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**Country : South Sudan**

**Course : Diploma in Monitoring & Evaluation**

**Assignment : Two**

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**ASSIGNMENTS:**

1. What are the qualities of a good indicator? Give an example
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 explain the following:
   * 1. Critically evaluate the implementation programme of free primary education for the first 2 years
     2. Analyze the unintended outcomes of free primary education on job creation within the same period
     3. What would the monitoring exercise in free primary education wish to achieve for the following stakeholders?
     + Donors (more funding is required)
     + Primary School managers (strategies need to be strengthened)
     + Government (lobby for more funds)
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?
   2. Formulate the steps in planning a monitoring system.

1. An indicator is a variable whose value changes from the baseline level at the time the project/program began to a new value after the project/program and its activities have made their impact felt. At that point, the variable, or indicator, is calculated again.

An indicator is a measurement. It measures the value of the change in meaningful units that can be compared to past and future units. Indicators are measure of change(s) brought about by an activity. “Indicators communicate about progress towards particular goal, provide clues about matters of larger significance, or make perceptible a trend or a phenomenon that is not immediately detectable (*Hammond et al, 1995*)”.

Indicators are also referred to as the quantitative or qualitative variables that provide a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect the changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of an organization against the stated outcome. This is usually expressed as a percentage or a number. Good Indicators are said to be roaring **(ROARS)** or **(SMART),** as such, good indicators must have the following qualities:

**Relevant:** It measures an important part of an objective or output;

**Objective:**If two people measure the same indicator using the same tool, they should get the same result. The indicator should be based on fact, rather than feelings or impressions (another way to say this is to say that it should be Measurable);

**Available:** Indicators should be based on data that is readily available, or on data that can be collected with reasonable extra effort as part of the implementation of the project.

**Realistic:** It should not be too difficult or too expensive to collect the information (related to the next one in the list);

**Specific:** The measured changes should be attributable to the project, and they should be expressed in precise terms.

An easy way to remember this is to say that each indicator ‘ROARS’ (like a lion).

Good indicators can also have the following qualities in terms of being SMART as explained below:

**Specific:** The measured changes should be expressed in precise terms and suggest actions that can be taken to assess them.

**Measurable:** Indicators should be related to things that can be measured in an unambiguous way.

**Achievable:** Indicators should be reasonable and possible to reach, and therefore sensitive to changes the project might make.

**Replicable:** Measurements should be the same when made by different people using the same method.

**Time-bound:** There should be a time limit within which changes are expected and measured.

Other qualities of good performance indicators include, CREAM:

**Clear:** Precise and unambiguous.

**Relevant**: Appropriate to the subject at hand.

**Economic:** Available at a reasonable cost.

**Adequate:** Provide a sufficient basis to assess performance.

**Monitorable:** Amenable to independent validation.

However, the “CREAM” of selecting good performance indicators is essentially a set of criteria to aid in developing indicators for a specific project, program, or policy (Schiavo-Campo 1999, p. 85). As such, performance indicators should be clear, relevant, economic, adequate and monitorable. CREAM amounts to an insurance policy, because the more precise and coherent the indicators, the better focused the measurement strategies will be.

In summary, the indicators provide both qualitative and quantitative data that reveal the effectiveness of project implementation, problems encountered and success achieved so far. The selection of indicators is critical, and there should be clearly a range of criteria for their selection. However, project managers must make decisions and select indicators that will serve them well by providing information to better manage the project in order to achieve its objectives.

Examples of Indicators:

* % decrease in prevalence of water borne diseases
* % increase in proper hand-washing practices
* % increase in household income
* % increase in per unit yield of maize crop
* % increase in survival rate of the livestock
* 25% increase in teachers indicating that corporal punishment should not be used to discipline children in schools after 1 year.
* Number of people trained in sustainable agriculture.
* 300 midwives trained in traditional birthing techniques.

1. **A)** In South Sudan, generations were deprived of their basic human right to education in the period of the two civil wars (the first from 1955-1972 and the second from 1983-2005). After South Sudan gained independence on the 9th July 2011, the Republic of South Sudan entered a process of transformation into a constitutional democracy that involves building of the education institution. The south Sudan government affirmed the importance of education in national building with much emphasis on free and compulsory primary education since South Sudan gained statehood in 2011.

As part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for universal education as a right for all children, the government of the Republic of South Sudan in 2012 passed Education Act that states clearly that, “Primary education shall be free and accessible to all citizens of South Sudan without discrimination on basis of sex, ethnicity, race, religion, and health states, or disabilities”. The **South Sudan Education Act 2012, N0. 30 article 18:** states, “*Subject to this Act, every parent or guardian of a leaner shall ensure that his/her child is enrolled and attends schools when he/she attains the age of 5 or 6 years*”.

Goal 2, “Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to, and complete, free, and compulsory primary education of good quality”.

In 2011, 1,391,704 students were enrolled in primary schools with a net enrolment rate (NER) of 42.9% under the free and compulsory primary education policy/program and the GIR (gross intake ratio) was 89.8% compared to a NIR (net intake ratio) of only 13.8%. Of the 264,427 students entering primary, 1,223,741 (or 84.6% of the incoming class) were not aged 6. As of 2013, the GIR was lower, only 68.0%. However, the NIR was 11.9%; 107,218 of the 129,993 new students were overage, 82.5% of the incoming student body. This remains consistent throughout primary school. The percentage of overage learners was 86.7% in 2011 and 87.3% in 2013. Gender parity in primary education was still leaving room for improvement in South Sudan. In 2011, 38.8% of primary students were female, and 61.2% were male. These rates have barely changed for 2013, 38.9% were female and 61.1% were male.

The quality of education also leaves some room for improvement. Teacher qualification is one good indicator of the quality of education. Since 2011, the percentage of trained teachers has declined from 43.7% to 39.8%. However, there has been an improvement in the rate of teachers being paid. In 2011, 39.9% of primary education teachers were volunteers, compared to only 25.8% in 2013. The pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) has also improved over the past few years, from 52.4 in 2011 to 47.3 in 2013.

One of the reasons for decline in many primary education indicators may be the rush for education immediately after independence in 2011. The President of the Republic of South Sudan decreed that all children must go to school. In response to this decree, concerted efforts to enroll children, such as the *Go to School Initiative*, the school based girls’ education movement (GEM), and community based promotion and advocacy for girls’ education (PAGE) resulted in enrolment demand far beyond what the system could effectively accommodate. As a result, overcrowding and lack of materials in relevant national languages, in line with the Education Act 2012, caused many children to leave the education system.

The Government of the Republic of South Sudan (GRSS) set a NER target in the primary system of 63% by 2017. This was to be achieved through the improvement of educational infrastructure, aiming for all primary schools to offer the full primary cycle, and channeling overage learners into alternative education programs. By 2017, the end of the current GESP, the GRSS aims to increase the primary NER to 63%, GER to 92%. Universal primary enrolment should be met by the year 2022, barring any major crisis or conflict.

The following are some of the factors why the universal education as a right for children, by government to implement free primary education to achieve the goal did not do well despite increment in the enrollment in primary schools:

**Quality of Education:** Since the education system in South Sudan is relatively new, it has been difficult to measure the longitudinal quality of the education system. Quality is considered as part of the right to education which is enshrined in the National Education Act and General Education Strategic Plan Documents. South Sudan education quality since independence and introduction of free primary education faced a lot of challenges in an attempt to achieve a primary education of acceptable quality and this includes problems of resources, services, facilities, and teaching in the schools.

**Facilities:** In south Sudan, pupils were/are taught in one of three typical locations: (a) classrooms in permanent buildings, for example, classrooms made of brick or stone; (b) classrooms made of local materials, such as bamboo and thatch; and (c) classes taught outside without any roof or building, usually under a tree. 43% of all classes were taught outdoors. Only 12% of pupils were taught in permanent classrooms. In Bahr El Ghazal region, almost 60% of classes took place under trees or outdoor classrooms. In general, these “outdoor classrooms” consist of little more than a homemade blackboard nailed to a tree with the pupils sitting on the ground or on branches slung between two forked sticks. Teaching were taking place when the weather permits and frequently had to be abandoned because of rain and afternoon heat. There were also major deficiencies in the general facilities of schools. Overall, only 33% of schools had latrines. However, this fell to 11% in the Bahr El Ghazal region and to 13% in Upper Nile. Even where latrines were existing were liable to be at the level of one latrine for 200 pupils. Forty-six percent of schools had no source of clean water with 72% in Bahr El Ghazal. Even when schools were receiving equipment or teaching materials, 66% had no storerooms.

**Teachers and Teaching Materials:** The vast majority of teachers in South Sudan were poorly educated and untrained in the first two years of implementing the free primary education. Almost 70% had only a primary school education. Many had not completed the full eight year primary school curriculum. Thirty percent completed secondary education and less than 2% had a diploma or higher certificate.

Only 7% of the teachers were trained and had at least one year of college (or per-service) training. Forty-five percent were totally untrained and 48% were reported as having received some in-service training, although this could be as little as two weeks of in-service training. From observations, which were conducted on over 5,000 lessons, over 60% of the teachers were assessed as doing a satisfactory job, given their lack of training and the teaching conditions in the school. The main teaching weaknesses were in the use of relevant visual aids, poor questioning technique, and in the use of child centered teaching methods. The availability of text books and teaching materials varied significantly from school to school. Missionary supported schools had the highest level of provision, although often these were texts taken from the curriculum of neighboring countries, such as Kenya and Uganda. Many schools had no textbooks.

**2B**) The unintended outcomes of free primary education on job creation within the same period in South Sudan include the following:

* Initially, parents were paying fees in proportion to the number of children one enrolls and were mostly, if not entirely, used to cover teachers’ salaries. Thus, the level of teachers’ remuneration were depending on the total number of children enrolled as well as parents’ ability to pay fees. As a result, the change brought about by FPE was a blow to teachers, whose remuneration was meagre and unstable already before the introduction of FPE.
* FPE made it even more difficult to mobilize resources from parents for education program.
* Cases of increased job insecurity and schools closures were on the rise, particularly in poor communities.
* FPE also had unintended consequences for the both national and state ministries of education in terms of resource allocation mainly in hard to reach rural areas.
* Classrooms set up on the premises of public primary schools have been shut down in order to accommodate the surge of enrolment in primary education sparked by FPE.
* Inspection and supervision which was carried out by the inspectors of schools became reportedly less frequent.
* FPE also brought about the reduced learning space in schools premises with some classes conducted under trees.
* Pupil teacher ratio was very high.
* Quality of free primary education was very poor.

Therefore, the decision on which option to pursue FPE is for the Government to take and could be a strategic choice, in fact, if efforts are made to ensure that the pedagogy is designed and practiced to prioritize and promote the children’s holistic development.

**2C)** The stakeholders refers to stakeholder involvement which means working with people and using the resources as they are and helping them to work together to realize agreed ends and goals (Bartle, 2007). Therefore, what the monitoring exercise in free primary education wish to achieve for the following stakeholders are as follows:

* Donors:
  + **Clear and timely reports:** Because of their responsibilities for making decisions concerning the continuation of financial support, the funders will need information about the progress of the free primary education.
  + **Evidence of community change and impact:** Funders will need to be able to measure the success of the free primary education and report this to their own trustees or constituents.
* **Primary School managers:** try to create school environment conducive for learning, teaching staff are be trained and qualified for teaching profession, education policies are developed/or in place to improve the education sector to realize quality education in the country, learning facilities/infrastructure built and conducive both for learning and teaching and development and provision of learning/teaching materials.
* Government: that policies were developed for implementing free primary education, plans developed for free primary education and resources and budgets were allocated equitably to improve the quality of free primary education, monitoring & Evaluation reports tracking the progress, problems encountered and successes of free primary education. Government was able to provide compulsory and free primary education for all, and the school management was also able to involve all stakeholders in the decision making process, for example the Parent Teacher Association (PTA).

**3a)** Participatory evaluation methods is a partnership approach to evaluation in which stakeholders actively engage or involve in developing the evaluation and all phases of its implementation.

Participation occurs throughout the evaluation process including: identifying relevant questions; planning the evaluation design; selecting appropriate measures and data collection methods; gathering and analyzing data, reaching consensus about findings, conclusions and recommendations; disseminating results and preparing an action plan to improve program performance. However, the type and level of stakeholder involvement will necessarily vary between different types, for example between a local level impact evaluation and an evaluation of policy changes (Gujit 2014, p.1).

While using participatory approach, “Participants ask the questions, plan the evaluation design, gather and analyze data, and determine actions to take based on the results (Zukoski and Lulaquisen, 2002)”. This requires the commitment and valuable time of many. As such the advantages of participatory evaluation include the following:

* **It gives better perspective on both the initial needs of the project's beneficiaries, and on its ultimate effects:** 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 – this will be much more likely to aim in the right direction, to correctly determine whether the project is effective or not, and to understand how to change it to make it more so.
* **Identify locally relevant evaluation questions**: Participatory evaluation ensures that the evaluation focuses on locally relevant questions that meet the needs of program planners and beneficiaries. Participatory approaches allow local stakeholders to determine the most important evaluation questions that will affect and improve their work.
* **Improve program performance**: Participatory evaluation is reflective and action-oriented. It provides stakeholders, including beneficiaries, with the opportunity to reflect on project progress and generate knowledge that results in being able to apply the lessons learned. It provides opportunities for groups to take corrective action and make mid-course improvements. In other words, it tells 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.
* **Empower participants**: A participatory approach is empowering because it claims the right for local people to control and own the process of making evaluation decisions and implementing them. Participating in an evaluation from start to finish can give stakeholders a sense of ownership over the results. Recognizing local talents and expertise builds confidence and pride in the community, and among participants. 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.
* **Build capacity**: Conducting a participatory evaluation promotes participant learning and is an opportunity to introduce and strengthen evaluation skills. Active participation by stakeholders can result in new knowledge and a better understanding of their environment. This, in turn, enables groups to identify action steps and advocate for policy changes. It can provide participants with tools to transform their environments.
* **Develop leaders and build teams**: Participatory evaluation builds teams and participant commitment through collaborative inquiry. Inviting a broad range of stakeholders to participate and lead different parts of the process can develop and celebrate local leadership skills. It can lead to stronger, more organized groups, strengthening the community’s resources and networks.
* **Sustain organizational learning and growth**: Finally, a participatory evaluation is not just interested in findings; it is focused on creating a learning process. It creates a knowledge base among local people and organizations, which can be applied to other programs and projects. The techniques and skills acquired can lead to self-sustained action.

Participatory evaluation approaches can be empowering, educational tools for community partnerships that can be used to ensure that evaluations address locally relevant questions, contribute to improving program performance, and support the development of sustainable partnerships. More importantly, the approach is focused on building the capacity of individuals and teams to carry out all steps in an evaluation process. In this respect, participatory evaluation can contribute to empowering communities to act and create change within their neighborhoods, community organizations and local governmental institutions.

**3b)** The steps in planning a monitoring system include the following:

Monitoring of a program or intervention involves the collection of routine data that measure progress toward achieving program objectives. It is used to track changes in program performance over time. Its purpose is to permit stakeholders to make informed decisions regarding the effectiveness of programs and the efficient use of resources. Monitoring is sometimes referred to as process evaluation, because it focuses on the implementation process and asks key questions:

* How well has the program been implemented?
* How much does implementation vary from site to site?
* Did the program benefit the intended people? At what cost?

However, before launching into the steps, the development of a M&E system is a participatory exercise. Staff at different levels of the organization who will be expected to maintain or use the new M&E system should always be consulted or involved in the process. This might include staff at head offices or secretariats, staff in regional or country offices, and staff at program or project level.

**Step 1: Define the scope and purpose**: This step involves identifying the monitoring audience and the purpose of the monitoring system.  Monitoring purposes include supporting management and decision-making, learning, accountability and stakeholder engagement.

Will the monitoring be done mostly for learning purposes with less emphasis on accountability?  If this is the case, then the monitoring system would be designed in such a way as to promote ongoing reflection for continuous program improvement.

If the emphasis is more on accountability, then the M&E system could then collect and analyze data with more rigor and to coincide with the reporting calendar of a donor.

It is important that the M&E scope and purpose be defined beforehand, so that the appropriate M&E system is designed.

Information about the purpose of the program, the specific M&E activities that are needed, and why they are important, “***Be on the same page as the ‘evaluation audience''***

**Step 2: Define the monitoring questions:** Monitoring questions should be developed up-front and in collaboration with the primary audience(s) and other stakeholders who you intend to report to. Monitoring questions go beyond measurements to ask the higher order questions such as whether the intervention is worth it or if it could have been achieved in another way.

**Step 3: Identify the monitoring questions:** For example, for a **monitoring *question*** pertaining to 'Learnings', such as "What worked and what did not?" you may have several ***monitoring questions*** such as "Did the workshops lead to increased knowledge on energy efficiency in the home?" or "Did the participants have any issues with the training materials?"

The monitoring questions will ideally be answered through the collection of quantitative and qualitative data. It is important to not start collecting data without thinking about the evaluation and monitoring questions.  This may lead to collecting data just for the sake of collecting data (that provides no relevant information to the program).

**Step 4: Identify the indicators and data sources:** In this step you identify what information is needed to answer your monitoring questions 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 from primary sources, like from participant themselves or from secondary sources like existing literature. You can then decide on the most appropriate method to collect the data from each data source.

**Step 5: Identify who is responsible for data collection, data storage, reporting, budget and timelines:** It is advisable to assign responsibility for the data collection and reporting so that everyone is clear of their roles and responsibilities.

 Collection of monitoring data may occur regularly over short intervals, or less regularly, such as half-yearly or annually. Likewise the timing of evaluations (internal and external) should be noted.

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.

Additionally, it is good to determine how the collected data will be stored. A centralised electronic M&E database should be available for all project staff to use. The M&E database options range from a simple Excel file to the use of a comprehensive M&E software such as [LogAlto](https://www.logalto.com/en/).

[LogAlto](https://www.logalto.com/en/) is a user-friendly cloud-based M&E software that stores all information related to the programme such as the entire log frame (showing the inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes) as well as the quantitative and qualitative indicators with baseline, target and milestone values. [LogAlto](https://www.logalto.com/en/) also allows for the generation of tables, scorecards, charts and maps. Quarterly Progress reports can also be produced from [LogAlto](https://www.logalto.com/en/).

**Step 6: Identify who will evaluate the data and how it will be reported:** In most programs there will be an internal and an independent evaluation (conducted by an external consultant).

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. A 'Marketing and Dissemination Strategy’ for the reporting of evaluation results should be designed as part of the M&E system.

**Step 7: Decide on standard forms and procedures**

Once the M&E system is designed there will be a need for planning templates, designing or adapting information, collection and analysis tools, developing organizational indicators, developing protocols or methodologies for service-user participation, designing report templates, developing protocols for when and how evaluations and impact assessments are carried out, developing learning mechanisms, designing databases and the list goes on Simister, 2009.

**Step 8: Use the information derived from Steps 1- 7 above to fill in the 'M&E System’ template**

You can choose from any of the templates presented in this [article](https://www.annmurraybrown.com/#!How-To-Design-a-Monitoring-and-Evaluation-ME-System/czf9/57092b650cf27cb8ad1e245e) to capture the information. Remember, they are templates, not cast in stone. Feel free to add extra columns or categories as you see fit.

**Step 9: Integrate the M&E system horizontally and vertically**: “Where possible, integrate the M&E system horizontally (with other organizational systems and processes) and vertically (with the needs and requirements of other agencies)”, Simister, 2009.

For the M&E system to be effective, it’s better to try as much as possible to align the M&E system with existing planning systems, reporting systems, financial or administrative monitoring systems, management information systems, human resources systems or any other systems that might influence (or be influenced by) the M&E system.

**Step 10: Pilot and then roll-out the system**

Once everything is in place, the M&E system may be first rolled out on a small scale, perhaps just at the Country Office level. This will give the opportunity for feedback and for the ‘kinks to be ironed out’ before a full scale launch.

Staff at every levels should be aware of the overall purpose(s), general overview and the key focus areas of the M&E system.

It is also good to inform persons on which areas they are free to develop their own solutions and in which areas they are not. People will need detailed information and guidance in the areas of the system where everyone is expected to do the same thing, or carry out M&E work consistently.

This could include guides, training manuals, mentoring approaches, staff exchanges, interactive media, training days or workshops.

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