

ASSIGNMENTS: TWO

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| Course | **D001 Diploma in Monitoring and Evaluation** |
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| Module: 1 | Diploma in Monitoring and Evaluation |
| Module Code: | D001 |
| Assignment Number: | Two |
| Date Issued: | 1/07/2019 |
| Due Date: | 31/07/2019 |
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| Assignment Brief: | 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   a) What would the monitoring exercise in free primary education wish to achieve for the following stakeholders?   * + - Donors     - Primary School managers     - Government  1. 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?   Formulate the steps in planning a monitoring system |

**Answers:**

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

An indicator is a variable that measures one aspect of a program or project that is directly related to the program’s objectives. It is a variable whose value changes from the baseline level at the time the program began to a new value after the program and its activities have made their impact felt. At that point, the variable, or indicator, is calculated again. Similarly an indicator is a measurement. It measures the value of the change in meaningful units that can be compared to past and future units. This is usually expressed as a percentage or a number. Finally, an indicator focuses on a single aspect of a program or project. This aspect may be an input, an output or an overarching objective, but it should be narrowly defined in a way that captures this one aspect as precisely as possible. The good indicator should consider all these points.

According to Sustainable Measures web site, a good indicator must be relevant, easy to understand, reliable and based on accessible data**,** (hart, 2010)**.**

**Meaningful**: Represent important information about the program for stakeholders.

**Relevant:** Reflect the intervention’s intended activities, outputs, and outcomes.

**Direc**t: Closely measure the intended change or measure only the condition or event it is intended to measure;

**Objective**: Have a clear operational definition of what is being measured and what data need to be collected. It should be defined in clear and unambiguous terms.

**Reliable**: Consistently measured across time and different data collectors and produce the same results when used repeatedly to measure the same condition or event;

**Useful:** Can be used for program improvement and to demonstrate program outcomes.

**Adequate**: Can measure change over time and progress toward performance or outcomes.

**Independent**: Indicators should be independent, meaning that they are non-directional and can vary in any direction. For instance, an indicator should measure the number of clients receiving counseling rather than an increase in the number of clients receiving counseling.

**Understandable**: Easy to comprehend and interpret.

**Practical/feasible**: The data for the indicator should not be too burdensome to collect the indicator should be reasonable in terms of the data collection cost, frequency, and timeliness for inclusion in the decision-making process.

**Examples of Indicators:**

* prevalence rate of water borne diseases
* % of households practicing proper hand-washing
* Prevalence of stunting in children under five years of age
* % of households using a basic (improved) drinking water source
* % change in yield of specific food crops (maize or rice)
* % of infants 0–5 months of age exclusively breastfed
* # of women received Reproductive Health services
* # of people that have access to primary health care services
* # of health facilities that meet minimum standards as determined by GoSS policy

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

South Sudan gained independence towards the end of the MDGs period in 2011 with shaky system of governance, education and all other sectors of development. According to the report released in 2012 by the Economic Commission for Africa, (Assessing Progress in Africa Toward the Millenium Development Goals, 2015), South Sudan’s Primary Completion rate is below 40%. Primary completion rate is 10% while net primary enrolment rate is 44% according to South Sudan Education Management Information System, (al, 2015).

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

Quality of teaching has been very poor because the teachers deserted teaching due to low pay.

You have to refer other countries experience and analyze unintended results of the MDGs on free primary education particularly on job creation. For instance, if government implement free primary education, education enrollment will increase and that will create more job opportunities for teachers, school administers and service providers to school etc.

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

* + - Donors

Understand the achievements, gaps and better options to improve on the free primary education in South Sudan. Donors are stakeholders who are source of funding. Monitoring exercises should bring timely information for reporting and ensuring them the specific programme is on the right track to achieve the intended objectives, ensure accountability and programme is doing right thing, inform donors that programme is using resources as planned; community actively participated in programme implementation, monitoring and owns the programme.

* + - Primary School managers

Monitoring exercise have to bring timely information for school manager for informed decisions, regular reporting and ensuring planned activities are moving on the right track. Monitoring should also designed in a way school manager will use the information for learnings, sharing best experiences to other stakeholders and plan for better achievement. It will provide clear information the way how progrmme implementation uses resources for intended objectives. Their roles, gaps and how they can work better with stakeholders in order to improve on the free primary education system in South Sudan.

* + - Government

The monitoring exercise should be participatory and should be conducted jointly with government stakeholders. The monitoring exercises will provide information to government what is planned and what is achieved, to how extent implementation engaged community, is the resources used for appropriate tasks, what are challenges faced, what will be the areas that need government interventions, what lessons leant to scale up for other similar activities etc. The government wants to know how many children have benefited, what is the level of achievement, what are the gaps and how can they be approached to offer better free primary education.

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**?

* **It gives you a 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 - you're much more likely to aim your work in the right direction, to correctly determine whether your project is effective or not, and to understand how to change it to make it more so.
* **It can get you information you wouldn't get otherwise**. When project direction and evaluation depend, at least in part, on information from people in the community, that information will often be more forthcoming if it's asked for by someone familiar. Community people interviewing their friends and neighbors may get information that an outside person wouldn't be offered.
* **It tells you 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.
* **It can tell you why something does or doesn't work**. Beneficiaries are often able to explain exactly why they didn't respond to a particular technique or approach, thus giving you a better chance to adjust it properly.
* **It results in a more effective project**. For the reasons just described, you're much more apt to start out in the right direction, and to know when you need to change direction if you haven't. The consequence is a project that addresses the appropriate issues in the appropriate way, and accomplishes what it sets out to do.
* **It empowers stakeholders**. 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.
* **It can provide a voice for those who are often not heard**. Project beneficiaries are often low-income people with relatively low levels of education, who seldom have - and often don't think they have a right to - the chance to speak for themselves. By involving them from the beginning in project evaluation, you assure that their voices are heard, and they learn that they have the ability and the right to speak for themselves.
* **It teaches skills that can be used in employment and other areas of life**. In addition to the development of basic skills and specific research capabilities, participatory evaluation encourages critical thinking, collaboration, problem-solving, independent action, meeting deadlines...all skills valued by employers, and useful in family life, education, civic participation, and other areas.
* **It bolsters self-confidence and self-esteem in those who may have little of either.** This category can include not only project beneficiaries, but also others who may, because of circumstance, have been given little reason to believe in their own competence or value to society. The opportunity to engage in a meaningful and challenging activity, and to be treated as a colleague by professionals, can make a huge difference for folks who are seldom granted respect or given a chance to prove themselves.
* **It demonstrates to people ways in which they can take more control of their lives**. Working with professionals and others to complete a complex task with real-world consequences can show people how they can take action to influence people and events.
* **It encourages stakeholder ownership of the project.** If those involved feel the project is theirs, rather than something imposed on them by others, they'll work hard both in implementing it, and in conducting a thorough and informative evaluation in order to improve it.
* **It can spark creativity in everyone involved**. For those who've never been involved in anything similar, a participatory evaluation can be a revelation, opening doors to a whole new way of thinking and looking at the world. To those who have taken part in evaluation before, the opportunity to exchange ideas with people who may have new ways of looking at the familiar can lead to a fresh perspective on what may have seemed to be a settled issue.
* **It encourages working collaboratively**. For participatory evaluation to work well, it has to be viewed by everyone involved as a collaboration, where each participant brings specific tools and skills to the effort, and everyone is valued for what she can contribute. Collaboration of this sort not only leads to many of the advantages described above, but also fosters a more collaborative spirit for the future as well, leading to other successful community projects.
* **It fits into a larger participatory effort**. When community assessment and the planning of a project have been a collaboration among project beneficiaries, staff, and community members, it only makes sense to include evaluation in the overall plan, and to approach it in the same way as the rest of the project.  In order to conduct a good evaluation, its planning should be part of the overall planning of the project. Furthermore, participatory process generally matches well with the philosophy of community-based or grass roots groups or organizations.

With all these positive aspects, participatory evaluation carries some negative ones as well.  Whether its disadvantages outweigh its advantages depend on your circumstances, but whether you decide to engage in it or not, it's important to understand what kinds of drawbacks it might have.

* 1. Formulate the steps in planning a monitoring system.

1- Clearly define the purpose of M&E system and its scope

2. Ensure readiness of the all stakeholders through stakeholder analysis

3. Review and finalize the project/program logical framework and agree on all outcomes to be evaluated and outputs to be monitored

4. Identify key indicators to measure stated objectives at outcome and output level and put clear definition for all indicators

5. Identify the information needed to track changes, management decision and reporting through information analysis

6. Develop data collection tools, data analysis, and data storage methods and mechanisms

7. Plan to Conduct baseline and final evaluation and set targets to measure the changes at the end of the intervention

8. Set reporting and information sharing mechanism in order to inform all stakeholders, community and donors about the change and project/prpogramme progress

9. Plan for resources needed to the accomplish all M&E activities including budget, staff and capacity building of all participants

10. Set learning and reflection mechanism by arranging session for repletion and learning and develop documentation mechanism for lessons and best practices for future programming

11. Define evaluation mechanism of M&E system. The M&E system should be evaluated and revised regularly in order to have effective system in place

# References

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