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**Module II: Assignment**

ASSIGNMENTS:

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

Let us define **an indicator** before telling its good qualities.

1. **An indicator** is a specific, observable and measurable characteristic that can be used to show changes or progress a program is making toward achieving a specific outcome. Therefore, to get right or close to this idea we need to have good qualities of indicators.

***A number, percentage or ratio represents quantitative indicators***. In contrast, ***qualitative indicators***seek to measure quality and often based on perception, opinion or levels of satisfaction. Indicators should be expressed in neutral language, such as ‘the level or degree of satisfaction’ or ‘the percentage of school enrolment by gender’.

Another definition from the course an indicator is a variable that measure one aspect of a project that directly relates to the program's objectives. The qualities of a good indicator are: A good indicator produces the same results when used repeatedly to measure the same condition or event; measures only the condition or event it is intended to measure; shows changes in the state or condition over time; have reasonable measurement costs; and be defined in clear and unambiguous terms. Therefore, we need to make sure that our indicator is **clear**, **relevant**, **Economic**, **Adequate**, **Monitorable. ( Source , from the course)**

This is what we call the **CREAM** of Good performance Indicator

1. **Clear**= Precise and Unambiguous
2. **Relevant**= Appropriate to the subject at hand
3. **Economic**=Available at a reasonable cost
4. **Adequate**=Provide a sufficient basis to assess performance
5. **Monitorable**= Amenable to independent Validation

**Example:** **Percentage of trained families, which practices hands washing after toilet.**

**2. As part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Universal education is a**

**right for all children. Different governments have implemented free primary**

**education in order to achieve this goal. With example from your country please**

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

Explanation: After 2 years of implementation of the program it is a question of making an in-depth assessment on its implementation in order to see: How the activities are carried out, What are the actions for? Who benefits from it? Are the results what we expected? How can we improve our practices? and even how resources are managed?

Here is the goal 2 and the target:

**Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education**

* **Target 2 A: By 2015, all children can complete a full course of primary schooling, girls and boys**
  + *Enrollment in primary education*
  + *Completion of primary education*

In my country Mali, the MDGs about achieving primary education had concerned two domains: the enrollment in primary education and the completion of primary education.

Some African countries have made considerable progress in implementing MDGs while others are late in implementing such as my country Mali. They are also moving on a positive track to achieve this target but further actions are needed to speed up this process. They improved their net enrollment rates by more than 25 percentage points between 1991 and 2008. The improvement in enrollment rates was driven by specific public interventions underpinned by resolute political will to achieve universal primary education. School feeding, increased budgetary allocations to education and cash transfers to poor households were among the factors that contributed to this positive trend.

From my point of view, there is a lot of to do. That is why my country has adopted the Sustainable Development goals in order to achieve this universal education by improving the quality: the reading and the writing skills of children.

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

Explanation: Within the framework of the program the expected results are defined but however in the implementation it could have unexpected results so to better understand these results an analysis is made. These results can be positive or negative, analyzing them will allow to know more about the impact of the project, to learn lessons and even to avoid the worst in case some results could affect the viability of the program.

The unintended outcomes of free primary education on job creation within the same period is the high recruitment of teachers, the evaluators, the consultant and experts in education. The different jobs created within the same period: training, teaching, classroom building and awareness raising campaign.

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

Explanation: For the various stakeholders, the monitoring exercise will help meet their information needs.

The monitoring exercise in free primary education would wish to achieve for the following stakeholders:

* **Donors**: Is money used in the right program? Have they met the targeted objective? What will be the impact of the free primary education? How well is the programme implemented?
* **Primary school managers**: Have they been trained for executing well the programme? How well are they managing primary school?
* **Government**: What is the contribution of government? At what degree should they meet the intended indicators and outcomes?

**3. You have been contracted by UNICEF to undertake the role of a consultant in a**

**project (joint partnership between them and the Ministry of Gender and Children)**

**a program that gives direct funds to families staying with orphaned children, to**

**plan a monitoring system for the same.**

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

Participatory evaluation is a generic term, which defines any evaluation involving the various stakeholders of a project, program or policy in its planning and implementation

1. **It gives you a better perspective on both the initial needs of the project's beneficiaries, and on its ultimate effects[[1]](#footnote-1).** If stakeholders, including project beneficiaries, are involved from the beginning in determining what needs to be evaluated and why - not to mention what the focus of the project needs to be - you're much more likely to aim your work in the right direction, to correctly determine whether your project is effective or not, and to understand how to change it to make it more so.
2. **It can get you information you wouldn't get otherwise**. When project direction and evaluation depend, at least in part, on information from people in the community, that information will often be more forthcoming if it's asked for by someone familiar. Community people interviewing their friends and neighbors may get information that an outside person wouldn't be offered.
3. **It tells you what worked and what didn't from the perspective of those most directly involved - beneficiaries and staff**. Those implementing the project and those who are directly affected by it are most capable of sorting out the effective from the ineffective.
4. **It can tell you why something does or doesn't work**. Beneficiaries are often able to explain exactly why they didn't respond to a particular technique or approach, thus giving you a better chance to adjust it properly.
5. **It results in a more effective project**. For the reasons just described, you're much more apt to start out in the right direction, and to know when you need to change direction if you haven't. The consequence is a project that addresses the appropriate issues in the appropriate way, and accomplishes what it sets out to do.
6. **It empowers stakeholders**. Participatory evaluation gives those who are often not consulted - line staff and beneficiaries particularly - the chance to be full partners in determining the direction and effectiveness of a project.
7. **It can provide a voice for those who are often not heard**. Project beneficiaries are often low-income people with relatively low levels of education, who seldom have - and often don't think they have a right to - the chance to speak for themselves. By involving them from the beginning in project evaluation, you assure that their voices are heard, and they learn that they have the ability and the right to speak for them.
8. **It teaches skills that can be used in employment and other areas of life**. In addition to the development of basic skills and specific research capabilities, participatory evaluation encourages critical thinking, collaboration, problem-solving, independent action, meeting deadlines...all skills valued by employers, and useful in family life, education, civic participation, and other areas.
9. **It bolsters self-confidence and self-esteem in those who may have little of either.** This category can include not only project beneficiaries, but also others who may, because of circumstance, have been given little reason to believe in their own competence or value to society. The opportunity to engage in a meaningful and challenging activity, and to be treated as a colleague by professionals, can make a huge difference for folks who are seldom granted respect or given a chance to prove themselves.
10. **It demonstrates to people ways in which they can take more control of their lives**. Working with professionals and others to complete a complex task with real-world consequences can show people how they can take action to influence people and events.
11. **It encourages stakeholder ownership of the project.** If those involved feel the project is theirs, rather than something imposed on them by others, they'll work hard both in implementing it, and in conducting a thorough and informative evaluation in order to improve it.
12. **It can spark creativity in everyone involved**. For those who've never been involved in anything similar, a participatory evaluation can be a revelation, opening doors to a whole new way of thinking and looking at the world. To those who have taken part in evaluation before, the opportunity to exchange ideas with people who may have new ways of looking at the familiar can lead to a fresh perspective on what may have seemed to be a settled issue.
13. **It encourages working collaboratively**. For participatory evaluation to work well, it has to be viewed by everyone involved as a collaboration, where each participant brings specific tools and skills to the effort, and everyone is valued for what she can contribute. Collaboration of this sort not only leads to many of the advantages described above, but also fosters a more collaborative spirit for the future as well, leading to other successful community projects.
14. **It fits into a larger participatory effort**. When community assessment and the planning of a project have been a collaboration among project beneficiaries, staff, and community members, it only makes sense to include evaluation in the overall plan, and to approach it in the same way as the rest of the project. In order to conduct a good evaluation, its planning should be part of the overall planning of the project. Furthermore, participatory process generally matches well with the philosophy of community-based or grass roots groups or organizations.

**b)** **Formulate the steps in planning a monitoring system**.

Here are the steps of planning a monitoring system:

**Step 1:** **Identify your evaluation audience[[2]](#footnote-2)**

Identify who the evaluation audience or stakeholders are. The evaluation audience include the people or organisations that require an evaluation to be conducted. There may be multiple audiences, each with their own requirements. Typically, this includes the funding agency, and may also include partner organisations, the Council (or Councillors), the project team, and the project’s participants or target group. Remember that evaluation is generally undertaken for accountability, or learning, and preferably both together.

If you have limited funds for evaluation, you may have to prioritise your evaluation by identifying who are the most important people to report to.

**Step 2:** **Define the evaluation questions**

Evaluation questions should be developed up-front, and in collaboration with the primary audience(s) and other stakeholders who you intend to report to. Evaluation questions go beyond measurements to ask the higher order questions such as whether the intervention is worth it, or could if have been achieved in another way (see examples below). Overall, evaluation questions should lead to further action such as project improvement, project mainstreaming, or project redesign.

You should also identify at this stage whether the evaluation audience has specific timelines by which it requires an evaluation report. This will be a major factor in deciding what you can and cannot collect.

**Step 3**: **Identify the monitoring questions**

In order to answer evaluation questions, monitoring questions must be developed that will inform what data will be collected through the monitoring process. Monitoring questions are quite specific in what they ask, compared to evaluation questions. For example, for an evaluation question of "What worked and what did not?" you may have several specific questions such as "Did the workshops lead to increased knowledge on energy efficiency in the home?" or "Did participants install water efficient showerheads".

The monitoring questions will ideally be answered through the collection of quantitative and qualitative data. It is important to not leap straight into the collection of data, without thinking about the evaluation questions.  Jumping straight in may lead to collecting data that provides no useful information, which is a waste of time and money.

**Step 4:** **Identify the indicators and data sources**

The next step is to identify what information you need to answer your monitoring questions (indicators) and where this information will come from (data sources). It is important to consider data collection, in terms of  the type of data and any  types of research design. Data sources could be participant themselves, or people’s homes (eg. audit of lighting types) or metering, or even literature. You can then decide on the most appropriate method to collect the data from the data source.

**Step 5:** **Identify who is responsible for data collection and timelines**

It is advisable to assign responsibility for the data collection so that everyone is clear of their roles and responsibilities. This also allows new staff to come onto the project and get a sense of who is responsible for what, and what they may have to take on and when.

Collection of monitoring data may occur regularly over short intervals, or less regularly, such as half-yearly or annually. Again, assigning timelines limits the excuse of ‘not knowing’.

You may also want to note any requirements that are needed to collect the data (staff, budget etc). It is advisable to have some idea of the cost associated with monitoring, as you may have great ideas to collect a lot of information, only to find out that you cannot afford it all. In such a case, you will have to either prioritise or find some money elsewhere (sorry but we have no special tool for that).

**Step 6:** **Identify who will evaluate the data, how it will be reported, and when**

This step is optional but highly recommended, as it will round off the M&E plan as a complete document. Remembering that evaluation is the subjective assessment of a project’s worth, it is important to identify who will be making this ‘subjective assessment’. In most cases, it will be the project team, but in some cases, you may involve other stakeholders including the target group or participants. You may also consider outsourcing a particular part of the evaluation to an external or independent party.

For an evaluation to be used (and therefore useful) it is important to **present the findings** in a format that is appropriate to the audience. This may mean a short report, or a memo, or even a poster or newsletter. As such, it is recommended that you consider how you will present your evaluation from the start, so that you can tailor the way to present your findings to the presentation format (such as graphs, tables, text, images).

**Step 7:** **Review the M&E plan**

Once you have completed your M&E plan, highlight data sources that appear frequently. For example, you may be able to develop surveys that fulfil the data collection requirements for many questions. Also consider re-ordering the M&E plan in several ways, for example, by data source, or by data collection timeframe. Finally, go through this checklist.  Does your M&E plan:

* Focus on the key evaluation questions and the evaluation audience?
* Capture all that you need to know in order to make a meaningful evaluation of the project?
* Only asks relevant monitoring questions and avoids the collection of unnecessary data?
* Know how data will be analysed, used and reported?
* Work within your budget and other resources?
* Identify the skills required to conduct the data collection and analysis?

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)