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**Assignment : Three**

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ASSIGNMENT:

1. Why is choosing the right question important in Monitoring and Evaluation?
2. Using Archival data has its own bottlenecks. Name five and explain how to overcome them.
3. Why is research important component in monitoring and evaluation? Give and explain four.
4. There are reasons why organizations or individuals or groups are running program.  Evaluating it should just be a matter of deciding whether things are better when you evaluate than they were before the project/program started but it's not that simple. First of all, there is need to determine what "things" should be actually looked at.  Second, there is need to consider how to determine what is being done right, and what needs to change.

As such, every monitoring and evaluation, like any other research starts with one or more questions which are simple and easy to answer. By choice of questions, one is defining what it is you are trying to change and the questions chosen should be able to analyze the community problem or issue you are addressing and deciding how you want affect it. The following are reasons why choosing the right questions beforehand in monitoring and evaluation is important:

* **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 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 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.
* **It highlights unintended consequences**: When you find unusual answers to the questions you choose, it often means that your program has had some effects 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 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.
* In [participant evaluations](http://ctb.ku.edu/en/community-tool-box-toc/evaluating-community-programs-and-initiatives/chapter-36-introduction-23), evaluation involves stakeholders in setting the course of the program, thus making it more likely that it will meet community needs.
* **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 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.
* It helps shape the monitoring and evaluation work and planned when planning the overall program or effort.
* It gives time and room for a participatory process and chance to use monitoring and evaluation as an integral part of the project/program.

Therefore, right questions should be chosen in order to analyze the community problem or issue to be addressed and how to affect it. The process should be participatory by involving all stakeholders to show representation of the views and knowledge of people affected by the issue to be addressed.

1. Archival data are defined as information that have been previously aggregated by others and can be utilized in systematic studies (Jones, 2010). Archival data also refer to information that already exists in someone else’s files, originally generated for reporting or research purposes, kept because of legal requirements, for reference, or as an internal record and because it’s the result of completed activities, it’s not subject to change and is therefore sometimes known as fixed data.

Archives are often stored as paper files or on electronic storage – computer disks, CDs, DVDs, etc. – and may include photographs and audio and video recordings as well. It may also take the form of encoded information expressed in numbers, or in computer language. Computer files may include various media and text, all in the same place.

There are five major categories of archival data that have been classified in previous literature (Jones, 2010; Singleton & Straits, 2005)-public documents and official records; private documents; mass media; physical, nonverbal materials; and social science data archives.

The use of archival data research process involves one or more of these purposes: "general research procedures (e.g., procuring data, data documentation, data sharing), research design (e.g., cross-sectional, short-term longitudinal, long-term longitudinal designs), measures (e.g., types of measures used, missing measures), and samples (e.g., sample size, sample type)" (Jones, 2010, p. 1011).

However, gathering information and using others’ ideas doesn’t mean that you can’t use your own or come up with something new but you can usually innovate more effectively if you know what has been tried. Information gathering refers to gathering/collecting information about the issue you’re facing and the ways other organizations and communities have addressed it.

Therefore, there are many sources of information, and they vary depending on what you’re looking for. Some of these information are categorized as follows:

**Existing sources**: This term refers to published material of various kinds that might shed light either on the issue or on attempts to deal with it. These are divided into scholarly publications, aimed primarily at researchers and the academic community; mass-market sources, written in a popular style and aimed at the general public; and statistical and demographic information published by various research organizations and government agencies.

**Natural examples**: These are programs or interventions developed and tried in communities that have addressed the issue you are trying to address. Studying them can tell you what worked for them and what didn’t, and why. This gives one insight into how issues play out in your or other communities, they can provide nuts-and-bolts ideas about how to (or how not to) conduct a successful program or intervention. The most information sources here are the people who are involved in efforts to address issues similar to yours, or those who can steer you to them. Additionally, there are a number of natural examples (such as single case studies) that have been written about descriptively in the literature of community psychology or public health that may be relevant to your work.

However, archival materials are generated as a result of the routines of administrative data production (Burton, 1995, 2000), reflexively instrumental forms of rhetoric (Hirsch, 1986; Kunda, 1992), or in response to extraordinary demands (Vaughan, 1996).

The following are some of the types of archives:

**College and university archives:** are archives that preserve materials relating to a specific academic institution. Such archives may also contain a “special collections” division. College and university archives exist first to serve their parent institutions and alumni, and then to serve the public.

**Corporate archives:** are archival departments within a company or corporation that manage and preserve the records of a company or that business. These repositories exist to serve the needs of company, staff members and to advance business goals. However, these archives may not be open to public research without prior approval from the company though corporate archives can allow varying degrees of public access to their materials depending on the company’s policies and archival staff availability. Corporate arcives can be an asset to a company because they preserve policies, legal documents, financial records and hold materials that can be valuable to their marketing and public relations departments.

**Historical societies:** are organizations that seek to preserve and promote interest in the history of a region, a historical period, nongovernment organizations, or a subject. The collections of historical societies typically focus on a state or a community, and may be in charge of maintaining some governmental records as well.

**Museums and archives:** share the goal of preserving items of historical significance, but museums tend to have a greater emphasis on exhibiting those items, and maintaining diverse collections of artifacts or artwork rather than books and papers. Any of the types of repositories mentioned in this list may incorporate a museum, or museums may be stand-alone institutions. Likewise, stand-alone museums may contain libraries and/or archives.

**Religious archives:** are archives relating to the traditions or institutions of a major faith, denominations within a faith, or individual places of worship. The materials stored in these repositories may be available to the public, or may exist solely to serve members of the faith or the institution by which they were created.

3. In order to improve project interventions or effect change, there is need for evidence on what works or worked but evidence alone is not enough. Evidence must be integrated into policy and programming to inform change that leads to strengthened systems of interventions, improved learning outcomes and sustainability of impact of projects/programs to meet the needs of individuals, communities and societies.

Therefore, research as a component of monitoring and evaluation is important because of the following:

1. **Research contributes to the evidence on effectiveness of project interventions**. For example, research can improve service delivery for underserved populations such as children/persons with disabilities and the need for supporting interventions that prepare them for successful futures. For instance, research can also check on education service like learning environment is conducive and facilitate the leaning of children with disability or not. The result of such research will effect decision making and enhance the process and implementation of intervention to be undertaken or undergoing.
2. **It establishes whether the project has met the desired/set objectives/results**: are the changes or effects expected to take place after implementing the project. The results are generally positive improvements to the lives of the beneficiaries. The results can be divided into three as follows:

**Outputs** are immediate results achieved soon after the completion an [activity](https://proposalsforngos.com/proposals/proposal-terminology/project-activities/). For example, in a project training locals on human rights, the output might be “20 community workers trained in basic human rights concepts.”

The **outcomes** are the results achieved after a period of time. These are the short-term effects of the immediate outputs. If after some time a change occurs because of the project activity, it can be called an outcome. Continuing the above example, the outcome might be: “the participants used their training to inform other community members about their human rights.”

The **impact** is the long-term result that came about because of the activities undertaken in the project. For the above example, the impact of the project might be that one year later, the whole community is aware of human rights issues and in the next election the community largely voted against a leader with a history of human rights violations.

1. **Stakeholders use it to explain the process of change or theory of change as a result of the project intervention:** 
   1. **Internal programme development**: research can help stakeholders to refine and enhance the effectiveness of your project.
   2. **External Communication**: through research as a component of monitoring and evaluation, stakeholders can communicate what the programme does and how it has an impact in a clear and convincing way.
   3. **Evaluation planning:** it is a first step in designing an effective evaluation, and through research one can identify which outcomes are key to model’s success and can indicate which ones should be the focus of evaluation efforts.
2. **Strategic Information through Data Collection:** Research shares how strategic information are obtained using various data collection systems (tools/methods such as questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussion, observation, literature review etc,) to reach decisions about how to improve the project on an on-going basis. It establishes ethical approval standards and procedures for implementation of project/program and ensures adherence to the set objectives and expected results. Through this, it establishes a mechanism to share and discuss findings and their implications, learning and sharing with stakeholders.

Therefore, for a project/program to be implemented effectively and efficiently, a functional monitoring and evaluation system with research as a component will greatly help in informed future decision making process.

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