Diploma in Monitoring & Evaluation

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Author Note

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**ASSIGNMENTS:**

***Question One:***

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

An indicator is a quantitative and qualitative variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure the achievement of a project that shows that an intervention has taken place to cause the changes. For example a reduction in malaria typhoid due to establishment of clean water point, increased enrolment due to school feeding program among others. A good indicator must have good qualities and here we discuss them below.

**Clear:** A good indicator must be clear and easily understandable by all the stakeholders and those who don’t understand project terms. It should not be ambitious. For example, 2 project staff hired by the end of July 2019.

**Relevant:** a good indicator should be relevant to the subject of study at hand. For example, a reduction due to the community awareness program should be relevant for that particular programs not complicating it with for example school feeding indicators.

**Economical:** indicators should be available at a reasonable cost. In other words, to know the indicator should to cost an extra amount the will increase the availability of the indicators to the stakeholders.

**Adequate:** indicators should provide a sufficient basis for assessing the performances of the project. Assessing indicators should not be made complicated. It should not be too indirect and made proxy that it becomes problematic to assess.

**Monitorable:** the changes brought by the program should be measurable. Indicators should always be set in all levels of the project from the beginning of the project so that it will be easy to measure it during the monitoring and the evaluation process. They should be independently verified. They should be easy to monitor when carrying out monitoring exercise at the project site.

**Question Two:**

1. Critically evaluate the implementation programme of free primary education for the first 2 years.

The research problem for free education project could be to determine to what extent free education program increased the enrollment rate of pupils in South Sudan in the last 2 years (2017-2018). To understand if free education programmee has meet its objectives, there is need to conduct a monitoring and evaluation in specific key locations in the country. I would conduct a participatory evaluation process by conducting different data collection methods including interviews with the school administration, education regulatory bodies (ministries of education), and general public and some students. After collected the information, I would compute and analyses it, interpret and disseminate the information to the public for all stakeholders to know how the program works.

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

When government declare free education with an intention of providing education to her people, the demand for teachers and support staff will as well increase in the government schools hence, creating jobs for the citizens. However, private schools may lose many of their students to government schools for free education leading to downsizing or end of contracts for some employees.

Cost increase: when governments declare free education, the demand for quality staff will increase leading to rise in wages for people willing to work, to entice them out of college.

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

**Donors**

The donors are interested to know whether or not the funding they committed on behalf of the pupils or their sponsors is meeting its intended goal. The monitoring exercises help the donors to make a decision based on the result of the free primary education. The monitoring exercise will inform the donors about the progress of the free primary education.

**Primary School managers**

The primary school managers are interested in class performances, enrollment rate and expansion of the school. The evaluation exercise will help them make a decisions on whether to put more structures, limit registration to avoid congestion or not. The primary school managers are interested to see if there are changes in the school enrollment following the implementation of the free primary education system. It also tries to inform the school management of the performances of the students, teachers and the management system.

**Government**

Through the monitoring exercise, government will be informed of the performances of the programme. Government is interested in the benefit of education to the society as a whole. One of the roles of a functioning government is to provide quality education to its people, free education is typically funded from the public purse and government is interested to know if her investment in free education is a right decision.

***Question Three:***

* 1. What are the advantages of participatory evaluation methods?

Participatory evaluation is an evaluation approach where all stakeholders, from project staff, community members, and beneficiaries are all involved in the evaluation process from designing to reporting stages. “Guijt, I. (2014), says in her Participatory guide for UNICEF that, participatory approaches means involving stakeholders, particularly those affected by intervention, in the evaluation process. This includes involvement in the design, data collection, analysis, reporting, and management of the study”

Participatory evaluation includes recruiting local evaluators in the community who have knowledge and affected with the problem to work with the outside evaluators in carrying out the evaluation. It also involves interviewing community leaders, local authority in the community. Participatory evaluation is believed to be the most effective and efficient process in the modern monitoring and evaluation. The below are the advantages of participatory monitoring and evaluation;

* Participatory Evaluations improves project impact. It empowers locals in the community who take part in the evaluation to analyze and find solutions for their own situation. When community evaluators are involved in the evaluation process, they become active and not passive participants
* Builds local capacity and ownership to manage and sustain project achievements. When local evaluators are involved in the evaluation process, it provides them with an opportunity to learn and own the project. Local evaluators may use the knowledge receive from the training to further employee it on other projects after the project.
* Increases likelihood of acceptance and utilization of findings. Because the evaluation is done by the locals who are known to their communities and are part of the problem the intervention tries to solve, the findings from the evaluation are most likely to be accepted by the local communities due to the trust of the internal evaluators compared to the external evaluators.
* Builds collaboration between beneficiaries, staff and partners. Participatory evaluation helps build trust and togetherness among member of the evaluation team. This is because the internal evaluators look at the external evaluators as friends, colleagues or educators that they will benefit from them. The external evaluators perceive the internal evaluator as partners or assistant instead of competitors. This type of collaboration will result to commitment of each party that will result to effective project performances.
* Reinforces accountability to beneficiaries. Participatory evaluation reinforces accountability to beneficiaries.
* Can save money and time in data collection compared to using project staff. Participatory evaluation saves resources that are a benefit to the progress of the project. The long time that would have been taken if one or few evaluators have been chosen, has been shorten because of involving many parties. The same way if the project was to hire a one or few people, time for conducting a consultant would have been long and hence much money used therefore, involving many evaluators both internal and external saves resources.
* Provides direct field input to facilitate management decision making to execute corrective actions.

However, those participatory evaluation is advantageous for the success of monitoring and evaluation, it has some disadvantages as below.

* Participatory evaluations require more time to train and manage local staff and community members, and slow down activities. Recruitment processes always require proper planning in advance before evaluation.
* Participatory evaluation is costly in terms of training and logistics. Cost for training local evaluators, hire consultants, among others.
* Requires skilled facilitators to ensure that everyone understands the process and is equally involved. Most locals recruited in their communities have no knowledge and skills to carry out evaluation. To ensure that everyone carries the work effectively there is need to train them which is time wasting and costly.
* Can challenge quality of data collected where vested local interests are involved. Data analysis and decision making can be dominated by the more powerful voices in the community (related to gender, ethnic, or religious factors).
* Demands genuine commitment of local people and the support of donors, since the project may not use the traditional indicators or formats for reporting findings.
  1. Formulate the steps in planning a monitoring system.

Discuss reasons for monitoring. Before starting traveling to the field for evaluation, the monitoring and evaluation manger need to first sit with the project team to decide on what the intended outcome is needed from the evaluation to be carried. This will inform the team to think and brainstorm on the expected questions that will bring out already the intention of the evaluation.

Review objectives and activities. The next step is to review the objectives and activities of the evaluation in order not to deviate from the intended goal of the evaluation. For example if the intention of the evaluation is to understand the cost effectiveness of the project, it should be properly reviewed so that the questions will not be relating to impact evaluation.

Develop monitoring questions. The third step in the evaluation is developing the monitoring questions. Monitoring questions are key in bringing out insight of the interviewee. Monitoring questions should be precise and direct to the point.

Establish direct and indirect indicators. It’s important to establish what indicators the monitors will focus on during the monitoring process.

Decide which information gathering tools are needed. To have the required information to address the intention of the monitoring, there is need to have the right tools for data collection. For example, questionnaires, focus group discussions, observation, interviews among others are all methods for information collection. However, there is a need to decide on which one fits the intended monitoring.

Decide who will do the monitoring. Who will monitor the progress of the program is another step in monitoring and evaluation that need to be identified early enough. It is always advice though that monitoring should be participatory by all stakeholder. The main purpose of Participatory Monitoring is that it provides information during the life of the project, so that adjustments and/or modifications can be made if necessary. This step helps the management make a decision on who and how to reach them including deciding on what is needed to assist them do their work effectively.

Data collection: this step follows a decision made on who will participate in the data collection. This stage paved a way for the professional data analyst to use software (SPSS, Stata, etc) to analyze the data collected from the field. In the current era, participatory monitoring is the most preferred approach of monitoring and evaluating a program. The process must involve various stakeholder with different qualification and those without any skills have to be trained. Information collection can be through focus group discussions, interviewing key people who are affected by the problem to be evaluated, community leaders, people in the neighborhood.

The next step is the data analysis after the collection of the data from the field and presentation of the results. This though is the final stage, it is always performed in different stages during the monitoring process. The results in this stage will inform the project managers on whether or not the project is doing well. It will also help the managers to adjust, correct the program if there are errors discovered.

Finally, agree on how the findings are to be used and by whom.

***End***