Module 1 Questions:

Q1: Explain in about 350 words why M&E informs good programming practice. (10 marks)

How can M&E be used to increase government transparency?  
  
The information that M&E programs and systems generate is critical for raising awareness and promoting a debate about the efficiency of public programs and policies. It can empower citizen to hold their government accountable – as long as there are also the mechanisms in place for the government to use this feedback to make changes in budgeting, planning, or efficiency of programs.

What is the link between M&E and “impact evaluation?”   
  
Monitoring takes place when a program is implemented, and evaluation at the end of a project. Impact evaluation is a method used at the results-stage of projects to analyze differences in outcomes, with and without the program.

How can results become part of the budget-decision process?   
  
M&E results can be fed into budget-decision-making through careful planning and implementation during the policy cycle. Some countries are more advanced than others in this process as it requires sustained engagement at the highest level of government.

What are the challenges associated with M&E implementation?  
  
It depends on the country context and stage of development. But in general, we can identify four main challenges or requirements that must be met for M&E programs to be successful:

engagement at the highest level of government

incentives that promote the use and generation of performance information capacity to sustain the efforts of M&E access to good data and indicators

What type of information is needed, and why?

Having good information is critical for evidence-based policy. You need not just general information, but also tailored information. An example could be school reports that allow parents to track the children’s and schools’ performance. This information could ultimately influence the allocation of resources to these schools.

How would you describe the World Bank’s M&E partnerships with governments?  
  
Our partnerships have been very good and fruitful. We have learned a lot from governments’ level of knowledge and their dedication and willingness to promote a culture of accountability and evaluation.

Can you give us examples of some technical assistance you have provided to strengthen M&E?   
  
We had been working with several countries such as South Africa, Chile, Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, Rwanda, Cape Verde, Zambia, among others.

South Africa, for example, has a strong mandate from the president and the Presidency Office to manage for results. There are some performance agreements between the president and the ministries to meet predefined targets in eight outcomes that govern the national development plan.The South African model has encountered many challenges because of a lack of direction in ministries to work together and achieve the stated outcome set by the Presidency Office. Together with country teams, we are working with the Ministry of Rural Development and Land Affairs, a pioneer in carrying out rigorous evaluation, to help them develop and implement their M&E strategic plan and to sequence their actions to build the foundations of a sound M&E in the ministry.

Q2: Describe the fundamental similarities and differences between Monitoring and Evaluation.(10 marks)

Definition of Monitoring

Monitoring is the systematic process of observing and recording on a regular basis, the activities carried out in a project, to ensure that the activities are in line with the objectives of the enterprise.

Monitoring takes into account optimum utilization of resources, to assist the managers in rational decision making. It keeps a track on the progress and checks the quality of the project or program against set criteria and checks adherence to established standards.

The information collected in monitoring process helps analyse each aspect of the project, to gauge the efficiency and adjust inputs wherever essential.

Definition of Evaluation

Evaluation is defined as an objective and rigorous analysis of a continuing or completed project, to determine its significance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability by comparing the result with the set of standards. It is the process of passing value judgement concerning the performance level or attainment of defined objectives.

In short, evaluation is a process that critically assesses, tests and measures the design, implementation and results of the project or program, in the light of objectives. It can be conducted both qualitatively and quantitatively, to determine the difference between actual and desired outcome.

Key Differences Between Monitoring and Evaluation

The difference between monitoring and evaluation can be drawn clearly on the following premises:

By monitoring is meant a routine process, that scrutinizes the activities and progress of the project and also finds out the deviations that occur while undertaking the project. As against, evaluation is a periodical activity that makes inferences about the relevance and effectiveness of the project or program.

While monitoring is observational in nature, evaluation is judgmental.

Monitoring is an operational level activity, performed by the supervisors. On the other hand, evaluation is a business level activity performed by the managers.

Monitoring is a short-term process, that is concerned with the collection of information regarding the success of the project. Conversely, evaluation is a long-term process, which not only records the information but also assesses the outcomes and impact of the project.

Monitoring focuses on improving the overall efficiency of the project, by removing bottlenecks, while the project is under process. Unlike, evaluation stresses on improving the effectiveness of the project, by making the comparison with the established standards.

Monitoring is usually carried out by the people who are directly involved in its implementation process. In contrast, evaluation can be conducted by internal staff of the organization, i.e. managers or it can also be carried out by independent external party, who can give their impartial views on the project or program.

Q3: Describe the difference between formative and summative evaluation process and explain the time of each process in the life of a project.10mrks)

**Formative Evaluation:**

1. Formative evaluation is used during the teaching learning process to monitor the learning process.

2. Formative evaluation is developmental in nature. The aim of this evaluation is to improve student’s learning and teacher’s teaching.

. Generally teacher made tests are used for this purpose.

4. The test items are prepared for limited content area.

5. It helps to know to what extent the instructional objectives has been achieved.

6. It provides feed-back to the teacher to modify the methods and to prescribe remedial works.

. Only few skills can be tested in this evaluation.

8. It is a continuous and regular process.

9. It considers evaluation as a process.

10. It answers to the question, whether the progress of the pupils in a unit is successful?

**Summative Evaluation:**

1. Summative evaluation is used after the course completion to assign the grades.

2. Summative evaluation is terminal in nature. Its purpose is to evaluate student’s achievement.

3. Generally standardized tests are used for the purpose.

4. The tests items are prepared from the whole content area.

5. It helps to judge the appropriateness of the instructional objectives.

Q4: With brief explanations, outline the key questions both formative and summative evaluations seek to answer. (10mrks)

1. What makes an assessment formative? An assessment is “formative” if the data collected is used to gauge student understanding; provides students with specific, actionable, and immediate feedback; and adjust instructional strategies in relation to the standards or learning goal. The formative assessment process involves both the teacher AND the student, answering the following questions regarding student learning: Where am I going?• Where am I now?• How do I get from here to there?• Within the formative assessment process, the teacher and the student are giving and receiving feedback about the student’s learning progression using a continuous dialogue in order to know what comes next for student learning. As such, formative practices personalize the teaching and learning cycle. Feedback may occur in the form of teacher-student, student-teacher, student-student, or student-self. An essay, project, quiz, test, or informal check for understanding can serve as a formative assessment if the data is used to adjust instructional strategies to meet the needs of students at various levels of learning. However, if a teacher were to use that same assessment to report a final grade, or provide the data to the district or state, the assessment would be summative because it would be an assessment OF learning, not an assessment FOR learning. Summative assessments are meant to gauge student learning in relation to a specific set of standards, at a particular point in time.

Q5: Explain the main limitations of the pretest-post-test model of evaluation

(10mrks)

Prestest-Posttest Model

The pretest-posttest model is a common technique for capturing change in Extension programming (Allen & Nimon, 2007; Rockwell & Kohn, 1989). In this model, a pretest is given to participants prior to starting the program to measure the variable(s) of interest, the program (or intervention) is implemented, and then a posttest is administered to measure the same variable(s) of interest again (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). With measurements being collected at the beginning and end of the program, program effects are often revealed by calculating the differences between the two measures (Pratt et al., 2000).

Imagine that you are trying to identify the change in participants' factual information caused by your program. You would subtract the number of correct responses on that participant's pretest (e.g., 8 out of 20) from the number of correct responses on a participant's posttest (e.g., 15 out of 20). This calculation indicates a 7-point increase in factual knowledge for that person. This suggests that your program has positive effects on changing knowledge.

But what if you asked participants to rate some of their perceptions about a personal habit on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 5 being the highest)? Suppose a participant rates himself as no lower than a 4 on any pretest item, based on his preprogram knowledge perception. However, during the course of the program, the participant realizes that he rated himself too high based on the information that you have presented. So, on the posttest he rates himself on the same items as either a 2 or 3. If we subtract the posttest (score = 2) from the pretest (score = 4), we end up with a negative score (score = -2). Does this mean that the program had a negative impact? Not necessarily; however, it does make interpretation a bit more complex. Your participant is demonstrating response-shift bias, where the frame of reference your participant is using to measure himself has changed, thus making the pretest-posttest comparison invalid (Howard, 1980). Since measuring perceptions in this way opens the door for this type of bias, it is better to use a pretest-posttest evaluation design when attempting to measure factual knowledge or skill sets at two defined points in time, rather than perceptions of change.

An example

If an Extension professional chose to use a pretest-posttest for evaluating change among new homeowners enrolled in a financial management program, appropriate questions would revolve around reporting knowledge of factual information (i.e., what percentage of your income is recommended for spending on housing costs) or current skill sets (i.e., using the information provided, balance the following checkbook entries). These questions would be asked prior to the start of the 2-day workshop in order to inform the facilitator about areas that need the most attention during the sessions, and they would be administered following completion of the workshop. The results from the two data collection points would then be compared to determine whether change occurred as a result of participation. While straightforward, there are some advantages and disadvantages associated with using this model.

Advantages of the pretest-posttest model

Multiple data points: This model provides more information than a posttest-only design. Since this method provides a measure of participant knowledge or behavior prior to the start of programming efforts, it can be helpful in refocusing the information to be presented while providing a point of comparison from beginning to end (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, & Sorensen, 2006).

Capture of factual information/skill change: Assessing factual knowledge or current skills can provide a more accurate measurement of change than simply perceptions of change. Therefore, it is important to clearly identify what you are trying to capture—factual knowledge change or perceptions—and to select the appropriate evaluation method.

Accurate behavior measurement: Routine behaviors (e.g., food recalls) are more accurately reported in pretests for multisession programs because people remember fewer details as time passes (Sudman, Bradburn, & Schwarz, 1996).

Limitations of the pretest-posttest model

Time constraints:

1. Instrument creation: More time is required to create solid items that assess factual knowledge than is needed to capture perceptions.

2. Program delivery: It takes time to administer both a pretest and posttest questionnaire (Pratt et al., 2000); therefore, in short educational activities, it may not be worth the time necessary to conduct both.

Attendance concerns: Meaningful pretest-posttest comparisons require that participants be present at the start and end of the program; however, consistent attendance can be difficult to obtain, especially among high-risk groups (Pratt et al., 2000). Without pairs of responses (a pretest and a posttest), comparisons cannot be made and the available data are reduced.

Measurement error through response-shift bias: Meaningful pretest-posttest comparisons require a participant to use the same frame of reference to measure himself against; when this is missing, it makes the pretest-posttest comparison invalid (Howard, 1980). There is also the potential for the limited information a participant has prior to the program to affect his ability to properly judge baseline functioning (Allen & Nimon, 2007; Howard et al., 1979).