**PGD001 – Postgraduate Diploma in Monitoring and Evaluation**

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**Module 1 Questions:**

**Q1: Explain in about 350 words why M&E informs good programming practice.**

**(10 marks)**

Monitoring and evaluation is helps in tracking the implementation and outputs systematically while measuring the effectiveness of the programs. Through this, one is able to assess the progress made towards the set objectives and where necessary advise the changes which may be needed. At the same time, M&E can improve the performance of a project or program and lead to achievement of the desired result at output, outcome or impact level in governments, private sector, local and international organization and NGOs. Monitoring and evaluation leads to accountability since it promotes sharing and complaint or feedback response mechanisms. Elsewhere financial monitoring leads to efficient and effective use of resources.

A good monitoring and evaluation approach will also create an established institutional memory which link the past, present and future actions based on the previous learnings.

Because stakeholders and donors require information on the progress or delayed of the project/program activities, monitoring and evaluation acts as an oversight tool thus sufficing with necessary actions which can be taken to remedy any failures or deficiencies in programming.

It is also important to note that monitoring and evaluation is one of the continuum phases in project cycle management. Thus, effective monitoring and evaluation plays a major role in for good design and planning of the projects and programs. This is because monitoring and evaluation help us learn from past successes and, or failures which lead to improved decision making in consequent planning phase thus influencing better programming.

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

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) are two distinct but complementary processes that mutually reinforce each other. Both tools are used to support the management processes in an institution since they provide progress feedback. The main differences however, between Monitoring and Evaluation are summarized in the table below;

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| Monitoring | Evaluation |
| It is a continuous progress check of project activities | Evaluation is a periodic review or assessment of a project, mainly either mid term evaluation or end term evaluation |
| The scope of monitoring looks at lower results like at activity and output level | The scope in evaluation is at higher results mainly outcome derived from objectives and goals |
| Monitoring reports are more regular and focuses on each activity indicator. You can not make changes based on an activity report since it does not provide consistent learning | The report targets objectives of the project and is well articulates issues including recommendations or changes to a project. Usually presented among stakeholders for feedback and decision making |
| Monitoring is done by project and program staff within an organization to help them check progress towards indicators | Evaluations are mainly conducted by outsiders i.e external evaluators and act as a second lens on towards project objectives |
| The monitoring process is continuous with regular internal meetings on short term periods e.g weekly and monthly. | When evaluations are done we have extraordinary meetings with intensive process like data collection and analysis |

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

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| --- | --- |
| Formative evaluation | Summative evaluation |
| Formative evaluations are process oriented usually involve systematic collection of  information to assist decision-making during the planning or implementation stages of a program. Thus they are mid term evaluations | Summative evaluations are done at the end of the project or after the project live to asses if the project accomplished its intended goals. Hence they are end-term evaluations |
| They usually focus on operational activities, and focuses a wider perspective and possible long-term effects of the project | The focus on the lasting impact the project and check on the lessons learnt and can be used for next planning phase of similar project |
| At times staff can be involved during the formative evaluations since they could be responsible for the activity and work in hand with external evaluators | Since at times the staff who implemented the project may not be available, this evaluations are mostly done by the external evaluators with little involvement of staff |
| Since formative evaluation is diagnostic in nature it is main purpose is to enhance learnings and adjusted where necessary | There is no room for adjustments after the evaluation recommendations have been shared since the project is closed |
| Since it is process evaluation, it can only test some of part of the project objectives. | It assess the project goals and entire objectives and focusing to measure if the intended results were attained |

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

Key questions on formative evaluation questions include;

1. To what extent do the activities and strategies correspond with those presented in the plan? This is to help readjust the activities and strategies to tally with the performance monitoring plan
2. To what extent did the project follow the timeline presented in the work plan? The timelines in project implementation influences on the quality of the output thus if no well followed, this may affect quality of project outcomes thus need to assess timelines.
3. Are activities carried out by the appropriate personnel? The project implementation team’s knowledge, experience and skills are critical for effective project outcome. Thus, it is important to ensure that all relevant staff who were to be involved actually participated in the work.
4. To what extent are project actual costs in line with initial budget allocations? The budget verses actual assessment is equally important since it highlights the extent to which activities were executed. At the same time, some donors do not allow further liquidations than stipulated timelines hence assessing cost will be critical.
5. What are the main strengths and weaknesses of the project? It is important to check the success and failures of the project before completion, as this allows you to make positive changes
6. To what extent are beneficiaries of the project active in decision-making and

implementation? Beneficiary participation leads to high project sustainability this the question is critical

Key questions on summative evaluation questions include;

1. To what extent did the project meet its overall goals and objectives? This question tries to inform the programmers if they attained the project goal and objectives as intended. If not, then the evaluation brings out the possible reasons, and what else could be done differently.
2. What impact did the project have on the lives of beneficiaries? Every project goal has a long-term outcome that we expect to see especially among the beneficiaries or society. It is good to know if the project will influence the people’s lives.
3. What components were the most effective? Because at times not all the project objectives may be realized, it is important to understand the critical areas that were of value and which were important in the project
4. What significant unintended impacts did the project have? Whereas in every project we tend to expect project goals attained, at times we experience unintended outcomes. In such situation, it could be important to assess the cause for such.
5. Is the project replicable? It is important to know if the project is replicable since good projects under same circumstances and context should be replicable.
6. Is the project sustainable? Sustainability is key and tries to understand the entire process of project implementation. When a project is effectively implemented with proper involvement of beneficiaries and other stakeholders, it is highly likely to be well owned thus likelihood of sustainability.

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

**(10mrks)**

1. This model lacks scientific precision since there are many biases that might take place between the pretest and the posttest timelines hence could affect the results or otherwise, weaken the direct link between project interventions and project outcomes or impact. For example if external factors come in during the project implementation which are not considered as influencers to the outcome, then they will be ignored as have brought the change.
2. There can also be biases at the pretest stage compared to the posttest stage. This could be attributed if for instance, we have different evaluators at each stage.
3. Pretest-posttest model can not effectively explain the theory of change in a project since they ignore the processes and other key changes that might have happened in the implementation phase,
4. You can only restrict to the indicators that were measured at the baseline while executing the end-time evaluation for comparison purposes. In such cases, we may not take into consideration some of the key unintended outcomes which may be observed in the project yet this could be helpful to provide key learnings