**MODULE 4 ASSIGNMENT**

**1.Describe the following terms as used in project Monitoring and Evaluation:**

**(i) Project monitoring.** Project monitoring can be defined as a continuous process of tracking the output of a project by collecting data with predefined indicators (Zall Kusek and Rist, 2004; Singh et al., 2017). It gives the first indications as to whether, or not, a project is happening as planned and shows data in real time (Singh et al., 2017). In the project cycle, monitoring can take place at any time, on as many occasions as is necessary, from the first week to the last week of the implementation phase.

**(ii) Project evaluation.** Project evaluation is a systematic assessment of the design, implementation and outcomes of a project. This assessment can be done mid-project (formative) and post project (summative) and it analyses the data obtained through monitoring and couples this with the context analysis to determine the cause of a project’s successes and failures (Hall, 2011). Kutlar Singh, Dharmendra Chandurkar and Varun Dutt also note that the project evaluation includes an indication as to whether the successes were achieved as a result of the project alone or in conjunction with other factors, they look at how much the intervention has contributed to the achievement, or not, of the outcomes (Singh et al., 2017).

**(iii) Primary stakeholder.** A primary stakeholder is someone that is directly involved in or impacted by the activities of the project, they should not be confused with secondary stakeholders who are indirectly impacted by the project activities or those affected after the project has finished (Carment et al., 2009). A primary stakeholder, can be an actor who has a vital role to play in the realizing of project outcomes such as in a hygiene promotion project, a community women’s organization can be a primary stakeholder as they provide a means of accessing a significant section of the target population which is necessary for the needs, identified in the needs assessment, to be met (Kimmich et al., 2012).

**(iv) Scope Creep.** Scope creep is a term given to any circumstances that are unforeseen in a project. These might be beneficiaries that were unnoticed in the needs assessment stage of the project cycle or a recognition that the type of assistance required has altered during the course of a project (Head, 2008). This recognition of changes can be unveiled during monitoring and can lead the original scope of a project to be expanded to meet the demands of the new or newly realized reality. This term sometimes has negative connotations and is associated with slight alterations to an originally agreed project design, which operate under the radar of grantors or headquarters programme staff (Golini and Landoni, 2013).

**(v) Impact assessment.** Impact assessment is defined by *Oxfam*’s Chris Roche as ‘the systematic analysis of the lasting or significant changes - positive or negative, intended or not – in people’s lives brought about by a given action or series of actions’ (Roche, 1999: 21). Impact assessments have been thought of as analysis of the lasting and sustainable changes as a result of development and humanitarian intervention projects. However as Roche notes, in humanitarian projects particularly, the impacts are not necessarily sustainable, if a sanitation project saves lives, then the impact cannot necessarily be measured in terms of sustainability, instead the impact is measured as a significant change (Roche, 1999). According to Louisa Gosling and Mike Edwards of *Save the Children*, impact assessments can be done as part of any monitoring or evaluation and centre on any extended changes or implications beyond the scope of the project’s intended outcomes or beneficiaries (Gosling and Edwards, 2003). Impact assessments should form part of any project design and be a continued question in the implementation phase of a project, they are a logical look at any possible consequences from an intervention. For this reason, impact assessments form the basis of what is often known as a logical framework or logframe (Roche, 1999).

**2. Collecting information or data is just one part of the process of monitoring and evaluation.**

**(a) What is meant by data analysis?**

Data analysis is the term given to the interpretation of information that is collected, it is the vehicle by which meaning is given to data (Morra Imas and Rist, 2009). Data is collected through monitoring a project against pre-defined indicators, but without an analysis of that data, it has no use and no meaning. Trends in the data are identified at the monitoring stages, and these trends are analysed during evaluation, this is done by arranging the data in a meaningful way and asking what activities have led to the trends in those results. Analysing data allows conclusions to be drawn about the direction and success of a project. Data analysis can usefully be split into qualitative data analysis, which considers evidence complied in a nonnumeric form - such as interviews - and quantitative data analysis, which gives meaning to numerical data such as surveys (Morra Imas and Rist, 2009).

**(b) State any three uses of monitoring and evaluation results**

**Innovation and learning.** Often, a funding is granted to a project because it addresses a need in an innovative way, using new technology or a new approach. Summative evaluations are particularly useful as they enable grantors and project implementors to see if such innovations are fruitful and worth the extra investment (Hall, 2011). These results can then be shared at conferences for development and humanitarian innovation and these learnings distributed across the sector to enable overall advances in how needs are met.

**Donor requirement.** A second use of monitoring and evaluation results, is to fulfill the requirements set out by the donor when they agreed to provide funding (Markiewicz and Patrick, 2015). The results of monitoring and formative evaluation can be used to update the donor and provide evidence to the donor that their grant is being used effectively and to the intended specifications. It is useful in the long-term, particularly for a new or smaller organization that is attempting to establish credibility and a longer-term relationship with a donor.

**Relationship with beneficiaries.** Another application for the results of monitoring and evaluation is to improve the relationship with the beneficiary community, increasingly monitoring is done in conjunction with, and by participation of, local communities (Lundy et al., 2007). Therefore being transparent and showing the results of this analysis, is crucial to maintaining trust within the community and for collaborating with partner organisations native to the community. Creating transparency and sharing results is crucial to the cooperation of local beneficiaries and native organisations which can help build partnerships and better respond to need, providing a more complete coverage of the population.

**(c) Describe any seven factors that may lead to project failure.**

**External consultants.** According to Jeremy Miner and Lynn Miner, one factor which may lead to project failure is allowing too much autonomy to be given to external consultant’s in designing and enacting the evaluation plan, especially if the consultant is lacking in experience (Miner and Miner, 2013).

**Philosophies of development.** Robyn Eversole sites the differing ‘Philosophies of development’ as a factor which can contribute to the failure of a project (Eversole, 2016: xix). It is frequently noted, that NGOs need the autonomy to design projects based on the specific needs of a community, rather than being designed to meet the agendas of international donors (Mannan, 2015; Eversole, 2016). Because some projects do not target the particular problems which are most urgent to a community which means that either the project then meets its funded aims and does not address underlying causes in the community, or that the project scope is altered to better meet need but challenges the integrity of the organisation as it uses funds in an underhand way.

**Capacity.** From the perspective of smaller organisations operating in their own community, whilst they might understand the needs of their own community more thoroughly, they do not often have the capacity to enact more far-reaching projects (Fonjong, 2007). They can struggle with anything form technical innovations and availability of staff resources to budget restrictions and a lack of robust procedures to handle larger volumes of beneficiaries.

**Government-granted access.** Recently, disasters in Indonesia led to many International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) to fear for the success of their projects when blacks by the government prevented INGOs from operating in and being granted access to disaster zones. INGOs planned projects and raised funds assuming that access would be granted by the Indonesian government and this proved untrue as scores of international aid workers were denied visas. The capacity and reputation to partner with local Indonesian organisations proved important to be able to ensure that projects were enacted and properly funded (Boydell et al., 2018). In reality, this has not proved to be the failure that was feared, but government-granted access remains a factor that can lead to project failure in states which are less well prepared to meet the challenges caused by natural disasters.

**Inadequacy of needs assessment.** Another factor which can lead to project failure can be the inadequacy of needs assessments alone to determine need, a thorough context analysis is what is needed to prevent project failure (Lashaw, 2017). Indeed, it has been found that employing anthropologists can give a project a greater chance of success if the NGO comes from an external country (Lashaw, 2017).

**Power.** The failure to recognize the power that NGOs hold, can mean that inequalities are reproduced through the project that is delivered (Mawdsley, 2002; Eversole, 2016,). In this sense, if one of the intended aims of the project is to reduce inequality, it has failed in the way the project has been implemented. The level of risk held by the local beneficiary community is much greater than that of the NGO (Eversole, 2016). Because NGOs have access and power of distribution over the components that will address need, community members will take greater risks to safety, livelihood and local standing in order to access aid. Where as for NGOs, the risks are comparatively minor and if a project fails, an NGO can simply move onto another project, thus the failure to recognize the power of NGOs can be a factor contributing to the failure of a project.

**Lack of funding.** For longer term projects, one of the most basic reasons that projects can fail or cease, can be due to a lack of flexible funding. If a donor’s grant is coming to a close, substituting that gap in funding in a timely fashion can be a simple, but all too common reason, for a project not to meet its long term goals (Datta-Mitra, 2001). This may be due to a change in policy direction of the donor, or because the project is not producing the results expected, or because the management and anticipation of funding necessary has not been adequate and the organization is not nimble enough financially to plug a funding gap.

**3. Differentiate between formative evaluation and summative evaluation**

Formative evaluation refers to evaluations throughout the course of a project cycle, these are useful because they enable a project to be altered and adjusted during implementation to enable the goals of the project to be met (Ward, 2010). Formative evaluations assess whether an implementation plan has been carried out as intended and in line with any time restrictions (Hall, 2011). By contrast, summative evaluation takes place at the close of the project and its outcomes are communicated to the grantor, any outcomes that were not met are explained to the grantor (Ward, 2010). This is sometimes also referred to as outcome evaluation, and it looks at the overall success of a project but also whether it had the intended impact on the initial needs that were identified (Hall, 2011). Conducting both formative and summative evaluations can make a project more secure as it enables projects to be adjusted to fit the circumstances and need, however these evaluations can be expensive especially independent evaluations from external personnel (Zall Kusek and Rist, 2004; Ward, 2010).

**4. Identify and explain any four features or characteristics of a project**

**Monitoring database.** A well-maintained database of project information with consistent recording of monitoring activities can be identified as one feature of a project. The maintenance of such as database can contribute to the strength of a project and the capacity to usefully draw conclusions and learn from the successes and failures of a project (Banks et al., 2015).

**Stakeholder analysis.** Key feature of any development project is analysis and inclusion of stakeholders relevant to the community the project seeks to serve. This includes a look at how participation can be sought from local leaders, community organisations and local government (Parker, 2005).

**Human resource plan.** An often overlooked feature of a project is the necessity for a plan of the human resource needs, including an ongoing capacity planner with the lengths of contracts for every role and changes to staff deployments. This enables managers to prepare for potential shortages and reduce staff turnover through increased preparedness and organization. (Banks et al., 2015).

**Sustainability.** The sustainability of a project is a crucial feature and a requirement from donors. Some thought needs to be given to how the outcomes of a project can be sustained so that the effects of the project are felt by the community long after it ends. It has been noted that allowing community participation in the project activities and design, leads to a greater likelihood that the impact can be sustained in the long term (Parker, 2005).

**5. Explain the significance of the following techniques to collection of project evaluation** **data.**

**i) Community meetings.** Community meetings are important for evaluating project data as they can give an impression of how the project has been viewed and what the impact has been either from the perspective of beneficiaries of the project or as direct observers to it (Ebrahim, 2005). Particularly for externally contracted evaluators in their final evaluations, this perspective is useful as it provides a perspective which has not come from within the implementing organization.

**ii) Critical incident analysis.** Critical incident analysis is a method of making sense of a stressful event which has had an impression large enough to overpower the normal processes for understanding shock (Schwester, 2012). That is, an event which may have altered the course of a project activity or the beneficiaries targeted. It is an opportunity to determine what has happened and identify causality and thus preventative measures for future such incidents. This is important in the context of project evaluation, as it allows analysis of the overall project outcomes and learnings to be separate from the analysis of the critical incident, so that the incident does not overwhelm the learning and outcomes of the entire project (Schwester, 2012).

**iii) Focus group discussions.** Focus group discussions are a valuable source of information for project evaluation as they provide qualitative data which can be otherwise difficult to obtain and measure (Ebrahim, 2005). If the conditions are receptive, community members can feel greater confidence in divulging sensitive information about the impact of projects as the focus group is intended as a safe space to elaborate on the reception of the project. As discussions evolve in a focus group, new information can materialize and it can also be a useful place to test new ideas or adjustments to the project activities . For these reasons, focus group discussion can be significant for collecting qualitative data for evaluation.

**6. Monitoring and evaluation are always portrayed as being one and the same thing, yet that are different.” Discuss the truthfulness of this statement.**

Monitoring and evaluation are often confused because they are both methods of assessing a project and checking that the needs of a target population are being met, according to predetermined parameters, such as time and budget. However they are different, monitoring can, most usefully, be thought of as collecting data to determine a position at a particular time, where as evaluation is a more comprehensive process of understanding the direction and impact of a project, and is understood by what is learnt.

Monitoring can be defined as ‘a continuous function that uses the systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide […] indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds’ (Development Assistance Committee, 2002: 27). The important points to note about monitoring are; that it is continuous; that data is collected according to indicators for measurement and; that it shows the position of the project, a snapshot, in terms of target population reached, percentage of budget spent and time taken to achieve the position.

Evaluation is a ‘systematic and objective assessment […] including its design, implementation, and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfillment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability […] enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decisionmaking process of both the recipients and donors’ (Development Assistance Committee, 2002: 21).

By contrast to monitoring, evaluation is not continuous but is specifically a systematic assessment of, not just the outcomes, but the design of the project and how effectively the budget was used to address the identified needs. Crucially the evaluation looks at what has been learnt from the project and how this learning can be utilized to ensure a more effective project in the future. Additionally, evaluation is concerned with interpreting what has happened and determining why the goals set by the project have or have not been obtained, and questions the cause (Zall Kusek and Rist, 2004).

Therefore, whilst monitoring and evaluation are different processes, they do, and should, complement each other (Zall Kusek and Rist, 2004). The results of weekly monitoring, feed into the evaluation of a project as a whole, which means that if data produced by monitoring shows that the project is diverting from the projected goals, the evaluation can interpret this problem, place it in the correct context to determine the cause and identify a lesson that was learnt (Zall Kusek and Rist, 2004). Whilst the learning from an evaluation can lead to adjustments in the way that data is recorded, and what is recorded, for the monitoring of the next project. Overall, I agree with the truthfulness of the statement, that monitoring and evaluation are different, but I would add a caveat that each is informed by the other.

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