**AFRICA CENTER FOR PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

**Address :** P.O Box 58182-00200

**Muthaiga Centre Suite 3, Limuru Road, Nairobi, Kenya**

**Telephone : +254- 0723305358, +254 0723803505**

**E-mail :** [info@onlinelearningcenter.org](mailto:info@onlinelearningcenter.org)

**Learner’s Name : Benjamin Ibako Gabriel**

**Tel : +211(0)911323010/+211(0)927413044**

**E-mail :** [gdblessbig@outlook.com](mailto:gdblessbig@outlook.com)

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**Assignment : Four (4)**

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ASSIGNMENT:

1.a) Collecting information or data is just one part of the process of monitoring and evaluation.

What is meant by data analysis?

1. State any three uses of monitoring and evaluation results.
2. Describe any seven factors that may lead to project failure.

2. Identify any six parts of a monitoring and evaluation report

3.Why is feedback an important component of project monitoring and evaluation?

1a) In order to explain what is meant by data analysis, it is better to understand what data means. Data is a spatial representation organized from an information flow through processing or decoding. Data is used to describe things by assigning a value to them. The values are then organized, processed, and presented within a given context so that it becomes useful. Data can be in different forms: qualitative and quantitative:

Data Analysis is defined by LeCompte and Schensul (1999) as the process a researcher uses to reduce data to a story and its interpretation. Data analysis is the process of reducing large amounts of collected data to make sense of them. Patton (1987) indicates that three things occur during analysis: data are organized, data are reduced through summarization and categorization, and patterns and themes in the data are identified and linked. LeCompte and Schensul (1999) suggest that data analysis be done as data are collected in the field, as soon as possible after they have been collected, both while the researcher is still in the field, and later, when the researcher is no longer in the field.

1b) Program evaluation as a professional activity has grown substantially and spread around the world (Horton, 1997) and according to UNDP (2009), through generation of evidence and objective information, evaluation enables managers to make informed and evidence-based decision making and plan strategically. As such, the uses of monitoring and evaluation results may include the following:

1. **Supporting program improvements**: Did it work or not, and why? How could it be done differently for better results? The interest is on what works, why and in what context. Decision makers, such as managers, use evaluation results to make necessary improvements, adjustments to the implementation approach or strategies, and to decide on alternatives. Evaluations addressing these questions need to provide concrete information on how improvements could be made or what alternatives exist to address the necessary improvements.
2. **Building knowledge for generalizability and wider-application**: What can we learn from the evaluation? How can we apply this knowledge to other contexts? The main interest is in the development of knowledge for state/national or global use and for generalization to other contexts and situations. When the interest is on knowledge generation, evaluations generally apply more rigorous methodology to ensure a higher level of accuracy in the evaluation and the information being produced to allow for generalizability and wider application beyond a particular context. Evaluations should be seen as part of an exercise whereby different stakeholders are able to participate in the continuous process of generating and applying evaluative knowledge. Project/program managers, and other stakeholders, decide who participates in what part of this process (analyzing findings and lessons, developing a management response to an evaluation, disseminating knowledge) and to what extent they will be involved (informed, consulted, actively involved, equal partners or key decision makers). These are strategic decisions for organizations that have a direct bearing on the learning and ownership of evaluation findings. An evaluation framework that generates knowledge, promotes learning and guides action is an important means of capacity development and sustainability of results.
3. **Supporting accountability**: Is the organization doing the right things? Is the organization doing things right? Did the organization do what it said it would do? The interest here is on determining the merit or worth and value of an initiative and its quality. An effective accountability framework requires credible and objective information, and evaluations can deliver such information. Evaluations help ensure that organization’s goals and initiatives are aligned with and support the Millennium Declaration, MDGs, and global, national and corporate priorities. The organization should be accountable for providing evaluative evidence that links its contributions to the achievement of development results and for delivering services that are based on the principles of human development. By providing such objective and independent evaluations, evaluations support the organization’s accountability towards its Executive Board, donors, governments, national partners, international partners and beneficiaries. The intended use determines the timing of an evaluation, its methodological framework, and level and nature of stakeholder participation. Therefore, the use has to be determined at the planning stage.

Evaluation reports serve many purposes. The central purpose, however, is to “deliver the message”—inform the appropriate audiences about the findings and conclusions resulting from the collection, analysis, and interpretation of evaluation information, (Worthen, Sanders, and Fitzpatrick 1997).

1c) A **project** is considered a **failure** when it has not delivered **what** was required, in line with expectations. As such, the following are the factors that may lead to project failure:

**1. Lack of a Scope Document**

Most of the projects/program are doomed to failure from the beginning mainly because of regular changing of project scope and requirements. As such, one cannot expect the project team members to perform well when they are not clear about the project’s scope.

In the absence of a proper scope document, the project manager can never assign tasks or monitor the performance of the project team because he/she is not sure about the scope of the project in the first place.

Making a detailed scope document that highlights all the stakeholders’ requirements is imperative for a successful project delivery as it enables the project team members to understand what they have to do and sets a clear direction and objective for them to achieve.

**2. Poor Visualization of the Project objectives**

A well-laid project would always be objective in defining its capabilities and strengths in the market. Where a project lacks proper objectives, goals, and missions, it is highly likely to fail. The management should always give a clear visualization of the successes that the project can attain in case of successful implementation. The problems that may arise during the actual implementation process should be well-defined and modified to avert the risks attributed to the failures. Specifically, the technological world has caused stochastic variables that ought to be projected in order to ascertain the associated risks. Failure of this, project failures would still be evident on the society.

**3. Inconsistent Communication Management**

The executives in the implementation of the projects have to be cautious in the way they relay of information is carried out.

A [survey](http://www.it-cortex.com/Stat_Failure_Cause.htm) conducted by Spike Cavell shows that 57% of projects failed due to poor communication. This makes it one of the major causes of project failure. Information on the progress of the project always loses the limelight of the executives. In the end, when the projects are on the verge of collapsing, they give information which will not reverse the impacts that have been experienced in the project. In essence, this is due to misinformation that occurred. Poor communication management results in shattered objectives and missing of the project's aims.

To save your project from failure, you need to establish a clear communication channel. Additionally, a project management system should enable smooth communication within the project team in order to keep all project staff on the same page, avoid confusions and keep them motivated. This will develop an environment of trust, proactively kill conflicts, which would bring the best out of project team members and eventually lead to a successful delivery of the project.

**4. Poor Planning and Poor Prioritization of Tasks**

Lack of planning or poor planning can easily lead project to failure. Spike Cavell’s survey also revealed that 40% of projects fail due to poor planning and lack of resources. Spend time for making a solid plan for project and it will help in executing each phase of project smoothly. Brain Tracy sums it up brilliantly, “**Every minute you spend in planning saves 10 minutes in execution; this gives you a 100% return on energy!**”

As such, project managers and team members usually have a role in prioritizing tasks. The choice of the tasks to be laid out at specific timelines should always be updated frequently to maintain the operations of the project. When a task exceeds the speculated period to be implemented, it should always be corrected or terminated to pave way for other activities. However, this needs the project managers to be flexible and objective in the laying out of the tasks to implement. In essence, some tasks are more important than others in project management schedule. Some tasks tend to be repetitive. They should be omitted or reduced so as to keep a close track on the underlying tasks. In many instances in the past, some projects have been reported to have failed due to the misappropriation of the tasks to consider than the others.

**5. Unrealistic/ Over Expectations**

The rationality of the requirements and projected attainable results should be focused on. For instance, the objectives of a project should be well-framed to fit the scope of implementation. In some cases, the project developers tend to be over-confident on the world market.

As such, setting an unrealistic deadline and expectations can drag projects down the drain. Factors and constraints that might adversely affect the project should be highly considered and then set a deadline. Instead of having unrealistic expectations, keep a buffer that gives the liberty of completing the project without rushing through it. Having a buffer not only reduces the workload of the project team members but also let them focus on each task in a better way.

However, uncertainty risks have to be considered with the internal and external factors. More so in the current world markets, the technology related projects should be rationalized to consider the chances of success in the competitive world. In the 1950s, IBM had a project that was aimed at developing the world’s fastest computer. The expectations of realizing the fastest computer, however, were overambitious to the company’s expectations. IBM ended up investing heavily in an overambitious project. Due to the technological market volatility and uncertainty, IBM had to make huge losses in the project. Therefore, the company was forced to halt production machinery in order to avert similar risks in the future. From the incident, projects should be well-analyzed and researched on to prove viability. Over-expectations in the project ambitions should be addressed on since they are the most probable causes.

**6. Conflicts of Interest**

This is evident where project managers, team members, and executives have intra-personal or interpersonal conflicts arising from within the scope of the project development and implementation. Projects should be well-guided and shared equally in the planning and execution. If conflicts of interest emerge during the project formulation process, they ought to be solved amicably with the help of selected leaders and intervention of executive managers. In the implementation process, reshuffling of the staff consistently can help reduce the misunderstandings that may arise.

**7. Change in Governmental Policies**

During the implementation of the project, the policies of the government safeguarding the undertaking of activities on certain prospects usually changes. The tax impositions may be escalated by the government with the aim of stemming the ongoing activities on those sectors. In turn, it would cause the project events to be expensive in laying them out, hence leading to the failure of projects. On the same note, some rules may be imposed to stop entrepreneurial practices in some sectors of the economy. Unfortunately, some of the projects that were being undertaken would have to be locked out.

In order to ensure projects are successful, it is important to keep an eye on aforementioned factors and try to overcome them to reduce the risk of project failure.

However, understanding project failures is a critical concept to consider in the current world markets. Taking historical examples and the causes attributed to it should actually be treated extensively. Project failures can be attributed to both the internal and external factors in the environment. The internal factors usually can be mitigated and influenced by the project implementers. They are normally at the disposal of the management committee and team members. On the other hand, external factors usually influence the way of implementing the projects. Project managers, executives and team members usually have no control over them. In response to the external factors, project implementers have no otherwise than to cope with those factors. Therefore, the causes of project failures should be considered to avoid the risks of terminating valuable projects in the future.

2. The following are six parts of a monitoring and evaluation report:

1. **Executive Summary:** The executive summary of an evaluation report is a shortened version of the full report. It highlights the purpose of the evaluation, key questions, research methodology, evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations.

This summary provides a condensed version of the different sections usually one to four pages and is placed at the start of the report. To write an effective summary, the original document must be fully read with key ideas and important points highlighted. Re-write the highlighted sentences briefly, skipping the unimportant details. Therefore, the executive summary contains the following details in brief form:

* Background
* Purpose/objectives,
* Methodology
* Key findings and conclusions,
* Lessons learned that can be generalized beyond the specific case to apply to programs globally.
* Recommendations which are the overall suggestions of how the project/program can be improved based on the findings.

1. **Introduction or Background Information about the Project/program:** Here the project is introduced, and background information provided. It is a brief summary of the background of the project, its goal, objectives, planned outputs, outcomes, impacts, indicators, partners (stakeholders) of the projects and information at baseline study provided if applicable. Introduction to the project states what the project aims to achieve and what measures are to be taken for this purpose. Here information about the project team, target area and donors can also be provided briefly. However, necessary subsection can be created where necessary for easier following.
2. **Objectives of the Evaluation:** Objectives of the evaluation include assessing the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impacts and sustainability of the project and its activities. These should be realistic, in line with the Request For Proposal and the given resources (time and money). Objectives of the evaluation can also include what challenges were faced during implementation of the project, important lessons learned and recommendations for the future project implementation.

Sometimes the main purpose of the evaluation can be to focus on the **process** of implementation rather than on its impact, since this would be minimal if the project has started short time ago or was a short duration project. In this case it would also be important to assess the participatory approaches used to identify project beneficiaries and the communities’ role in implementing and monitoring the project.

As such, in the process the following are also assessed as explained above:

* **Problems and Needs (*Relevance*):** For example, is the overall project design relevant to the specific needs of the target population?
* **Achievement of Purpose (*Effectiveness*):** for instance, To what extent does the intended outputs and outcomes level indicators achieved in relation to targets set up in the project document? How effective and appropriate is the project approach? How well was beneficiaries’ and stakeholders’ including government participation incorporated in the project cycle? What was the quality of the M & E System?
* **Sound management and value for money (*Efficiency*):** How far funding, staff, time and other resources contributing to or hindering the achievement of the results. Is ‘Value for money’ achieving?
* **Achievement of wider effects (*Impact*):** Will the project activities be helpful in impacting the lives of the people? If the project is a short-term, care should be taken about committing for long term impacts. What difference is expected in the lives of those targeted in the project as compared to the project baseline initial bench marks? Who were the direct and indirect/wider beneficiaries of the project?
* **Likely continuation of achieved results (*Sustainability*):** What were the prospects for the benefits of the project being sustained after the funding will be over? How was the exit strategy defined, and how this will be managed at the end of the funding period?

1. **Methodology:** This section is used to define what methods of research (Quantitative / qualitative) did he/she used, what documents/reports did he/she study, how was the sampling done and how did he/she arranged for knowing about the community’s feedback on the project. In short, the evaluator should mention all of the sources of data collection, sampling techniques used, methods of data collection (e.g. surveys, FGDs, key informant interviews, staff debriefing), data analysis and documentation. Here he/she can also select or finalize the key areas of investigation like:
2. Impact on beneficiaries and the community
3. Community participation
4. Selection and processing of beneficiaries
5. Project management and overall implementation process

It would also be necessary to include the limitations of the methodology, if any.

1. **Evaluation Findings/Discussion of Results:** This section includes a detailed analysis of the findings of the evaluation study of the project. The results are compared against the objectives, planned activities and indicators of the project. This section will also take into consideration the following:

* **Relevance:** What activities were planned/implemented and how relevant were they in the context of what is to be achieved in the outcomes/impact? Can it really bring lasting changes in the community? Are these activities culturally relevant? Etc.
* **Effectiveness:** What is the degree of effectiveness of the activities on the lives of the people? To what extent were the objectives achieved? Are people engaging and taking ownership of the project? What were the challenging factors?
* **Efficiency:** Efficiency of the project should be assessed against its costs, human resources and time. Answers to following questions should be found out: Are the outputs completed in specified time and allocated budget? Were activities cost efficient? Were objectives achieved on time?
* **Impact:** This involves evaluation of all the social, economic and environmental changes, direct or indirect, intended or unintended, produced by the project. An impact evaluation assesses changes in the well-being of individuals, households, communities or firms that can be attributed to a particular project, program or policy. The main impact evaluation question is what would have happened to the beneficiaries if they had not received the program. The evaluator can gauge the number of beneficiaries and see what real difference has the project or its activities made in the lives of the people?

Impact evaluation provides feedback to help improve the design of programs and policies. In addition to providing for improved accountability, impact evaluations are a tool for dynamic learning, allowing policymakers to improve ongoing programs and ultimately better allocate funds across programs. Information generated by impact evaluations informs decisions on whether to expand, modify, or eliminate a particular policy or program and can be used in prioritizing public actions.

* **Sustainability:** Sustainability or exit strategy of a project is a plan describing how the program will continue to achieve its goal after the project funding has exhausted. The community should be the main stakeholder in planning an exit strategy, as they are the most expert in their communities. Exit Strategies, when planned and implemented correctly, can be a springboard for sustainable development.

1. **Conclusions, lessons learnt and recommendations:** This section looks at the conclusions made from the results of the evaluation findings and whether the objectives and the general purpose of the project were met. This also includes lessons drawn from the project as well as what worked or did not work well in the course of the project period.

Evaluations often make recommendations about how a program can be improved, how the risk of program failure can be reduced or whether a program should continue. However, the inclusion of recommendations is based upon the provided terms of reference for the evaluation. These should be formed on the basis of the evaluation findings and processes which involve all the stakeholders.

3. Feedback in monitoring and evaluation also refers to presentation of the data to the stakeholders involved in the initiative such as line staff, volunteers, administrators and board members, project beneficiaries, funders, etc. in form of tables, graphs, narrative, portfolios, audio or videotape.

The following are why feedback is an important component of project monitoring and evaluation:

* Feedback allows an individual or organization to understand their relationship to others within any given environment or project area. Feedback is useful for understanding the state of systems or relationships and for guiding actions taken to effect change.
* It raises awareness about the issue and purpose of your coalition or initiative and to be recognizable to the community, state or nation and to have a positive impression of the initiative or organization.
* Feedback is the process of communicating the results and learning from your work to various stakeholders within and outside of your organization as a key way to demonstrate transparency and accountability.
* Feedback can stimulate changes that will improve the way in which you work and your effectiveness. It can provide examples of good practice to be shared with others, and can inform your national and international advocacy work.
* Releasing evaluation findings not only lets people know the organization exists, but it also lets them know some of what you’ve been doing to help your community. If the findings are positive, it shows that you've been getting results. If they are less than encouraging, you can use this information to make the case that your group or coalition needs more public support.
* Sharing evaluation findings can also stir public interest, and provoke thinking and discussion about the issues you're working on. The main reasons for making your evaluation findings known publicly are to expose the issue and encourage the public to take action.
* Feedback is important because it helps community leadership assess progress towards meeting the initiative's goals and see areas wherein the members of the initiative may want to put more energy.
* It provides funders the opportunity to help re-direct the initiative towards activities more directly related to the mission and to see and reward the accomplishments of the initiative.
* It encourages and attracts resource mobilization such as personnel, finances etc. through the spirit of voluntarism.
* It helps in lobbying for legislative changes to address the issues of concern as well as encouraging community partnerships to work on the problem or issue.
* It helps tap into nationwide networks of persons and agencies with similar goals and wide expertise.

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