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Module 3 Assignment

**Q1:** Explain the value of M&E in about 100 words and outline key planning steps for setting up an M&E plan (10 mrks)

M&E provide the necessary data to guide planning, to show a projects’ progress against defined goals, to assess what is working and what is not, to determine changes that need to be made, increase accountability, allocate resources in better ways and improve staff performance.

*“Without effective planning, monitoring and evaluation, it would be impossible to judge if work is going in the right direction, whether progress and success can be claimed, and how future efforts might be improved.”* UNDP (2009)

M&E are an essential management tool in supporting an organization’s commitment to accountability for results, resources entrusted to it and organizational learning.

The key planning steps for setting up an M&E plan include:

* **Goal:** You must know what the main aim of the project is.
* **Objectives:** You must know the objectives and the strategies you will use to achieve those objectives.
* **Activities:** You must know the desired results and the strategies for achieving those results.
* **M&E:** You must know what the budget and other inputs are for M&E activities.
* **Clients:** You must know your target beneficiaries of the project.
* **Indicators:** You must know your indicators for all project levels – inputs, outputs, outcomes and impact.
* **Time frame:** You must know your time frame for all aspects of the project.

**Q2:** Describe the relevance of stakeholder participation in M&E (10 mrks)

Stakeholders participation in M&E is at the forefront of ensuring that the intended benefits of the project reach the communities in focus and that the results remain relevant. It provides access to project information which will then allow people to voice their concerns and needs, which can then be incorporated into project activities. It also provides ownership of the project to the community, which in turn, will reduce the risk of manipulation by other actors for their own benefit.

According to Sulemana et al (2018) *“When stakeholders become active participants in the project and programme monitoring process, they add intrinsic value by holding duty bearers accountable for their omissions and commissions.”*

According to Estrella et al (1997), the following are the main reasons for stakeholder participation in M&E:

* Impact Assessment
* Project Planning & Management
* Organisation Strengthening and Institutional Learning
* Understanding and Negotiating Stakeholder Perspectives
* Public Accountability and Policy

Overall, the success of a project and the continued benefits will be much more relevant if stakeholders are involved throughout M&E.

**Q3:** It is imperative that sufficient resources are allocated to the conduct of M&E in a program. Discuss this assertion in about 350 words. (10 mrks)

*“A general rule of thumb is that the M&E budget should not be so small as to compromise the accuracy and credibility of results, but neither should it divert project/programme resources to the extent that programming is impaired.”* (IFRC, 2011).

In M&E, the two main resources that need to be considered and sufficiently allocated are human and financial.

When looking at financial resources, it is important to separate monitoring and evaluation as two separate budget areas, which will lead to a more realistic budget.

The IRFC (2011) highlights that effective M&E systems require capable people to support it, so when we look at human resources, it’s important to plan for the people responsible for those processes. That can include data management, analysis, reporting and training. The first step in planning for human resources is to determine what the gaps are between the M&E needs and the available personnel. Available personnel could be your own project team, the implementing organization, partner organizations and target communities. From there, you can identify the need for capacity building and/or outside expertise. This must be considered for each level of M&E that is required, for example at the project, programme or outcome level, and also overall. Budget items for human resources could be for staffing, both full-time and external, capacity training, translation etc. When focusing on your own team, ensure that sufficient time and resources are available for their tasks. Participating community stakeholders will often undertake capacity building training to ensure reporting on key monitoring indicators. These capacity building trainings often require more time, cost and skilled personnel. Outside specialists are often required for their experience, credibility and reliability.

All of these human resources lead to financial resources; those capital expenses could include facility costs, office equipment, supplies, travel and accommodation, printing etc.

Finally, it is imperative to plan for contingency costs as unexpected expenses often arise such as inflation, currency devaluation, theft or additional resources to verify findings (IFRC, 2011).

**Q4:** What are the key considerations and questions that both monitoring and evaluation seeks to answer? Explain giving project examples. (10 Mrks)

Monitoring is the tracking of key elements of programme performance on a regular basis. In contrast, evaluation is the episodic assessment of the change in targeted results that can be attributed to the project, or the analysis of inputs and activities to determine their contribution to results.

According to the UNDP (2009), *monitoring “can be defined as the ongoing process by which stakeholders obtain regular feedback on the progress being made towards chieving their goals and objectives”* and that evaluation *“is a rigorous and independent assessment of either completed or ongoing activities to determine the extent to which they are achieving stated objectives and contributing to decision making”.*

Therefore, we can identify that monitoring is going to answer questions such as:

* Are the pre-identified outputs being produced as planned and efficiently?
* Do any challenges and assumptions need to be changed or added?
* Do any changes need to be made?
* Will the outputs identified remain relevant to achieve the outcomes?
* Are the outcomes identified remaining relevant and will they achieve the overall goal and impacts?
* What is being learned?

Evaluation will highlight the following:

* What worked,
* What did not work;
* And why?

It will also provide feedback on how to improve programming, planning and strategy. It will highlight any unintentional results and consequences. Finally, it will also aide in learning.

**Q5:** Explain the relationship between *change assumptions”* and *impact* in a project. (10Mrks)

When designing a project with the desired impacts, you need to take into consideration the *‘change assumptions’*. The expectations that you have of what the desired impacts will be, however, may not always come to fruition. Hobbs et al, 2013, state that the reasons for this could be related to resources, social and cultural norms, technology, government and agency policies, infrastructure etc. The more aware you are of these assumptions within the project, the more likely your project will succeed as they will be addressed. Once you have identified your change assumptions and mapped out your pathway, the easier it is to then identify your own contribution as well as contributions from others.

If we take the example identified in Module 2 Q3 of rolling out a mass measles immunization campaign, one of the results/impacts it to ‘Increase awareness on the importance of measles vaccinations’. Our desired impact is that ‘Knowledge and attitudes of the public to the importance of immunizations will shift and see a positive influence towards acquiring the vaccinations’. Here, we are assuming that there will be a change in behaviour which will lead to this desired impact. However, we cannot guarantee that this will happen.

The more a project team is aware of the relationship between *‘change assumptions’* and *‘impact’*, the more likely that project is to succeed.

**References**

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