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Certificate in M&E Assignment 3

***QUESTIONS FOR MODULE THREE***

1. What are roles of donor agencies in strengthening National monitoring and Evaluation

Systems

Khadijah Khan, January 2003 claimed that strengthening the M&E system in organizations by employing MIS relies heavily on technological advancements. It requires articulating an MIS concept, defining clear objectives and creating a vision to transform manual system into electronic (computerized) system focused on substantial improvement in the delivery of services (Khan, 2003) Lai, Hancock, & Muller-Praefcke (2012), many NGOs operating with small fixed budgets find it hard to embrace advanced M&E technologies, and acquire expertise due to high costs involved. Lai, Hancock, & Muller-Praefcke (2012) notes that lack of modern telecommunication infrastructure and/or limited access to competent technical advice and support services could restrict the use of ICT in MIS establishment in certain project contexts.

Dillon, 22 June 2019 claimed that donor agencies are an important financial help when the projects that have been developed shall be carried out to meet the strategic objectives. WSP, 2004, further claims that getting funding for your project can take a lot of effort especially if you are not familiar with what is available.

Tremolet et al. 2007, funds for sanitation and water projects can come from various sources. In a very schematic way, at the level of a given project, funds may come from four main sources mainly,

1. Users of the service. Tremolet et al. 2007
2. Taxpayers via the government budget. Tremolet et al. 2007
3. Private participation. Tremolet et al. 2007
4. External sources (such as international lending institutions, NGOs, INGOs, and philanthropic organizations) providing “free” money in the form of grants or subsidised loans. Tremolet et al. 2007

The following are the key roles played by donor agencies in strengthening National monitoring and evaluation system

1. Corinna Kreider, November 1999 claims that donors are a key link in the accountabilitychain,and stakeholders expect donor representatives to ensure that action is taken when the humanitarian system does not perform well. Donors have various roles within the accountability chain.
2. First, there is accountability to donors: recipient agencies are accountable to donors for how the funding received is spent. This gives donors the leverage to insist that quality aid is delivered with the funds provided.  Corinna Kreider, November 1999
3. Second, there is accountability through donors: the collective pressure donors can apply to other stakeholders, such as national governments and UN agencies. Corinna Kreider, November 1999
4. Finally there is accountability by donors: initiatives that look at quality and accountability within donor organizations themselves. Whilst individual agencies should focus on meeting beneficiaries needs at the lowest possible cost (i.e. being efficient), donors have an obligation to ensure they achieve the highest possible impact with the funding they have available (i.e. being effective). This means not only selecting the best projects but also ensuring that proposals address areas and populations with the greatest needs Corinna Kreider, November 1999
5. Donors can influence partner’s adherence to standards and accountability mechanisms at the various stages of the funding cycle proposal appraisal, monitoring, financial and narrative reporting and evaluation. When appraising proposals, the criteria should include the following:
6. The tools used for needs assessment and project planning are appropriate. Corinna Kreider , November 1999
7. A transparent and cost-effective budget is provided. Corinna Kreider , November 1999
8. Arrangements are made for qualitative monitoring and independent evaluation. Corinna Kreider , November 1999
9. There is a commitment to applying agreedstandards, such as Sphere. Corinna Kreider , November 1999
10. Donor monitoring of funded projects is another way of enhancing quality and accountability. ECHO has a larger field presence than any other humanitarian donor, enabling it to systematically monitor all the projects it funds. Indeed, ECHO staff are held accountable if a project has not been monitored, or if the monitoring visit has not been documented. Through these monitoring visits ECHO staff ensure that the standards set at the proposal stage are met, and offer technical assistance to support other elements of good quality management, for example recommendations on improving monitoring systems through better quality indicators and help with designing an after-action evaluation. Corinna Kreider, November 1999

In conclusion therefore, it is clear that donors hold a key position in the accountability chain. They can insist that implementing agencies aim for high-quality performance, lobby at the political level for humanitarian space, remind national governments of their responsibility to protect their citizens and push for better accountability within the humanitarian system as a whole. And they must themselves be held accountable. Too often it is left to individual donor staff to put quality and accountability at the core of their work, including their own personal performance. Kreider, November 1999

1. At project level explain in detail the six stages of project Monitoring and Evaluation

Nandwa Muyuka, 21 July 2015 claimed monitoring this is the regular systematic collection and analysis of information to track the progress of program implementation against pre-set targets and objectives. It aims to answer the question “did we deliver?” Monitoring; Clarifies program objectives, Links activities and their resources to objectives, Translates objectives into performance indicators and sets targets, Routinely collects data on these indicators, compares actual results with targets

Nandwa Muyuka, 21 July 2015 claimed that evaluation deals with questions of cause and effect. It is assessing or estimating the value, worth or impact of an intervention and is typically done on a periodic basis – perhaps annually or at the end of a phase of a project or program.

Jenny Brown, 13 October 2015 claims that project monitoring is an important component of the project management cycle. It is one of the key ingredients in the success of the project. The project monitoring component must be included during the project initiation phase.

Project monitoring is not a onetime affair, it must be carried out continuously at different phases of the project. In most of the companies, the projects are usually monitored by the project managers or team leads. It is their primary duty to design an effective monitoring mechanism that will keep a hawk eye on the project progress. It is observed that, organizations who don’t implement an effective monitoring plan, find difficulties in understanding why their projects went wrong, and why it failed to create the desired impact, even though it was successful. Jenny Brown, 13 October 2015

Listed below are the steps that will help project leaders in monitoring the project effectively and efficiently.

**The initiation phase** is the beginning of the project. In this phase, the idea for the project is explored and elaborated. The goal of this phase is to examine the feasibility of the project. In addition, decisions are made concerning who is to carry out the project, which party (or parties) will be involved and whether the project has an adequate base of support among those who are involved. According to Project management -training.net, n.d

**Definition phase.** After the project plan (which was developed in the initiation phase) has been approved, the project enters the second phase: the definition phase. In this phase, the requirements that are associated with a project result are specified as clearly as possible. This involves identifying the expectations that all of the involved parties have with regard to the project result. How many files are to be archived? Should the metadata conform to the Data Documentation Initiative format. According to Project management -training.net, n.d

**Designing phase** .The list of requirements that is developed in the definition phase can be used to make design choices. In the design phase, one or more designs are developed, with which the project result can apparently be achieved. Depending on the subject of the project, the products of the design phase can include dioramas, sketches, flow charts, site trees, HTML screen designs, prototypes, photo impressions and UML schemas. The project supervisors use these designs to choose the definitive design that will be produced in the project. This is followed by the development phase. As in the definition phase, once the design has been chosen, it cannot be changed in a later stage of the project. According to Project management- training.net, n.d

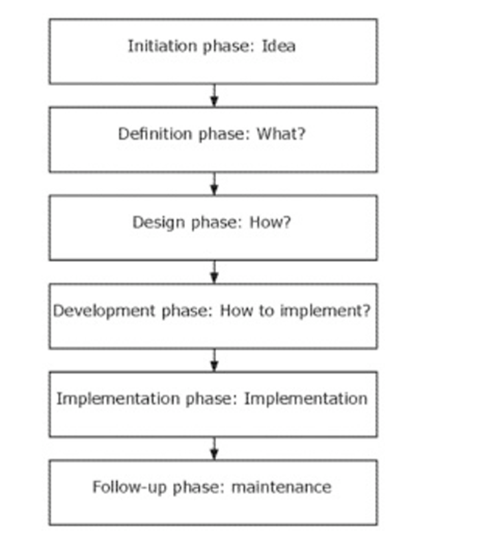
**Development phase** .During the development phase, everything that will be needed to implement the project is arranged. Potential suppliers or subcontractors are brought in, a schedule is made, materials and tools are ordered, and instructions are given to the personnel and so forth. The development phase is complete when implementation is ready to start. All matters must be clear for the parties that will carry out the implementation. In some projects, particularly smaller ones, a formal development phase is probably not necessary. The important point is that it must be clear what must be done in the implementation phase, by whom and when. According to Project management- training.net, n.d

**Implementation Phase.** The project takes shape during the implementation phase. This phase involves the construction of the actual project result. Programmers are occupied with encoding, designers are involved in developing graphic material, contractors are building, the actual reorganization takes place. It is during this phase that the project becomes visible to outsiders, to whom it may appear that the project has just begun. The implementation phase is the doing phase, and it is important to maintain the momentum. In one project, it had escaped the project teams’ attention that one of the most important team members was expecting to become a father at any moment and would thereafter be completely unavailable for about a month. When the time came, an external specialist was brought in to take over his work, in order to keep the team from grinding to a halt. Although the team was able to proceed, the external expertise put a considerable dent in the budget. According to project management- training.net, n.d

**Follow-up Phase.** Although it is extremely important, the follow-up phase is often neglected. During this phase, everything is arranged that is necessary to bring the project to a successful completion. Examples of activities in the follow-up phase include writing handbooks, providing instruction and training for users, setting up a help desk, maintaining the result, evaluating the project itself, writing the project report, holding a party to celebrate the result that has been achieved, transferring to the directors and dismantling the project team.( Project management -training.net, n.d)

The central question in the follow-up phase concerns when and where the project ends. Project leaders often joke among themselves that the first ninety per cent of a project proceeds quickly and that the final ten per cent can take years. The boundaries of the project should be considered in the beginning of a project, so that the project can be closed in the follow-up phase, once it has reached these boundaries. According to Project management -training.net, n.d

Step by step cycle phases of stages of project monitoring and evaluation. According to Project management -training.net, n.d



1. Enumerate any problems associated with current approaches in Monitoring and Evaluation

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Nandwa Muyuka, 21 July 2015 claims evaluation deals with questions of cause and effect. It is assessing or estimating the value, worth or impact of an intervention and is typically done on a periodic basis – perhaps annually or at the end of a phase of a project or program.

The following explains current approaches associated with monitoring and evaluation

1. Consultation with stakeholders regarding monitoring and evaluation planning, implementation and review. The consultation processes with internal and external stakeholders regarding monitoring and evaluation planning, implementation and review, needs to be detailed in any monitoring and evaluation planning. Paul Duignan 2007
2. Evaluation management structure. The structure for governance, management and undertaking evaluation activities needs to be clearly determined in monitoring and evaluation planning. In small evaluations this will be managed within existing governance and management structures. In larger evaluations, specific governance structures may be set up (e.g. steering groups), technical inputs may be sought e.g. Technical Advisory Groups), structures to manage internal evaluation staff will be established and systems for contracting evaluators will be established. Paul Duignan , 2007
3. Internal versus external evaluators. There are pros and cons with using internal versus external evaluators and these needs to be considered in evaluation.

These are as follows

* Integrating with strategic decision making. Likely to be more with internal rather than external evaluators. Paul Duignan, 2007
* Independent judgment. Likely to be less with internal rather than evaluators. Paul Duignan ,2007
* Cost. Likely to be less with internal rather than evaluators. Paul Duignan, 2007
* Range of evaluation skills. Likely to be less with internal rather than evaluators. Paul Duignan, 2007
* Institutional Knowledge retention. Likely to be more with internal rather than evaluators. Paul Duignan , 2007
* Getting the evaluation done. Likely to be less periodization of the evaluation by internal staff distracted by other organizational priorities than in the case of external evaluators. Paul Duignan , 2007
* Drift in the evaluation questions being answered. Likely to be less evaluation question drift (where the evaluation does not end up answering the questions stakeholders thought it going to answer) with internal rather than external evaluators. Once exception to this is if political factors within the organization change the direction of the evaluation and in this case, internal evaluators are more likely to be influenced than external evaluators. Paul Duignan , 2007

1. **Risk management.**

* According to Paul Duignan, 2007,there are a number of risks which need to be managed in monitoring and evaluation.

The general risks faced by any monitoring and evaluation are set out below with the way in which these are managed when using Systematic Outcomes Analysis.

* Not asking and answering the right monitoring and evaluation questions. Systematic Outcomes Analysis, by linking evaluation questions back onto the outcomes model and by going through the set of seven areas of evaluation focus increases confidence that all important evaluation questions have been identified. Having your Systematic Outcomes Analysis peer reviewed increases the chances that you are considering the right questions. Paul, Duignan,2007
* Lack of stakeholder confidence in the independence of monitoring and evaluation. The more transparent an evaluation is the more stakeholders are able to decide if they have confidence in it. Systematic Outcomes Analysis provides a fully transparent view of an evaluation. Appropriate consultation with stakeholders (1 above); the right evaluation management structure (2 above); and the right selection of internal versus external evaluators (3 above) all decrease the risk of a lack of stakeholder confidence. Paul, Duignan, 2007
* Getting evaluators with the right skills to undertake the evaluation. This depends on the actual availability of evaluators with the right skills to undertake the evaluation plus having the funding available to employ or contract them. Systematic Outcomes Analysis will help you clarify the exact evaluation questions you want answered (e.g. high level outcome evaluation questions versus other evaluation questions) and this is likely to help you when assessing whether potential evaluators have the skills needed to answer particular questions. Involving an additional independent expert evaluator on selection panels and advisory groups can mean that more informed decisions are made about whether evaluators being employed or contracted have the right skills. Paul, Duignan, 2007
* Drift in the evaluation questions being answered away from those stakeholders think are being answered. Systematic Outcomes Analysis makes sure that all stakeholders are clear about exactly which evaluation questions are being answered. Equally importantly (and often neglected in evaluation planning) it also identifies which evaluation questions are not being answered and the reasons why. Visually mapping all evaluation questions back onto the outcome model reduces much stakeholder and evaluator confusion about what is and what is not being answered. Paul Duignan, 2007
* Lack of ongoing control of externally contracted evaluations due to contracting organization staff turnover. For evaluations which take a number of years this can be a major problem. Systematic Outcomes Analysis reduces this risk by providing a transparent evaluation plan which should be progressively updated throughout the evaluation so that any new staff can quickly understand what the details of what the evaluation is trying to do and how it is going about it. Paul Duignan , 2007
* Lack of integration of monitoring and evaluation. These two aspects are often not well integrated. Systematic Outcomes Analysis fully integrates them. Paul, Duignan , 2007
* Disconnect between evaluation findings and ongoing strategic planning. Systematic Outcomes Analysis can be used to fully integrate evaluation with strategic planning if the same outcomes model is used for both evaluation planning and strategic prioritization. Paul Duignan, 2007

1. What is the importance of financial monitoring

Sandra Durcevic, 20th March 2019 claims that financial analysis and reporting are one of the bedrocks of modern business, financial reporting is important mainly because it’s a legal requirement in most countries, you may not understand its untapped power and potential.

Sandra Durcevic, 20th March 2019, claims that financial reporting refers to standard practices to give stakeholders an accurate depiction of a company’s finances, including their revenues, expenses, profits, capital, and cash flow, as formal records that provide in-depth insights into financial information.

According to Sandra Durcevic, 20th March 2019, there are 3 common major financial reporting.

1. **Income statement.** This particular report tells you how much money a company made (or lost) in a given time period (typically a fiscal year). It does so by showing you revenues earned and expenses paid, with the ultimate goal of showing a company’s profit numbers. Sandra Durcevic, 20th March 2019
2. **Balance sheet.** This piece of financial reporting software offers a snapshot of your assets and liabilities (aka debts) at a given moment in time. It’s definitely possible to fall into bother with your profitability and cash flow situations while having a healthy balance sheet (especially if you have a lot of money tied up in physical inventory), and this report will help you dig deeper, assisting your strategic decision-making. Sandra Durcevic, 20th March 2019
3. **Cash flow statement.** This report shows how much money flowed into and out of your business in a period of time. The cash flow statement is crucial for things like making sure you have enough money to make payroll. Sandra Durcevic, 20th March 2019

According to Sandra Durcevic, 20th March 2019 the following are the importance of financial monitoring**:**

1. **Improved debt management:**As you will surely know, debt can cripple the progress of any company, regardless of sector. While there may be many different types of financial reporting concerning purpose or software, almost all solutions will help you track your current assets divided by the current liabilities on your balance to help gauge your liquidity and manage your debts accordingly. Sandra Durcevic, 20th March 2019
2. **Trend identification:**Regardless of what area of financial activity you’re looking to track, all types of this kind of reporting will help you identify trends, both past and present, which will empower you to tackle any potential weaknesses while helping you make the kind of improvements that will benefit the overall health of your business. Sandra Durcevic, 20th March 2019
3. **Real-time tracking:**By gaining access to centralized, real-time insights, you will be able to make accurate, informed decisions swiftly, thereby avoiding any potential roadblocks while maintaining your financial fluidity at all times. Sandra Durcevic, 20th March 2019
4. **Liabilities:**Managing your liabilities is a critical part of your company’s ongoing financial health. Business loans, credit lines, credit cards, and credit extended from vendors are all integral liabilities to manage. By using a  financial report template, if you’re planning to apply for a business expansion loan, you can explore financial statement data and determine if you need to reduce existing liabilities before making an official application. Sandra Durcevic, 20th March 2019
5. **Progress and compliance:**As the information served up by financial reporting software is both accurate and robust, not only does access to this level of analytical reporting   offer an opportunity to improve your financial efficiency over time, but it will also ensure you remain 100% compliant – which is essential if you want your business to remain active. Sandra Durcevic, 20th March 2019
6. **Internal decision-making.** Financial reports are not the best tools for making all internal business decisions. However, they can serve as the ‘bedrock’ for other reports (such as management reports) that can and should be used to make decisions. It’s crucial that financial reports are as accurate as possible – otherwise, any management reports (and ensuing decisions) based on them will be sitting on a shaky foundation. This is where companies can run into trouble, using legacy methods (such as one massive spreadsheet that multiple users have access to) rather than reaping the benefits of financial reporting by utilizing financial dashboards instead. Sandra Durcevic, 20th March 2019
7. **Improved internal vision.** Financial analysis and reporting are an accurate, cohesive, and widely accessible means of sharing critical financial information throughout your organization. If your financial insights or data is fragmented, things can quickly fall apart in a nutshell. Durcevic, 20th March 2019
8. **Raising capital and performing audits.** Financial reporting and analysis assists organizations, regardless of industry, in raising capital both domestically and overseas in a well-managed, fluent way – an essential component to ongoing commercial success in today’s competitive digital world. Also, financial analysis and reporting facilitate statutory audits. The statutory auditors are required to audit the financial statements of an organization to express their opinion. Reporting tools or software will give this official concise, accurate, and compliant information – which, of course, is vital. Durcevic, 20th March 2019

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