Assignment 2:   
Monitoring And Evaluation: M&E

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

The next step for a result-based M&E of a project management after the outcomes have been agreed on and specified is choosing the key performance indicators. As the name implies, indicators are the measurable units that inform the managers, stakeholders and donors about the progress of the project through monitoring inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and goals.

They are variables expressed in numbers and percentages to track the program implementation towards its success in achieving its objectives. Indicators provide ongoing feedback for all levels of result-based M&E system. They help us indicate what is working and what is not and thus alarm us when intervention is required to redirect the processes of implementation.

Although quantitative indicators are highly recommended to begin with, it is also important to carry on the monitoring with qualitative indicators. The results that are measured by quantitative and qualitative indicators are in fact data collected to assess the outcomes.

Therefore, indicators are defined and calculated based on the specified outcomes intended from the project to show us what should be measured; keeping in mind that with every new indicator, a baseline needs to be established to measure the change in the status quo.

Outcome indicators in short, act as the traffic signal that regulates the lanes ensuring that each car on route safely heading to its intended destination. Hence, the crucial role that outcome indicators play in the result-based M&E system requires a logical good set of performance indicators to be formulated.

As per UNDP, the process of formulating indicators should begin with the following questions: How can we measure that the expected results are being achieved? What type of information can demonstrate a positive change? What can be feasibly monitored with given resource and capacity constraints? Will timely information be available for the different monitoring exercises? What will the system of data collection be and who will be responsible? Can national systems be used or augmented? Can government indicators be used?

Once the above questions have been raised, European Commission, explains to us what a good indicator should be:

**Specific** in what will be measured and how? The measured changes should be the result of the project and expressed in precise terms.

**Measurable** in away that data can be collected clearly and unambiguously

**Relevant** in measuring an important part of the results chain (as an objective or output) in other words, **Programmatically important**: linked to the programme or to achieving the programme objectives (Gage and Dunn, 2009).

**Useful** for the management decision making • Does not include any element of the target, which means they should measure the change in the country or region and not what projects will produce.

Can be **disaggregated** to help reveal levels and trends for relevant subgroups that are important to the success of an activity or project (which river is polluted? Which sector is using water and generating wastewater?).

• Good mix of qualitative and quantitative so that when quantitative indicators of success cannot be identified, qualitative methods offer a valuable alternative. As agreed earlier, with the various ways available for data collection, the best reliable approach would be the good mix.

**Already defined** known also as **predesigned** since the more defined the indicator, the less room there will be for later confusion or complications. E.g. MDGs or other internationally agreed indicators.

Nevertheless, the selection of each indicator should be based on readily **available data**, or **time-bound** data that can be collected at reasonable extra effort and affordable cost• It is always recommended to choose the most important or strategic ones since the less the indicators for each result the better for the measurement **credibility**

Choosing and developing indicators must be a **participatory process** where all partners and stakeholders agree on the data collection responsibilities• Finally, it should be clearly expressed whether they are annual, cumulative, etc. indicators.

European Commission explains further how a good indicator should be through the following examples:

Net primary enrolment rate per annum, percentage of citizens who say that they have access to court systems to resolve disputes, number of parliamentary inquiries conducted, public perception of parliamentary effectiveness

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:**

a) Critically evaluate the implementation programme of free primary education for the first 2 years

September 2000, witnessed the adoption of the Millennium Declaration (MD) by the United Nations General Assembly. 191 countries endorsed the Declaration and promised to achieve by the end of 2015: eight goals, 21 targets and 58 defined indicators. The second goal of the Millennium Development is to achieve universal primary education with the target of ensuring that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

In order to monitor the progress towards these MDG and targets, the United Nations system, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, as well as the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, came together under the Office of the Secretary General and agreed on 48 quantitative indicators.

These indicators were defined in accordance to an inter-governmental process to identify relevant indicators in response to global conferences. The UN Secretary-General presented the goals, targets and indicators to the General Assembly in September 2001 in the Road Map Towards the Implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (UNDP, 2010).

Thus the three universal indicators that were developed to monitor the implementation ofthe second goal Universal Primary Education at each country level are the following: Net enrolment in primary education, proportion of students who have completed grade 5, and literacy rate of the 15-24 year age group.

The end of the early 90s marked the end of a 20 year war suffering in Lebanon, whom have pledged to fulfil the second goal along the other Millennium Development Goals as part of Lebanon’s development plan and a step forward towards globalisation.

The First Millennium Development Goal Report (MDGR) was presented in 2003.It was prepared by the Lebanese government and the UN Country Team who played an active participatory role.

The MDGR takes into consideration information included in national planning reports prepared by the government, UN agencies, and civil society. The lack of statistics available has seriously limited the monitoring process.

The first major post-war sample survey was conducted in 1996 by the Ministry of Social Affairs and UNFPA. In addition to other institutions, the Central Administration of Statistics, the National Employment Office, and the Ministry of Public Health, supported by UNICEF and UNDP, also carried out sample surveys between 1996 and 2001; hence, the report has integrated these and other data and statistics when analysing the situation. Consequently, the baseline year for this report is 1996.

**GOAL 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education, Target 3: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Indicators  (Percent) | 1996 | 2000 | 2015 Target |
|  |  |  |  |
| Net enrolment in primary education | 97.6 | 98.3 | 100 |
| Proportion of students who have completed grade 5 | 91.1 | 95.3 | 100 |
| Literacy rate of the 15-24 years age group | 98.9 | 97.5 | 100 |

To achieve the goals of the third target, which constitutes children of all gender and from all regions to complete primary schooling. Percentages of the Net enrolment and percentages of the proportion of students who have completed grade five increased by 0.7% and 4.1% respectively between the years 1996 and 2000. However, there was a 1.4% decrease in the literacy rate of the 15-24 years age group between 1996 and 2000 (UNDP, 2001).

**Basic education.** To attain basic education, the main goal or aim was to meet national and international goals by improving key education indicators in all regions, specifically under-served regions. This was done as a collaborative work between the UN system (UNESCO, and UNDP), the World Bank, and UNICEF. This project supported by the World Bank late in 2000, has three primary factors: access to basic education in schools, institutionalization, and the quality of basic education.

One of the key indicators is “the net enrolment ratio in primary education” in terms of both access and retention, prioritizing improvement.

Moreover, basis for policy making in education: establishment of an education management system as a joint effort between the UNESCO and National Centre for Education Research. This project provided a general plan to assess reform processes. This was done through making function of the policy institutionalized holding the view of learning from experience. However, as much as learning from experience even universally is important, there must be an adaptation to the cultural and accessible context in different regions. For example, in Lebanon some regions provide accessibility to public schools and free primary education more than other regions, and this is due to the fact of having better resources, staff, and schools such as Beirut vs. Akkar.

Thus, new curricula textbooks were introduced throughout three years (1998, 1999, and 2000). This was a reform phase completed by the end of year 2000, which monitored the organization of textbooks and how they revealed the disorganizations of the institution (UNDP, 2001).

b) Analyze the unintended outcomes of free primary education on job creation within the same period.

The aim of free primary education provided in all regions around the world is to achieve universal primary learning. Which seems as a building block for any child paving his or her way to secure a job and reduce poverty levels. This is why job creation is crucial to the economic status of any country, and in this context in particular, Lebanon. Job creation is a crucial part of the economic development to create opportunities to anyone acquiring basic education and professional skills.

In theory this seems like a well calculated equation, whereby basic primary education, along with job creation provide job opportunities to people from all socioeconomic status, leaving very little percentage of the population relying on governmental resources such as the elderly.

However, while the obvious intended outcome is accessibility to universal primary education and poverty reduction, there are various unintended outcomes that hinders the process. First, parents won’t be paying for education and thus delegate the whole concept of education on the government, losing their input into the child’s educational journey. Second, the population with low socioeconomic status would not be paying taxes and thus the expenditure level by the government would increase on public schools. Since we know there is a budget with a ceiling to how much the expenditure increases, and with the increase of children getting free education, there will be a disproportion between the number of student enrolled in free primary education programs and the quality of education provided.

The quality of education provided encompasses both the curricula being provided along with the classroom interaction, whereby the teachers play a huge role in. so if the number of students is increasing, there will be a need for more classrooms in order not to affect the learning process due to class size, and more classrooms will need hiring more teachers and providing salaries. However, since this is not the case in Lebanon, the quality of education is hindered, which is one of the reasons a lot of students drop out of school during the primary phase, or by the end of it.

Third, free primary education provides financing tuition and books maybe, but there might be transportation obstacles. Moreover, this education financing is only provided for the primary phase, assuming the families would finance themselves through secondary phase of education. In fact, due to the high levels of poverty there is a high percentage of people dropping out by the end of primary phase without acquiring any professional skills that will help them through the labour market. Which doesn’t seem to solve the problem in its essence, however it posts more pressure on the job market, and more frustration by the unskilled drop outs.

a) what would the monitoring exercise in free primary education wish to achieve for the following stakeholders?

• Donors

• Primary School managers

• Government

Monitoring isn’t an optional addition to a successful progress in program however, it is an essential part of it. One of the main benefits of it, is engaging stakeholders t highlight their ownership and motivate them to sustain their contribution. Stakeholders in the context of free primary education (fpe) program are: donors, government, and teachers.

In general, monitoring provides new raw data for stakeholders, so that they can systemize their decisions effectively on how they will contribute and sustain this contribution. Since roles and responsibilities are divided among stakeholders, we can assume that the monitoring process not only benefit the project generally, but also benefits stakeholders individually. Monitoring reports facilitate communication between stakeholders for progress assessment. From the donors’ side, they expect reports on how to increase their grants making, reports on expenditure and how it is benefiting the group they are investing it. For example is their funds being invested in books, buildings, and what it is providing. From the government’s side, they expect an integration that will improve their system in a way monitored by them and goes along their guidelines. This comes in terms of the curriculum being provided, whether it is coming in line with the curriculum provided in other schools, private or public. Both sides also need a report on the implementation of innovative programs that might also boost their position politically, etc.

As for the teachers, they do expect that the program is inline with their efforts, and within there scope of teaching. They expect to have a follow-up on the curricula books and tools needed for them to be able to deliver information properly and benefit the receivers (n.d, 2018).

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.

a) What are the advantages of participatory evaluation methods?

b) Formulate the steps in planning a monitoring system.

**Advantages of a participatory evaluation methods**

The dream and ultimate goal of every project is to reach the win-win situation. In a result-based M&E project management, unless a participatory evaluation is applied, the dream of a win-win situation will not come true and the ultimate goal will not be fully achieved.

In order to appreciate the importance of such evaluation to any project, we need first to define this method. Participatory evaluation is considered to be the holistic approach covering the community needs.

It involves as many stakeholders as possible including donors, local government officials, local staff, partners, NGOs and most importantly the direct beneficiaries in the community (men, women and children affected).

Thus according to UNICEF report influential evaluation, the most influential evaluation, is the one involving primary users as part of the evaluation process.

The reports explain that one of the factors leading to most influential evaluation is full engagement and ownership by users and stakeholders at multiple levels of the project.

This brings us to the many advantages of the Participatory Approach:

• It sees people as subjects, empowering them to analyse and find solutions for their own situation as “active participants” not “passive recipients”.

• It gives voice to the marginalized people who are never heard or acknowledged. It includes a new dimension not applied previously and hears the poor’s, underprivileged and affected perspective.

• It improves the impact of the project and prolong its sustainability through building local capacity and ownership resulting in the likelihood increase of acceptance and utilization of findings.

• Builds collaboration between beneficiaries, staff and partners which gives stimuli to poor people’s views to be shaped in the plans and contribute accordingly to the development strategy.

• Reinforces accountability to beneficiaries where they become more trusting and involved. The trust relationship journey has started and beneficiaries become more flexible in allowing a variety of methods to be applied to their situation.

• Can save money and time in data collection compared to using project staff after training the local volunteers.

• Provides direct field input to facilitate management decision making to execute corrective actions. Small scale surveys are done on a regular basis which allows timely analysis and intervention (n.d, “Define Goals, 2010).

As a consultant for UNICEF’s program: “Funds to Families Staying with Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (FFSOVC)” in partnership with the Ministry of Gender and Children, I will certainly adopt the Participatory Evaluation Approach to ensure the optimum result of the project.

As defined by UNICEF and global partners, an orphan is a child under 18 years of age who has lost one or both parents to any cause of death. With the outbreak of HIV/AIDS pandemic leading to the death of millions of parents worldwide and leaving an increasing number of children growing up without one or more parents, the terminology of a ‘single orphan’ – the loss of one parent – and a ‘double orphan’ – the loss of both parents – was born to convey this growing crisis.

As a result, the vast majority of children made vulnerable by orphaning are living with a surviving parent grandparent, or other family member. This raised the issue of the need for providing the support to the families and communities that care for orphans and not to the orphans’ individually (Unicef, n.d).

The raising need for new families, shelter or care for orphans urged the Ministry of Gender and Children of the Country X in collaboration with UNICEF to come up with the program FFSOVC that aims to:

Provide a social protection system through regular and predictable cash transfers to families living with orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) in order to encourage fostering within their families and communities, and to promote their human capital development (Team, T.K., 2012).

Although the provision of direct cash transfers to the caregivers (families caring for OVC) will be executed by The Ministry of Gender and Children in partnership with UNICEF, however, the development of the program FFSOVC will be the result of broad and inclusive participatory efforts. To provide sustainable and holistic care for OVC, it is crucial that the different segments of society are involved so that a wider range of services are made available for the orphans.

Thus, the needs of the OVC should be identified and assessed with meaningful participation of the caregivers, the communities and most importantly themselves. Orphans and vulnerable children are a resource for their families and communities, and have the right to express their views, be listened to, and to have their opinions taken into account. By participating in decisions and solutions, they can develop and sustain their skills, care and support. Accordingly, a work shop for 4 days will be conducted to assess and proceed with the suggested roles to be distributed among all key stakeholders relatively.

Once the workshop has been conducted and program developed, a list of activities is assigned to each stakeholder. Our Stakeholders for FFSOVC are:

* The Ministry of Gender and Child is responsible for leading, coordinating and monitoring the program in partnership with UNICEF
* Other government ministries, agencies and departments are responsible for ensuring implementation of the programmes in their respective sectors (child care, support and protection, education, health, psychosocial support, socio-economic security and capacity enhancement for improved service delivery for OVC)
* Parents and other caregivers who are the loving adults within the household decide how to use the transfer in order to improve the capacity of the family.
* Civil Society Organizations support and supplement existing formal and informal community networks involved in the provision of services to orphaned and vulnerable children
* Community (local consultants, religious, cultural and influential leaders) links service providers with orphans and strengthens social support network to provide the wellbeing and development of OVC and their households in accordance to the community’s values and traditions
* Orphans and vulnerable children who are the primary users help us understand why and how they are vulnerable and build on that to plan and develop and intervene to improve and promote their life skills
* Private Sector contributes in resources and undertakes initiatives for improved protection and care for OVC and help the government in the development of social services.

Having adopted the participatory evaluation method for the development of the program FFSOVC to ensure optimum result is reached, a call for participatory monitoring system to routinely tackle the progress is thus in place.

We have agreed on the need of including all stakeholders in the evaluation participatory approach and have assigned roles to each stakeholder. Questions of what the stakeholders, beneficiaries, and donors need and the desired change requested out of the project have been answered through interviews, surveys and interview sessions.

Hence, now is the time to formulate a monitoring system to keep up with the project development and instantly intervene with the progress according to each stakeholder related role.

According to UNDP (Kasturiarachchi, 2009), when planning for monitoring system, evaluation must be kept in mind. “The availability of a clearly defined results or outcome model and monitoring data, among other things, determine the ‘evaluability’ of the subject to be evaluated” - Evaluability defined: clarity in the intent of the subject to be evaluated, sufficient measurable indicators, accessible reliable information sources, and no major factor hindering an impartial evaluation process.

The next step after the planning stages have been concluded, the key stakeholders agree on a clear framework to systematically proceed with the monitoring process. This framework will be the plan followed for monitoring explaining:

* What is to be monitored
* The activities needed to monitor
* Who is responsible for the monitored activities?
* The time allocated to monitoring
* The methods specified for monitoring
* The resources required and available to carry on the monitored activities
* The risks and assumptions that may occur during monitoring

The framework also constitutes of three parts:

1. Narrative: it describes how each stakeholder will perform monitoring activities and the accountability assigned to each accordingly. It reflects both, the suggested plans that strengthen national or sub-national monitoring capacities, and the existing monitoring capacities along with an estimate of the human, financial and material resource requirements for its implementation.
2. Results framework: effective planning and identifying of outcomes, outputs and indicators.
3. Planning Matrices for monitoring: strategize and consolidate the information required for monitoring and evaluation for easy reference

UNDP developed the monitoring matrix that can be regionally adopted and locally customized to strategically consolidate information shared easily with stakeholders.

Planning Matrix for Monitoring:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Expected results (outcomes & outputs) | Indicators (with baselines and indicative targets) and other key areas to monitor | M&E Events with Data Collection Methods | Time or Schedule and Frequency | Responsibilities | Means of Verifications: Data Source and Type | Resources | Risks |
| Obtained  from  development  plan  and results  framework. | From results framework.  Indicators should also  capture key priorities such  as capacity development  and gender.  In addition, other key areas  need to be monitored, such  as the risks identified in the  planning stage as well as  other key management needs. | How is  data to be  obtained?  Example:  through a  survey, a  review or  stakeholder  meeting,  etc. | Level of detail  that can be  included would  depend on the  practical needs.  In UNDP, this  information can  also be captured  in the Project  Monitoring  Schedule Plan  from Atlas. | Who is responsible  for organizing  the data  collection and  verifying data  quality and  source? | Systematic  source and  location where  you would find  the identified  and necessary  data such as a  national  institute or  DevInfo | Estimate of  resources  required  and  committed  for carrying  out planned  monitoring  activities. | What are the risks  and assumptions  for carrying out the  planned monitoring  activities?  How may these  affect the planned  monitoring events  and quality of data? |

Meanwhile, OECD believes that no matter the number of steps different experts propose (four-, seven- or ten-step models), the essential actions involved in building an M&E system are to:

• Formulate outcomes and goals

• Select outcome indicators to monitor

• Gather baseline information on the current condition

• Set specific targets to reach and dates for reaching them

• Regularly collect data to assess whether the targets are being met

• Analyze and report the results

OECD also specified the key features of:

**Elements of Implementation Monitoring** (traditionally used for projects) as:

* + Description of the problem or situation before the intervention
  + Benchmarks for activities and immediate outputs
  + Data collection on inputs, activities, and immediate outputs
  + Systematic reporting on provision of inputs
  + Systematic reporting on production of outputs
  + Directly linked to a discrete intervention (or series of interventions)
  + Designed to provide information on administrative, implementation, and management issues as opposed to broader development effectiveness issues.

**Elements of ResultsMonitoring** (used for a range of interventions and strategies) as:

* + Baseline data to describe the problem or situation before the intervention
  + Indicators for outcomes
  + Data collection on outputs and how and whether they contribute toward achievement of outcomes
  + More focus on perceptions of change among stakeholders
  + Systemic reporting with more qualitative and quantitative information on the progress toward outcomes
  + Done in conjunction with strategic partners
  + Captures information on success or failure of partnership strategy in achieving desired outcomes (Clements, 2005).

Formulating monitoring system to implement FFOVC, we need to specify the program’s main outcomes and goals:

* Establish a social protection mechanism that makes regular, predictable cash transfers to households that take care of orphans and vulnerable children
* Create an incentive system for taking care of OVC through fostering and retention of OVC within families and communities.
* Help promote human capital development of OVC to help as many of them as possible to break out of the poverty cycle and dependency.

Hence, specific outcome indicators for monitoring activities will be distributed among stakeholders for data collection and report findings compared to baseline data collected through surveys, questionnaires and meetings. For instance:

* The field supervisor will ensure that the assessment process has been systematic, transparent, and fair.
* The social worker will pay monthly visits to beneficiaries to assess progress, monitor implementation of activities and submit monthly reports of implemented activities
* The community volunteer will conduct monthly visits to the child and households to observe if the identified counselling needs have been addressed.

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