**STRATEGIA NETHERLANDS**

**Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences**

**Department of Monitoring and Evaluation**

**Course**

**Online Diploma Programme**

**Assignment Three (3)**

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**Q.2. Why is choosing the right question important in Monitoring and Evaluation?**

You know why you're running your program. Evaluating it should just be a matter of deciding whether things are better when you evaluate than they were before you started, right? Well, actually...wrong. It's not that simple. First of all, you need to determine what "things" you are actually looking at (remember the school lunch example?) Second, you will need to consider how you will determine what you're doing right, and what you need to change. Here's a partial list of reasons why choosing questions beforehand is important.

In participant evaluations, evaluation involves stakeholders in setting the course of the program, thus making it more likely that it will meet community needs.

* It determines what needs to be recorded in order to gather data for evaluation. A clear choice of evaluation questions makes the actual gathering of data much easier, since it usually makes obvious what kinds of records must be kept and what areas need to be examined. Guides your future choices. If you find that your program is particularly successful in certain ways and not in others, for example, you may decide to emphasize the successful areas more, or to completely change your approach in the unsuccessful areas. That, in turn, will change the emphasis of future evaluation as well.
* It helps you understand what effects different parts of your effort are having. By framing questions carefully, you can evaluate different parts of your effort. If you add an element after the start of the program, for instance, you may be able to see its effect separate from that of the rest of the program...if you focus on examining it. By the same token, you can look at different possible effects of the program as a whole. (Do adult basic education learners read more as a result of being in a program? Are they more likely to register to vote? Do their children improve their school performance?)
* It highlights unintended consequences. When you find unusual answers to the questions you choose, it often means that your program has had some affects you didn't expect. Sometimes these effects are positive - not only did people in the heart-healthy exercise program gain in fitness, but a majority of them report changing their diet for the better and losing weight as well - sometimes negative - obese children in a healthy eating program actually gained weight, even though they were eating a healthier diet - and sometimes neither. Like the side effects of medication, the unintended consequences of a program can be as important as the program itself. (In the case of the exercise program, the changes in diet might do as much as or more than the exercise to maintain heart health, for instance, and may point toward changing the focus of the program in some way.)
* It makes you clearly define what it is you're trying to do what you decide to evaluate defines what you hope to accomplish. Choosing evaluation questions at the start of a program or effort makes clear what you're trying to change, and what you want your results to be.
* It provides focus for the evaluation and the program. Choosing evaluation questions carefully keeps you from becoming scattered and trying to do too many things at once, thereby diluting your effectiveness at all of them.
* It shows you where you need to make changes. Carefully choosing questions and making them specific to your real objectives should tell you exactly where the program is doing well and where the program isn't having the intended effect.

**Q.2. Using Archival data has its own bottlenecks. Name five and explain how to overcome them**

**Archival data refer to information that already exists in someone else’s files.  Originally generated for reporting or research purposes, it’s often kept because of legal requirements, for reference, or as an internal record. In general, because it’s the result of completed activities, it’s not subject to change and is therefore sometimes known as fixed data.**

**On the other hand, if the information you need, or something very close to it, already exists, there are several good reasons to find and use it.**

* **Archival data could touch on important areas you have not considered, or identify patterns or relationships you wouldn’t have looked for**. In cases like these, the use of pre-existing data might change your whole view of your work, and help bring you to a level of effectiveness you wouldn’t have reached otherwise.
* **Archival data may have already been processed by people with more statistical expertise**. Unless you’re a statistician or a health or human service researcher with an advanced degree (and often not even then), the chances are that you don’t have a flawless grasp of data analysis. You can hire someone or find a volunteer to help you, but if the hard work has already been done, it will make your work that much easier.
* **Even with raw data, the basic organization and preparation (transcription of interviews, entry of numbers into a spreadsheet or specific software, etc.) may have already been done, again saving time and resources.**
* **It’s easier and less time-consuming than collecting all the data yourself**. This is probably the most obvious and most common reason for taking advantage of archival data. Especially if you’re looking for a large amount of information or information about a large group of people, you may be able to save yourself an enormous amount of time and trouble by using archival data.
* **It’s quite possible that you can find more information than you’d be able to gather if you did it yourself**. The archival data you find may be more sweeping or more specific than what you’d be able to gather. It may involve more people than you’d be able to, cover a larger geographic area, or provide more detail.

**Q.3. Why is research important component in monitoring and evaluation? Give and explain four.**

Monitoring and Evaluation Systems require twelve main components in order to function effectively and efficiently to achieve the desired results. These twelve M&E components are discussed in detail below:

**1.       Organizational Structures with M&E Functions**

The adequate implementation of M&E at any level requires that there is a unit whose main purpose is to coordinate all the M&E functions at its level. While some entities prefer to have an internal organ to oversee its M&E functions, others prefer to outsource such services. This component of M&E emphasizes the need for M&E unit within the organization, how elaborate its roles are defined, how adequately its roles are supported by the organizations hierarchy and how other units within the organization are aligned to support the M&E functions within the organization.

**2.       Human Capacity for M&E**

An effective M&E implementation requires that there is only adequate staff employed in the M&E unit, but also that the staff within this unit have the necessary M&E technical know-how and experience. As such, this component emphasizes the need to have the necessary human resource that can run the M&E function by hiring employees who have adequate knowledge and experience in M&E implementation, while at the same time ensuring that the M&E capacity of these employees are continuously developed through training and other capacity building initiatives to ensure that they keep up with current and emerging trends in the field.

**3.       Partnerships for Planning, Coordinating and Managing the M&E System**

A prerequisite for successful M&E systems whether at organizational or national levels is the existence of M&E partnerships. Partnerships for M&E systems are for organizations because they complement the organization’s M&E efforts in the M&E process and they act as a source of verification for whether M&E functions align to intended objectives. They also serve auditing purposes where line ministries, technical working groups, communities and other stakeholders are able to compare M&E outputs with reported outputs.

**4.       M&E frameworks/Logical Framework**

The M&E framework outlines the objectives, inputs, outputs and outcomes of the intended project and the indicators that will be used to measure all these. It also outlines the assumptions that the M&E system will adopt. The M&E framework is essential as it links the objectives with the process and enables the M&E expert know what to measure and how to measure it.

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