ensuring that information/data acquired through established indicators is believable is a critical aspect in M&E. It is therefore critical to ensure that indicators developed for a given project is ***reliable*** to ensure that information acquired is trustworthy (Sustainable Measures, n.d.).
4. According to Sustainable Measures (n.d.), effective indicators should be based on ***accessible data*** that can be gathered when needed. The indicators must be able to provide timely information when required to enable the team make a sound decision on a given aspect of the project (Sustainable Measures, n.d.).

**Example of a good indicator:** A project activity of conducting training for 50 teachers from 5 schools in Juba on good teaching methodologies. **The indicator in this will be the number of teachers from 5 schools in Juba trained on good teaching methodologies at the end of the activity (# of teachers trained)**

**Example 2:** While implementing a sanitation project, an organization was working towards ensuring that at least 70% of households in a given village construct and use latrines to eliminate open defecation. **In this example, the indicator used can be: proportion of the target HHs reporting ownership and use latrines (% of target HHs reporting ownership and use latrines).**

1. As part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Universal education is a right for all children. Different governments have implemented free primary education in order to achieve this goal. With example from your country please explain the following:
   1. Critically evaluate the implementation programme of free primary education for the first 2 years

**Project background**

In 2013, the Government of South Sudan with support from the United Kingdom government through the Department for International Development (DFID) initiated a 5 years education project titled ***Girls Education South Sudan*** (GESS). The objective of the project was to increase enrolment, attendance and retention of school children in schools with a primary focus on girls’ education. It was expected that within 5 years, at least 20,000 school girls will have enrolled, attended lessons for at least 21 days in a month and remained in school until the finished their secondary education.

The project was established following an assessment that identified low enrolment of girls in schools of South Sudan which was attributed to high poverty levels, adverse cultural practices and beliefs that favored education of the boy child, poor teaching techniques and poor learning environment. Several stakeholders including UNESCO have painted a gloomy picture of the limited access to education by South Sudanese children. According to UNESCO (2018, p. 5) South Sudan has some of the worst global education indicators, resulting from extreme poverty and decades of conflict. In the wake of persistent fragility and conflict, at least 2.2 million school-aged children are estimated to be out of school with thousands more at risk of dropping out (UNESCO, 2018, P. 10).

If not addressed in a timely manner, the number of out of school children is projected to rise beyond 2.4 million by the year 2020 (UNESCO, 2018, p. 10). Among the worst affected are girls with 59% of girls married having attained no basic education (NBS, 2010 cited in UNESCO 2018, p. 28). The project was expected to increase enrolment, attendance and retention especially among girls by addressing the aforementioned challenges.

Through the project, girls were provided with cash transfers to enable them meet their education needs and also as an incentive to encourage parents to allow girls to go to schools, teachers were trained to improve quality of education leading to better performance, schools were provided with capitation grants to enable them procure needed learning materials, pay incentive for volunteer teachers in schools where the number of teachers was not adequate and make the schools habitable and appealing to school children by improving infrastructure and learning environment. To address the challenge of adverse cultural practices that were seen to impede girls’ ability to access education, community sensitization through mobilization and radio programs were conducted to enlighten parents and community leaders/decision makers of the importance of providing equal education opportunities for boys and girls.

**Project status after 2 years**

*Implementation status*: During the initial 3 months of the project, the implementing teams experienced resistance for community leaders majority of whom were of the opinion that the project was initiated to erode existing culture and behavior aspects of the community. To the community leaders who were highly respected by community members, the project intended to introduce what they considered ‘the white man’s ideas’ to the communities something they vowed not to allow. It took intense deliberation in several meetings and involvement of senior government officials for community leaders to understand the main project objective. To enable community leaders understand that the project was not coined with a sinister agenda, an agreement was reached to involve them to key committees overseeing the implementation of the project.

Their involvement was to ensure that they supported the project implementation through their involvement and also use their following within the communities to rally other community members to support the project. As an incentive of their involvement, bicycles were procured through the project to facilitate their movement while attending meetings and also during their visits to schools to conduct project monitoring.

The inclusive education management approach ensured smooth project implementation after 3 months. Community leaders were supportive of the project and its intended objectives and were actively involved in the project implementation. The project witnessed increased involvement of parents in education affairs of their children with teachers reporting increased attendance during Parents Teachers Association (PTA) meetings. There was also increased participation of school management committees who took an active role in supporting teachers with developing schools budgets in preparation for capitation grants disbursement.

Within two years of the project, teachers reported increased number of girls in all the schools in the country. This was attributed to increased community mobilization messaging which included information on payment of cash transfers to girls who enroll and remain in schools for at least 2 days in a month. In schools that had shortage of teachers, more volunteers were recruited following the disbursement of capitation grants. Schools’ learning environment also improved with schools constructing gender sensitive latrines that ensured privacy for girls in schools thereby increasing the number of girls enrolled in schools. School supervisors reported improved teaching practices following teachers’ trainings. According to data provided on SSSAMS (2019), at the end of the second year of the project (2015), 1,145,082 students had been enrolled to schools (1,062,243 girls’ 1,384,176 boys). The number of girls enrolled and retained in schools within the two years was higher than the anticipated 20,000 girls expected to have been rolled to schools nationally by the year 2018 when the project was to end.

The gradual increase of the number of girls enrolled in schools from the project inception. While the trend has shown an increase in enrolment, the number of girls to who will continuously attend lessons for at least 21 days and complete their education will determine whether the objective of regular attendance and retention is achieved at the end of the project. The project would have performed way better had it not been for a civil war that broke out in South Sudan in 2013 that led to displacement of school children in some areas with many leaving their homes to seek safe refuge in neighboring countries and in Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps. Nonetheless, while the war led to a setback on the project, the progress derived from 2013-2015 is desirable despite of the aforementioned challenge that threated to derail the project from attaining the set target.

* 1. **Analyze the unintended outcomes of free primary education on job creation within the same period**

While the primary objective of the project was to promote increased enrolment, attendance and retention in schools other aspects arose during the project implementation that led to creation of jobs within the project locations. While no actual data is available on the number of jobs created through the project, expenditures received from schools issued with capitation grants, staff payrolls from organizations supporting with project implementation and from talking to parents of girls who benefited from cash transfers, there is evidence to prove that through the project jobs were created that improved the lives of persons not directly targeted through the project.

***Job creation through project implementing partners***: The GESS project was implemented in all the 10 States of South Sudan. The project was implemented through Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) partners. Each partner identified their staffing needs and recruited project teams to oversee the implementation of the project. The partners also procured needed project materials to support the project implementation. As such, through the project, the partners staff acquired jobs and persons from whom project materials were procured also earned a living.

***Job creation at school and community level***: The project also contributed to creation of jobs at school and community levels. Schools hired masons to undertake infrastructure developments/renovations, cooks to prepare meals for school children and volunteer teachers to support with learning. All these groups were paid using capitation grants provided to schools to improve the learning environment to make schools habitable and appealing thereby encouraging students to enroll. The schools also used part of the capitation grants to procure learning materials from local markets thereby sustaining the livelihoods of persons from whom the materials were procured. Information was also received of some parents who used part of the cash transfers provided to their daughters to procure seeds and tools to establish farming as a venture thereby ensuring sustainable livelihood venture. Upon harvest, some parents sold surplus produce in local markets thereby leading to HH job creating which they used to meet other HHs needs for their children.

c) What would the monitoring exercise in free primary education wish to achieve for the following stakeholders?

Different stakeholders have desired aspects that they seek during a project implementation. To understand whether their expected results are derived, the stakeholders put in place mechanisms to monitor the various aspects on the project. Using the above example of the free primary education implemented in South Sudan, the below stakeholders will need a monitoring exercise to achieve the following;

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Stakeholder | Expectations from a monitoring exercise |
| Donor | 1. Determine whether the project is on course to achieve its set objectives. 2. Determine whether identified project milestones are delivered within agreed project timeframe. 3. Determine whether proposed project activities are being implemented in line with the approved project documents. 4. Determine appropriate use of approved project resources. 5. Identify shortfalls identified within a given period of the project and mitigations steps put in place to ensure project objectives are achieved. 6. Determine value for money by comparing accomplished project activities against resources used to accomplish the activities. 7. Determine whether the implemented project activities have any impact on the beneficiaries/organizations supported. 8. In a joint funding approach as with the example provided, the donor will seek to understand whether the government (partner) is meeting its obligation to the project. |
| Primary School Managers | 1. Determine whether proposed project activities have any impact on education e.g. identify whether community mobilization activities have led to increased enrolment, attendance and retention of girls in schools. 2. Determine whether trainings conducted by partners for teachers lead to quality education through improved teaching methodologies and better performance. 3. Determine whether implementing partner/donors/government ensure timely delivery of agreed project resources to schools. 4. Identify areas of the project that require review for agreed project deliverables to be achieved within the agreed period. 5. Identify challenges/risks that may impact the project negatively and jointly with the donor and government come up with sustainable mitigation steps to remedy the challenges/risks. |
| Government | 1. Determine whether the project has any impact in promoting increased enrolment, attendance and retention of children in school. 2. Monitor whether the project has contributed to a shift in positive mindset amongst communities reached through the project. 3. Determine whether the project contributes to better performance in target schools 4. Determine whether donors meet their obligations towards signed bilateral agreements. For example on the free education project in South Sudan, being a joint partnership, the government will seek to understand whether DFID has met its obligation by monitoring whether capitation grants are released to schools. 5. Identify existing gaps on the project and come up with measures in place to bridge identified gaps to ensure quality education. 6. Identify avenues for community involvement in free education project and find avenues of better engagement to promote inclusive education management 7. Determine whether released project resources are put to good use and an accountability mechanism put in place to ensure value for money. For example, when schools indicate that money is paid towards payment of volunteer teachers, the government will seek to determine whether the money was paid and also whether the volunteer teachers delivered lessons by reviewing monitoring documents from education supervisors. |

1. You have been contracted by UNICEF to undertake the role of a consultant in a project (joint partnership between them and the Ministry of Gender and Children) a program that gives direct funds to families staying with orphaned children, to plan a monitoring system for the same.

‘’A participatory evaluation actively involves key stakeholders, especially the intended beneficiaries of a project or program, in the design and implementation of the evaluation’’ (INTRAC, 2017). While there are many reasons why an organization can opt for a participatory evaluation, the most common reasons are ‘’to empower beneficiaries to better analyze and improve their own situations, and to produce better and more reliable findings and recommendations’’ (INTRAC, 2017). In many cases, participatory evaluation is used when a designed project affects the lives of different groups, impact of the project can be derived in various ways, the project addresses issues on social inclusion such as gender or disability, a project is concerned with mobilization, empowerment and other forms of social development and when the organization conducting the evaluation is committed to a rights-based approach (INTRAC, 2017).

1. What are the advantages of participatory evaluation methods?

While there are many advantages of using participatory evaluation including helping to build local ownership of established projects, building consensus between different groups of stakeholders, enhancing local learning and management capacities, ensuring timely information on decisions made and empowering communities to make decisions (INTRAC, 2017), Guijt (2014, p.18) cited in (INTRAC, 2017) argues that “the benefits of participation … are neither automatic nor guaranteed”. INTRAC (2017) states that participatory evaluations can be difficult to facilitate and require more time and resources to undertake.

**Challenges**

1. Unlike a situation where an evaluator is in control of data collection, analysis and reporting, with participatory evaluation, it becomes harder because the evaluator has to ensure that all stakeholders are involved during the entire process which is time consuming, requires additional resources and facilitation skills (INTRAC, 2017).
2. There is a risk of elite capture where more powerful people within a group may take over the entire process by suppressing other persons’ opinions on a given issue (INTRAC, 2017). For example in South Sudan, men are considered dominant and most times they take over conversations leaving women left out.
3. Situations may arise where beneficiaries may decline to take part in evaluations or come up with conditions and demands for their participation on an evaluation (INTRAC, 2017). This may slow down the process and require additional resources for the evaluation to be conducted.
4. Participatory evaluations work best when a target population was involved in the defining stage of project objectives or indicators (INTRAC, 2017). It is difficult to undertake a participatory evaluation if the group had not been considered at the inception period of a project as they may not be able to contribute due to lack of understanding of t the project and what it was designed to achieve (INTRAC, 2017).
5. There is difficulty of ‘’ensuring sustained engagement from the local community; collecting information from community members can be challenging once, but managing this twice is even more difficult – which means that gathering information for both the baseline and the endline can be quite a challenge’’ ( Yusuf, 2016).
6. Formulate the steps in planning a monitoring system.

The proposed project has 3 key stakeholders namely;

1. The Ministry of Gender and Children
2. UNICEF
3. Target beneficiaries

To ensure community ownership and involvement of the project, the government partner and target beneficiaries must be involved during the entire project design. Key aspects including identification of families to be supported, the nature of target families’ needs and the beneficiary selection process will need to be discussed and deliberated on exhaustively as they will form key components of the evaluation process. To ensure community own the process, the consultant in consultation with UNICEF and the government partner will support target communities through the existing groups’ leaders including women, youth, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), Refugees, local chiefs, local authorities and returnees to develop a community driven inclusive beneficiary selection criteria. It is on the basis of this criteria that identified vulnerable HHs housing orphaned children will be selected. Developing a selection criteria through the community will ensure that context specific vulnerability definitions are captured and incorporated into the project. The inclusive community developed selection criteria also eliminates the risk of favoritism and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA). Involving communities at the initial stage of the project will make it easy for them to be involved during the evaluation of the project at a later date because they were part of the project design process.

**Formulating a monitoring system**

***Step 1: Conduct a readiness assessment*** *(Kusek& Rist., 2004, p. 41).* It is critical to understand existing capacities of the partner organization (Ministry of Gender and Children) including the presence of systems to monitor the proposed project, existing project teams to support project implementation among other important aspects relating to the project. A readiness assessment provides the analytical framework for rating the partner’s (Ministry of Gender and Children) ability to monitor and evaluate the project progress in achieving designated goals (Kusek& Rist., 2004, p. 41). It does this by evaluating the ministry’s current understanding and capacity to use the evaluation system (Kusek& Rist., 2004, p. 41).

***Step 2: Agreeing on Outcomes to Monitor and Evaluate*** *(Kusek & Rist, 2004, p. 5)*: During this stage, the consultant working with identified Ministry of Gender and Children official develop strategic outcomes that focus and steer resource allocation and activities of the project. The outcomes should be based on the project’s strategic goals as stipulated by the donor in consultation with the project partner- Ministry of Gender and Children (Kusek & Rist, 2004, p. 5)

***Step 3: Developing Key Indicators to Monitor Outcomes***(Kusek & Rist, 2004, p. 5): In this stage, the consultant working closely with the Ministry of Gender and Children officials jointly develop indicators that will enable the project stakeholders understand the degree to which the project outcomes have been achieved (Kusek & Rist, 2004, p. 5). Indicators development is a critical activity in the development of M&E system as it drives all subsequent data collection, analysis and reporting (Kusek & Rist, 2004, p. 5) hence should be undertaken with great precision.

***Step 4: Setting Baselines and Gathering Data on Indicators*** (Kusek& Rist., 2004, p. 80): Understanding existing status of the project and collecting data at project inception period against which the project indicators will be measured is critical. Baseline data enables project stakeholders to understand the project progress from inception to the time of project evaluation. Establishing baseline data also helps decision makers of the current circumstances of a project before embarking on projecting targets (Kusek& Rist., 2004, p. 80). Together with Ministry of Gender and Children and in coordination with UNICEF, the consultant will establish project baselines and gather data on project indicators.

***Step 5: Planning for Improvements—Setting Realistic Targets*** *‘’*recognizes that most outcomes are long term, complex, and not quickly achieved’’ (Kusek & Rist, 2004, p. 5). ‘’Thus there is a need to establish interim targets that specify how much progress towards an outcome is to be achieved, in what time frame, and with what level of resource allocation’’. ‘’Measuring results against these targets can involve both direct and proxy indicators as well as the use of both quantitative and qualitative data’’.

***Step 6: Monitoring for Results***(Kusek & Rist, 2004, p. 5-6). Under this stage, the consultant working closely with UNICEF and the Ministry of Gender and Children establishes data collection, analysis and reporting guidelines (Kusek & Rist, 2004, p. 5-6). With support from the consultants, the two stakeholders further project activity timelines and costs and also work through and agree on the roles and responsibilities of the donor and Ministry on the project (Kusek & Rist, 2004, p. 5-6).

***Step 7: Using Evaluation Information to Support a Results-Based Management System***(Kusek & Rist, 2004, p.6). The consultant, UNICEF and Ministry representatives look into the contributions of the project evaluation studies and analysis to help in coming up with critical decisions such as resource allocations, help rethink the causes of a problem, identify emerging problems among others that ensure the project deliverables are derived in line with the approved project document and budget (Kusek & Rist, 2004, p.6).

***Step 8: Analyzing and Reporting Findings*** is considered an important step in M&E system, as it used to determine what findings are reported to whom, in what format, and at what intervals(Kusek & Rist, 2004, p.6). On this step, the consultant, UNICEF and Ministry officials address the existing capacity for producing such information and on the methodological dimensions of accumulating, assessing, and preparing analyses and reports (Kusek & Rist, 2004, p.6).

***Step Nine: ‘’Using the Findings*** emphasizes that the crux of the system is not in simply generating results-based information, but in getting that information to the appropriate users in the system in a timely fashion so that they can take it into account (as they choose) in the management of the government or organization’’(Kusek & Rist, 2004, p.6).. Under this step, the roles of partners accessing and using the information is spelt out.

***Step 10: Sustaining the M&E***System is important to an organization as it involves establishing ways to ensure longevity and utility of the established system *(Kusek & Rist, 2004, p.6).* Demand, structure, trustworthy and credible information, accountability, incentives, and capacity are important aspects of M&E system that needs continued attention over time to ensure the viability of the system (Kusek & Rist, 2004, p.6). This includes ensuring the presence of well-trained Ministry staff to work with the system in the absence of the consultant and UNICEF as part of established sustainability approach. The Ministry must commit to ensuring that trained staff are retained and continuous on job trainings organized for other staff within the Ministry to ensure continuity.

Fig 1. ***Summary steps in planning a monitoring system***

Conducting readiness assessment

Setting Baselines and Gathering Data on Indicators

Developing Key Indicators to Monitor Outcomes

Agreeing on Outcomes to

Monitor and Evaluate

**Step 1**  **Step 2**  **Step 3**  **Step 4**

Planning for Improvements—Setting Realistic Targets

Monitoring for Results

Using Evaluation Information to Support a Results-Based Management System

Analyzing and Reporting Findings

**Step 8**  **Step 7** **Step 6** **Step 5**

Analyzing and Reporting Findings

Analyzing and Reporting Findings

**Step 9**  **Step 10**

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