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**MODULE TITLE: INTRODUCTION TO MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

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1. **Describe the following terms as used in project Monitoring and Evaluation:**

(i) **Project monitoring;**

UK’s then Overseas Development Administration (ODA; now Department for International Development, DFID) defines it as continuous process of data collection and information gathering over the life span of a project which allows adjustments to be made and objectives refined. Monitoring provides information on which evaluation is based (Robinson and Thin, 1993 P.5).

Monitoring is a routine collection of information for tracking project progress against previously agreed plans, objectives or milestones. The process allows for identifying both the effects and impact and in case of discrepancies between actual and planned progress, corrective actions can be undertaken. Monitoring can also mean keeping check on the use of resources.

**(ii) Project evaluation**

Evaluation refers to the use of information gathered during regular monitoring and other information to assess or gauge the relevance, effectiveness and impact of a project with the aim of improving an existing project or influencing future policies, programmes and projects (Rubin, 1995, P.16). Evaluation happens at specific times of a project life span, it could be mid-term or end term. It therefore can be formative or summative. It uses information collects at the beginning of the project (baseline) against which progress can be measured. While monitoring is more concerned with implementation, evaluation is primarily concerned with effectiveness of the intervention as well as measurement of performance. Evaluation has an internal support function, it aims to analyze the past to understand the future but it also it fulfils a control function as it includes control of accounts and financial operations.

**(iii) Primary stakeholder;**

Stakeholders are people or organizations that have something to gain or lose from what will be learned from an evaluation, and also in what will be done with that knowledge. In monitoring and evaluation, primary stakeholders refer to the specific individuals or agencies or departments that are in position to decide and or so something with the results of the evaluation or monitoring. They are directly implicated by in the monitoring and evaluation activities as well as dissemination of the information and knowledge arising out of it. These could include project, administrators, managers, and staff.

**(iv) Scope Creep**

A scope creep refers to changes, continuous or uncontrolled growth in a [project](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project)’s [scope](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scope_(project_management)), at any point after the project begins. This can occur when the scope of a project is not properly defined, documented, or controlled. Larson et al 2009 says that Scope creep is adding additional features or functions of a new product, requirements, or work that is not authorized (i.e., beyond the agreed-upon scope). The PMBOK® Guide describes scope creep as “adding features and functionality (project scope) without addressing the effects on time, costs, and resources, or without customer approval” (PMI, 2008, p 440.

Scope creep can be a result of:

* Ambiguous or unrefined scope definition
* Lack of any formal scope or requirements management
* Inconsistent process for collecting product requirements
* Lack of sponsorship and stakeholder involvement
* Project length

**(v) Impact assessment**

This could be defined as measurement of effectiveness of organizational activities and examining the significance of changes brought about by those activities. Interventions are aimed at influencing social circumstances that are external to the intervening organisation(s) and impact assessment goes beyond measuring performance to assess the wider impact of an intervention. In terms of a framework plan, this implies measuring the indicators in the top row (Goal and impact indicators) Pinder 2007.

**2. Collecting information or data is just one part of the process of monitoring and evaluation.**

**(a) What is meant by data analysis?**

Data analysis is systematization of information obtained during monitoring or evaluation exercise. At this stage a collective process is supported and encouraged. Participatory monitoring and evaluation involves at all levels all end users and stakeholders including the beneficiaries in data analysis. Stakeholder groups engage in critical reflection and thinking about the problems and constraints, success and outcomes of the activities undertaken. Data analysis primarily depends on the tools chosen for gathering data and on the information required by the participants (Mandakini 2006, Pg 109).

**(b) State any three uses of monitoring and evaluation results**

Monitoring and evaluation results facilitate understanding and learning especially that development is largely an unknown area, difficult and risky, monitoring and evaluation provides the tools to navigate through the arena in terms of extending and promoting participation, for making changes, and for drawing out lessons ( Carlie and Christie Talk 1992) .

Monitoring and evaluation results promote evidence based decision making, the information that is gathered provides feedback and control and interventions planned are based on evidence and it therefore improves management as well.

Monitoring and evaluation results promote accountability and performance measurement. The evaluation helps to establish the relationship between the programme activities and the observed consequences hence performance measurement. The provided updates could also boast team morale if it is positive and if it is not then it is a catalyst for self-direction to ensure that corrective measures are implemented.

**(c) Describe any seven factors that may lead to project failure.**

Successfully completing a project in my understanding refers to delivering the results foreseen by the project at the time of the design, on time and within the allocated budget. According to<https://blog.taskque.com/causes-project-failure/>, keeping an eye on the factors below and trying to overcome them will reduce the risk of project failure.

Lack or limited project definition, the project is defined in the scope document which clearly details the objectives, results and activities of the project, the stakeholders and their requirements, the resources that will be required within what time. The scope therefore sets the project foundation and the details of the design. Therefore in absence of a clear project scope document to guide the execution of the project will lead to project failure.

In Tracy’s time Management Technique, “Every minute spent in planning saves 10 minutes in execution; this gives a 100% return on energy”- Brain Tracy.. This therefore implies that poor planning can easily lead to project failure as the resources will not be appropriately allocated, time, scope and quality are compromised.

Ambitious unrealistic expectations and deadlines will lead to a project failure. Execution of projects successfully calls for consideration of all factors and constraints that are involved that could adversely affect successful project execution. Therefore it is important to keep a buffer so that one has the liberty to complete the project without rushing through it. From experience of the project that I manage, during project appraisal, we are able to determine that a project will not succeed right from the application assessment phase from the expectations that they set. For example an organization was applying for funding for one year, intending to train 1,500 youth in non-formal trainings of 6 to 9 months! This was surely not going to be possible as this expectation was not realists, therefore setting such unrealistic expectations will compromise quality and lead to project failure.

Unreliable/inconsistent communication; According to a survey conducted by Spike Cavell, 57% of projects failed due to poor communication. This makes it one of the major causes of project failure. <https://blog.taskque.com/causes-project-failure/> Therefore effective communication is important to keep the project team focused and motivated. If the communication channels are not clear and the project structure does not facilitate smooth communication horizontally and vertically, the project will most likely fail. Unclear communication channels will only lead to conflicts, confusion, creates an environment of mistrust and deprive the project of successful delivery.

Project leadership management and Team; incompetent project manager who fails to constituent and lead a competent team will fail to implement the project successfully. Therefore failure of a project to hire a competent project manager and competent team will most likely not succeed.

This can easily be resolved by hiring experienced and certified project managers. Although, the trend of hiring certified project managers is gaining popularity, there is still a long way to go before the number of certified project managers exceeds the number of non-certified ones.

Failure of the Project team leader/Manager to create cohesion within the project team. Lack of cohesion within the project team is a recipe for project failure as the members are not coordinated in their efforts, do not work and move as a team. This could be due to individual differences but also due to conflicting interests and different values. There is therefore need to have cohesion within the team for coordinated execution of the project, there is need for unity for purpose and lack of this is likely to lead to poor execution of the project and hence failure.

Inadequate of poor monitoring and risk management; There is need to constant monitor project progress and where there are variances from what is expected, corrective actions and strategies are put in place to avoid surprises when it is too late. Consistent monitoring of project activities and performance of staff facilitates accountability and responsibility for actions which enables delivery of better and results. Most project managers know and understand the importance of risk management in project management yet, they put little or no emphasis on risk management. As a result, these projects fail to achieve their targets and go well beyond the specified deadline or budget.

**3. Differentiate between formative evaluation and summative evaluation**

Formative evaluation refers to the type of evaluation carried out before; during and after a project takes place, and contributes information to improve the ongoing operation of a programme or organization (Weiss, 1972, p. q4, quoted in Pinder Pg. 24). Formative evaluation is the all-encompassing task of considering how the organisation or project runs, with the aim of helping it to operate better (ibid). It is primarily undertaken to answer questions about the organisation or project to help make more informed decisions, related to its current or future direction (Ibid, Pg 23).

Summative evaluation is retrospective review of performance with the aim of collecting information to enable summary statements and judgments about the value of a programme or a particular aspect of a project.

**4. Identify and explain any four features or characteristics of a project**

A project is a temporary and one-time endeavor undertaken to create a unique product or service that brings about beneficial change or added value. It is temporary – temporary means that every project has a definite beginning and a definite end. Project always has a definitive time frame and creates unique deliverables, which are products, services, or results. A review of this definition gives rise to the following distinctive characteristics according to Cuthworth et all 1993

**Unique:** A project is a unique, one-off discrete undertaking. Although similar projects may have similar objectives, every project faces a unique set of environmental, political and resource issues as well as constraints. In addition, every project results to some extent in new, unique deliverable or set of deliverables. It is never repeated exactly. E.g even though many thousands of office buildings have been developed, each new facility has a degree of uniqueness about it (Different owner, different design, different location, different contractors).

**Finite:** A project is a temporary process, i.e finite/limited duration. A project has a beginning and an end at which point one can say its objectives have been accomplished. Even the resources used on a project are temporary, only needed for the project life time.

**Life cycle:** Projects have a unique and distinctive life cycle that passes through several distinct phases. The activities and resources change as the project progresses through the cycle. The cycle is characterized by a slow start, through a progressive build-up and peak, followed by a decline and final termination. At the end, some projects may be incorporated into the normal on-going operations of the parent organization

**Change:** Projects are implemented to create change. Projects are the change efforts of society. The turbulence and dynamic nature of the world, necessitates project managers to be effective at managing change. All managers must manage change through projects. We undertake projects because we cannot produce or achieve the benefit by doing routine things.

**5. Explain the significance of the following techniques to collection of project evaluation data.**

i) Community meetings: This is a data collection method where a community member is identified from that community in which an intervention is to be conducted or is implemented and the community professional is assigned to collect data from different villages within the community. The community professionals guide discussions in the meetings and collect data from the members.

ii) **Critical incident analysis**: This is a systematic, open ended technique where specific situations are analyzed to determine communicative actions or behaviors that are likely to lead to the best possible desirable outcome of a given situation. According to Journal of Extension, June 2013, it is a qualitative data technique which focus on collecting open-ended descriptive data from respondents and converting it into meaningful categories that can be used to quantify the results (Culp & Pilat, 1998). The methodology used encourages respondents to share their experiences about a particular topic of study and in this case program impact evaluation, the technique assists in collection of information that is directly relevant to important questions or problems (Flanagan 1954). As described by Flanagan (1954), the following five steps are involved in critical incident technique procedure:

* Determination of the objectives of the activity
* Development of plans and specifications for collecting factual incidents
* Collection of data
* Analysis of data
* Interpretation and reporting of facts regarding reported incidents

iii) **Focus group discussions:** This is a data collection method where people from similar background or experiences are gathered together to discuss a topic of particular interest that is being evaluated. For example when evaluating the impact of different vocational trainings that have been provided to youth, it is possible to hold a focus group discussion with youth that were trained in various skills and discuss with them and gather their perspectives on the relevance and quality of trainings they received. Focus group discussions generate insight which can be used in planning and renewal efforts for the intervention.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is a qualitative method of data collection widely used (Parker and Johnson 2006), it is participatory and respondents are free as they are not afraid of views being attributed to them as individuals. It can be used as a standalone method in data collection or alongside other methods. FDGs are commonly used to explore and construct knowledge about a particular phenomenon in small groups (Krueger and Casey 2015). The discussions provide priceless breadth of learning and the participants thoughts compliment the originality of the project designers own thinking.

The method is time efficient and low cost, hence it can easily be used in evaluation of many social issues.

**6. Monitoring and evaluation are always portrayed as being one and the same thing, yet that are Different.” Discuss the truthfulness of this statement.**

Monitoring is a continuous process of data collection and information gathering over the lifespan of a project which allows adjustments to be made and objectives refined while Evaluation on the other hand is a retrospective assessment of performance against objectives at a particular point in time, Robinson 1993. Evaluation could be mid-term of end term, while monitoring is continuous

Monitoring provides the information on which evaluation is based. During continuous monitoring data is gathered for example on the different indicators which provides basis for evaluation.

Robinson and Thin 1993, distinguish monitoring to be primarily concerned with implementation, while evaluation is concerned with the effectiveness of an intervention in terms of its objectives.

Monitoring measures progress while evaluation measures performance and provides feedback to facilitate controls.

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