**POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA COURSE IN MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

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**MODULE 3**

**PLANNING TO MONITOR AND EVALUATE**

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

Monitoring and evaluation is an indispensable part of project implementation. Monitoring is a continuous process, which allows a project to collect record and analyze data and information (Mulwa, 2008). Evaluation on the other hand is a periodic exercise carried out to examine broader aspects of an intervention. As noted by (CRS, 2011), “quality monitoring and evaluation encourages timely decision-making, ensures project accountability, and provides a robust foundation for evaluation and learning. It is through the continuous monitoring of project performance that you have an opportunity to learn about what is working well and what challenges are arising”

One of the important elements to think about planning for project M&E is the **aim of the project**, what exactly is the project supposed to deliver because the identification of goals sets the pace for the project (Martin, 2014)

The next step is to define the desired objectives for each goal and the target value. The **set objectives must be SMART**[[1]](#footnote-1). They must specify clearly what is to be done, how it will be done and within which time frame (Telfair, 2001)

**Allocation of resources** for M&E is important to ensure the exercise can be in a qualitative manner.

Know the **target beneficiary** and add descriptive elements such as age, race, ethnicity, sex, and location and income population groups such as households, organizations, community’s allocation and these beneficiaries are determined by the project objectives (Telfair, 2001)

Selects **the indicators.** These are specific pieces of information which enable to track change and attribute it to the project ( Hobson, Mayne, & Hamilton, 2013) An indicator is a variable which is used to measure an achievement and to reflect change which is connected to an intervention in a reliable manner (Parsons, Gokey, & Thornton, 2013).

Identify the monitoring frame and gather the evidence, then analyses the results and communicate the results.

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

**A stakeholder** are people with a stake in a project or programme. This includes direct and indirect beneficiaries – anyone **who is interested may be affected by the action.** The concept of stakeholder involvement has gained traction in the recent past, with donors demanding that, their implementing partners become more accountable not only beneficiaries but to the other stakeholders as well. It seen as mark towards quality and a measure to ensure that the inventions are in lines with the needs of affected populations.

The UNDP argues that stakeholders involvement is linked to notion of **participatory development** where by stakeholders are not only recipients of the evaluation report, but they are involved in the process from the outset, including development of the action, choice of indicators etc. Participatory evaluation is reflective and support to answers various questions including setting of the vison and priorities (UNDP, 2009)

Using a number of sources in carrying out a literature review including journal articles, ‘grey literature’ manuals and policy documents Estrella & Gaventa (1998) found out that a focus only the aims of a project were not sufficient and did not present the full picture of the programme in questions. The role of stakeholders served gave insights on how to improve future projects including on :promoting equity, maximizing available resources, more participatory decision, meeting the expectations of various stakeholders as well as clarifying the riles and responsibilities of different stakeholders in the project.

The above experience shows that stakeholders have a role to play in not only the ongoing project but also through lesson learning, providing **feedback** on how a project has been implemented and to **affect how future project could be implemented** for greater outcomes.

Undertaking quality, M&E will strengthen learning and accountability guided by systematic inquiry, integrity, respect for the population and responsibility to stakeholders (CRS, 2011)

**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 marks)**

Quality monitoring and evaluation requires both human and financial resources. There are many myths surrounding M&E including that is too expensive and time consuming. In order to allocate resources well, it is important to first of decide what needs to be monitored. Coupled with that, it is important to choose the right methodology and approach. These should be inbuilt within the project from the outset (IFC, 2008). Each project should have a budget line dedicated to M&E based on the agreed upon areas of focus for M&E

Having the right human resources who are **skilled** and **dedicated** to M&E is essential to quality M&E and resources for this should be mobilized.

Setting aside financial and human rescues for M&R ensure quality work is done including ensuing participation of stakeholders and a robust system is set up with acceptable level of details with the M&E activities.

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

Monitoring is a continuous process, which allows a project to collect record and analyze data and information (Mulwa, 2008).

Monitoring seeks to answer key questions which arise from the project design but also at implementations and this supports the decision making process

What is the effectives of producing the planned out? Outputs are immediate results of the activities. For example, in an project to curb to promote access to sexual to health and reproductive rights(SRHR) of people with disabilities, An output to monitor would be the number people with disabilities accessing services, number of health are staff trained on disability inclusive programme delivery.

Monitoring seeks to identify and key issues and challenges that might affect the delivery of the project For example, in the same project on access to SRHR, some challenge might arise that people with disabilities do not because they fear the backlash that since the general community is not aware that they are sexually active, or that the family are over protective. This can entail mitigating factors such as awareness raising to the facilities and immediate circle on the rights and indeed the humanity of people with disabilities

Monitoring allows for period of introspection where the project is able to test the theory of change. Will the outputs lead to desired outcomes? Will the planting of trees lead to reduced soil erosion during the rainy season, giving room to increased food produce?

Monitoring questions the role that outcomes will play in ensuring that broader priorities are achieved. These can be regional or national. Ina project to support the government in expanding access to physiotherapy in rural areas would the support the training institute in order to produce human resources for health, lead to access to rehabilitation services for those in rural areas. To expand on this, there are more factors to consider, such as willingness of the graduate health staff to work in rural eras. The project can either advice or put measures on place to incentivize those who choose to go and work in rural area (as measure to ensure broader objective are truly met)

Finally, any monitoring should produce learning, which affects current and future implementation.

Evaluation on the other hand is a periodic exercise carried out to examine broader aspects of an intervention. Normally, most projects use the main OECD indicators of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact evaluates a project (ADA, 2009).

* **Relevance -** Are the population’s problems and needs clearly identified? Did the programme respond to the needs of the targeted?

**Effectiveness** - The extent to which the project outcomes are attained and the specific objectives. To what extent do the results contribute to meet the objectives of the project achieved? How the different outputs interconnected to achieve effective outcomes.

* **Efficiency**- How well the various activities transformed the available resources into the intended results in terms of quantity, quality and timeliness?
* **Accountability-** To what extent did the project put in accountability measures to various stakeholders including the direct the indirect beneficiaries? These accountability mechanisms include participatory decision making, feedback mechanisms as well communicating results.
* **Impac**t - What were the positive impacts of the project and what measures the project take to maximize them? Were there unintended impacts (positive and negative) of the project at micro and macro level?

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

**Change assumptions** also known as the **pathways change** or **impact chain is** related to the theory of change concept. According to Parsons, Gokey, & Thornton (2013) , a theory of change explains why a project thinks that certain actions will produce desired changes in a given context. It explains how the use of resources will produce the intended benefits and provide a base to develop solid indicators for implementation.

The results chain beginning with inputs, activities, output, outcomes and impact serve to guide how change will occur and needs to be measured. It is important to remember that change assumptions work within a context, and the project needs to show attribution. This means, how can a project ascertain that the changes that are taking place are related to the activities that the project is putting in place?

Change assumptions/ pathway therefore, are important to support the mapping of what needs to be done, but they also reveal what should be evaluated and they draw logical connections between activities and outcomes (Grantcraft, 2006)

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1. SMART is an acronym used to denote Specific, Measurable Attainable / Attributable , Relevant and Time bound [↑](#footnote-ref-1)