**Module 1 Questions:**

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

Monitoring and Evaluation allows, as both separate entities and as intertwined approaches, the project and by consequence the project manager and all its other stakeholders to acquire tools to widen the scope and depth of the implementation at all stages of the cycle, from the initial phase of conception through to the final reporting stage. Monitoring and Evaluation are therefore necessary to the programme, project or intervention to track its progression, to measure its impact, its sustainability and its utility as well as to facilitate the implementing team’s good management at the appearance of possible challenges during the period, whether planned or not.

In a time where in both the emergency and development worlds efficiency and effectiveness are required more than ever, while the monitoring methodologies permit the project manager and his/her team to “remain in the present” and ensure that all the activities are going as planned, evaluating tools allow to perceive a glimpse of the footprint the action would leave once it ends.

Monitoring in fact, needs, if not even must, be considered a loyal companion to a project manager and other stakeholders and always can always be counted on to remain honest and paint the real picture of the programme’s progress. Throughout the implementation, the process of monitoring permits to measure whether objectives and results conceptualised during the proposal writing phase, along with supposedly SMART indicators, are being achieved within the planned timing and through the intended methods and approaches.

Evaluation instead, while also terribly honest, always brings to light both the strengths and weakness of past and present interventions. During all the different phases of the programme cycle, although not as persistently as monitoring, the evaluation carries out a measurement of the strength of the project under different perspectives - technical, ethical, human mainly. A good project managers would permit a focused, sensible and timely evaluation to take place to use the information acquired not only for the current programme but also to assist with the conception of future interventions, aiming to be, if possible, even more relevant, sustainable and impactful than the previous.

Overall, M&E needs to be viewed as an integral part of the programming practice, as the tools they provide will lead to a purposeful intervention which does not stray far from the path and brings necessary services to populations at the time they need it the most.

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

As mentioned in the above explanation of monitoring and evaluation as good tools to provide an effective and efficient programme, both walk hand in hand with project management. Therefore, although always together in literature and practice, these two approaches differ in terms of scope, timing, and impact among other components of an intervention.

Monitoring in fact, is a continuous process of gathering the relevant data directly related to the project’s activities that sticks that should become embedded on the daily routine to all the people engaged within the project at all levels (project manager, support staff, beneficiaries, etc.) through even the basic exercises of meetings, key-informant interviews, etc. . The evaluation, instead, measures the impact of not only the activities, but also of the outcomes and outputs of the entire programme and works so that, unlike monitoring that happens during the specific phases of the project cycle, the evaluation can, and should, take place before, during and after the implementation period, so that the aforementioned project staff as well as external evaluators and the donors can examine the planned, and the not achieved, results that can influence future operations. Both approaches should be recorded and kept under written form so that the information gathered can be of immediate, in the case of monitoring, or of later use, as in the case of an evaluation, and can be shared with colleagues or people that could benefit from the past experience (NGOs in the same sector, donors, local authorities, etc.).

It should be mentioned that although achieving different results, evaluation does depend on the monitoring process, as without it, the data necessary to produce an accurate and exemplary analysis would not be extrapolated. At the same time, the information gathered by the process of monitoring would be given any meaning and would not

Therefore it could be said that as well as being necessary to the smooth implementation of a programme, Monitoring and Evaluation are necessary to each other, noting that all their differences become a strength to unify these two methodologies that would not otherwise be abel to operate individually.

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

While both evaluations are needed to measure, as mentioned earlier on, certain specifics of your project, different types take under considerations different end-results. Specifically, in the case of Formative and Summative evaluations, the implementation of the project – the “during” – and its impact – the “after” – respectively. In fact, these two types of evaluation come into play at different times during the programme cycle.

The process of Formative evaluation takes place during the implementation phase of the project and considers the information collected that could assist in the decision-making process for the following phases. Although very a practical approach that gives very rapid and direct answers, the formative evaluation also allows all persons involved in the project to begin foreshadowing the long-term effects of the intervention. This evaluation takes under consideration the planning designed at the inception phase of the project and studies whether it is being followed and why, it brings from paper to reality the objectives and results designed and observes how, when and whether they are being kept into the project’s staff’s minds throughout the entire intervention. Of course, the formative evaluation, should also always keep in mind the beneficiaries’ experiences during the implementation and explore whether these are what the intervention is about, and if not, why is it so and what can be done to amend it before the activities reach their end.

A Summative evaluation would then enter the scene once all the activities have come to a close to assess if the objectives observed during the formative evaluation had actually been fulfilled. To assure a thorough study, two steps should be taken. the first, at the immediate termination of the intervention, with an *end-time evaluation* to examine the potential need for further assistance, and the second, an *ex-post evaluation* that observes the results of the project years (two to five) after it came to a close to assess the impact as well as the sustainability of the intervention.

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

Being at a moment in time where the activities are in full swing and many aspects are to be analysed, a Formative evaluation seeks to answer many questions :

1. Do the activities and their timeline correspond with those decided upon during the inception phase of the project? Evaluations are not carried out to *assume* but rather to *state* and *examine* the state of intervention and therefore need to compare the intentions with the actual reality and, if they do not correspond, understand the challenges that hinders fulfilment and suggest what can be done to rectify the error.
2. Does the staff implementing this project have the necessary skills? Without a competent technical team, the project can not only proceed at a slower pace, but can even regress and worsen the initial situation. An evaluator, through a formative approach, should therefore be very attentive and critical towards whom is part of the team and whether they have correct and necessary skills to really make a positive impact.
3. Are the actual costs matching up with the allocated budget? In cooperation with the project’s admin staff, an evaluator should always be up to date on the spending, to ensure that the allotted budget lines are being followed within the donor’s spending margin (for some it’s within the ± 20%, for other the ±10%). It should reflect the activities and if over- or under-spending is taking place, there should always be a valid reason that needs to be evaluated.
4. Is the project actually achieving the projected results, objectives and goal? There should be a holistic analysis of all the project components to see whether these are being attained, however, one should also observe whether the activities taking place are actually the best method to reach said results.
5. What are the project’s strength and weakness? Apparently easy, examining these might make an evaluator delve deep into all aspects of an intervention to figure out, in the case of a weakness, what are the obstacles that stops it from being a strength and what can be done to change it from being so.
6. Are the beneficiaries being included in the decision-making process? Are they satisfied with the services provided by the project? The beneficiaries of the project should always be kept in the loop, and their opinions should always be take under consideration. It is for this that an evaluator should encourage the staff to ensure the population is satisfied with the intervention, and if not, what would change that.

A summative evaluation, considering it takes place at the end of a project, also asks whether the goals, objectives and results have been achieved and whether the beneficiaries were effectively involved. However, it also asks the following questions:

1. What aspects of the intervention were the most effective? An in-depth analysis should be carried not only by the internal and/or external evaluators, but also but the people actively involved in the project to see what components will remain engraved in the long run, which could actually be repeated in future programmes and which did not bring any added value to the implementation but can still considered as a “lesson learnt”.
2. Aside the expected outcomes, what other results did the intervention bring about? Did the project shed some light on unforeseen problems and did it solve them? Could they be a point of focus for future programmes?
3. Can the project be replicated in a similar context or in the future? Did it obtain the foreseen results in such a way that the methodology can be easily replicated?
4. Did the project obtain a high degree of sustainability? In a development context especially, but also in a humanitarian intervention, sustainability should be a the top of the considerations made during the inception phase. If not sustainable, albeit with a slight exaggerate tone, the project might as well as not have taken place. The level of sustainability contributes to reaching a conclusion for both end-time *and* ex-post evaluations.

Overall, it can be see that these questions correspond exactly with the timings and characteristics of two types of evaluations and should therefore be kept under valuable consideration whenever one of them is being used.

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

**(10mrks)**

While widely used by evaluators all over to measure the project impact and its results, the pre- and post- test methodologies are often doubted due to their lack of scientific rigor and accuracy. In fact, it is impossible to consider all the biases that might interfere with the implementation of these tests as external factors, aside from those already considered within the logical framework in the initial phase of the project cycle.