Module 2 Assignment: Indicators, MDGs and Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

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Admission number. ACPM DIP/030/005/2018

**ASSIGNMENTS:**

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

How will we know when we have achieved our desired outcomes? After examining the importance of setting achievable and well-defined outcomes, and the issues and process involved in agreeing upon those outcomes, we turn next to the selection of key indicators .Outcome indicators are not the same as outcomes. Indicators are the quantitative or qualitative variables that provide a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect the changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of an organization against the stated outcome (diploma in M and E module 2 notes).

An indicator is a specific, observable and measurable characteristic that can be used to show changes or progress a programme is making toward achieving a specific outcome.

There should be at least one indicator for each outcome. The indicator should be focused, clear and specific. The change measured by the indicator should represent progress that the programme hopes to make. (Gage and Dunn, 2009).

An indicator should be defined in precise, unambiguous terms that describe clearly and exactly what is being measured. Where practical, the indicator should give a relatively good idea of the data required and the population among whom the indicator is measured.

Indicators do not specify a particular level of achievement -- the words “improved”, “increased”, or “decreased” do not belong in an indicator.

Indicators should be developed for all levels of the results-based M&E system, meaning that indicators are needed to monitor progress with respect to inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and goals. Progress needs to be monitored at all levels of the system to provide feedback on areas of success and areas in which improvement may be required (Diploma in M and E Module 2 notes).

Dr. Rajiv Sharma, in the World Bank technical paper 334 summarizes the quality of a good indicator in a CREAM word to mean:

**Clear -** Precise and unambiguous.

**Relevant -** Appropriate to the set goal.

**Economic** - Available or computable with reasonable cost.

**Adequate** - Provides sufficient basis to access performance.

**Measurable** – Quantifiable using available tools and methods.

Gage and Dunn, 2009 also describes characteristic of a good indicator to be,

**Valid -** accurate measure of a behaviour, practice, taskthat is the expectedoutput or outcome of the intervention

**Reliable -** consistently measurable over time, in the same way by different observers

**Precise: -** operationally defined in clear terms

**Timely -** provides a measurement at time intervals relevant and appropriate in terms of programme goals and activities

**Programmatically important** - linked to the programme or to achieving the programme objectives.

**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**

With the introduction of UPE in many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), many children who had been out of school were enrolled in school and provided with the opportunity to pursue an education (GOK, 2005a; Ngware, Oketch, Ezeh, & Mudege, 2009; Ohba, 2009; Oketch, Mutisya, Ngware, & Ezeh, 2010). Despite the fact that the goal of many countries in SSA was to provide universal and FPE, this goal has been elusive 40 years after independence by many of these countries. With the inclusion of UPE in the Millennium Development Goals agenda, the attention toward achieving UPE has been accelerated, especially between 1990 and 2000 (Watkins et al., 2008). The accelerated effort has been demonstrated in Malawi (1994), Uganda (1997), Tanzania and Lesotho (2000), and Burundi, Rwanda, Ghana, Cameroon, and Kenya (2003) (Grogan, 2008; Kadzamira & Rose, 2003; Watkins et al., 2008).

Despite the introduction of FPE in these respective countries, research evidence shows that there has been concern with quality of instruction offered (Deininger, 2003; Oketch & Somerset, 2010), even when many governments have put a lot of emphasis on access and transition. For instance, the Kenyan government moved fast to employ more teachers to reduce class size with the numbers in employment being an outcome of class size and pupil–teacher ratio. It is expected that if FPE would be effective and sustainable in many countries, it should be a program that in the long term is accessible to all beneficiaries and provides opportunities to all school age children to gain access to quality education for a full cycle of basic education.

In Kenya, the 2003 FPE program was not the first initiative aimed at achieving UPE. It was first introduced in the country in 1974 when the government at the time abolished the school fees for Standards 1 to 4. The elimination of school fees was extended to Standards 5 to 7 in 1978. Subsequently, it was reintroduced in 1979 and recently in 2003. These school fee abolition initiatives had significant impact in increasing primary school enrollments, particularly for Standard 1 in 1981 (Ohba, 2009).

However, scholars argue that 1 to 2 years after abolishing tuition fees in 2003, enrollments fell and dropout rates rose (Oketch & Somerset, 2010). Experts (Oketch, Mutisya, Ngware, & Ezeh, 2010) attributed this phenomenon to declining quality of education due to,

1. Massive surge in enrollment,

2. Overcrowding of classrooms,

3. Lack of textbooks,

4. Shortage of trained teachers.

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

Free Primary Education (FPE), introduced in Kenya in 2003, has enabled 1.3 million poor children to benefit from primary education for the first time through the abolishment of fees and levies for tuition. (MOEST, 2003).The gross enrolment rate in primary education jumped from 86.8% in 2002 to 101.5% in 2004. (MOEST, June 2004). Though intended to boost primary education, FPE has had consequences in other areas of education, including early childhood development (ECD).

Studies by UNESCO, 2005 have been conducted to assess the effects of FPE on ECD Centers. Some report on negative effects, while others note no major drawbacks (UNESCO 2005). While the overall impact of the policy is yet to be determined, the UNESCO/OECD Early Childhood Policy Review Mission, which took place in September 2004, observed that the policy did have a negative impact on ECD Centers serving poor children.

In North Eastern Province, one of the most disadvantaged regions, for example, there has been a sharp decrease in ECD enrolments since the implementation of FPE. Declining enrolments appear to be so acute and widespread that there is a serious concern about the “collapse” of ECD services. In the better-off regions, such as Rift Valley Province and Nairobi City, decreasing enrolments are observed in public- and community-owned ECD Centers, which typically serve poorer children, but not in private ECD Centers, which accommodate the more affluent ones. The main reason for this phenomenon is that since the implementation of FPE, poor parents are choosing to withdraw their children from ECD Centers and/or keep them at home until they reach the age of primary school entry. They refuse to pay the fees for ECD on the grounds that ECD, like primary education, should be free.

Decreased enrolments have meant reduced salaries for ECD teachers. In Kenya, ECD teachers’ salaries are in most cases covered by parental fees, unlike their counterparts in primary schools who are paid by the government according to an official teacher salary scale. In ECD Centers, parental fees are paid in proportion to the number of children one enrolls and are mostly, if not entirely, used to cover teachers’ salaries. Thus, the level of teachers’ remuneration depends on the total number of children enrolled as well as parents’ ability to pay fees. As a result, the reduced number of ECD enrolments brought about by FPE has been a blow to teachers, whose remuneration was meagre and unstable already before the introduction of FPE. (Mukui and Mwaniki, December 1995).With parents increasingly reluctant to pay for ECD, FPE has made it even more difficult to mobilize resources from parents for ECD. Cases of increased job insecurity and ECD Centre closures are on the rise, particularly in poor communities.

1. **What would the monitoring exercise in free primary education wish to achieve for the following stakeholders?**

**• Donors**

The previous government of President Moi was targeted by aid cut offs and often because of corruption (State of the Right of Education Worldwide, 2006), it was impossible to tell whether the government will continue receiving external funding with its record. Previous school levies included, registration fees, textbooks, activity fee, caution money, payments for teachers /support staff hired by school committees, development funds, school trips, teachers tours and internal exam fees. The new policy only covered textbooks and tuition fees.

While it has discouraged schools from charging other expenses, school committees are having problems supplementing these other costs. Parents refused to pay levies due to this notion of free education. The current education is not totally free. Kattan (2006) notes that fees continue to be collected (sometimes illegally) in a third of the countries with an official policy against fees. “Because public funding was/and is insufficient to cover for direct and indirect costs of schools (in Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and Mauritania), the definition of free education was reduced to *fee free”* education (Tomasevski, 2006).

Kenya abolished school levies since 2003 and has seen an upsurge in GER as in the case of its neighbours; Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Rwanda. User fees negatively affect attendance rates in Kenyan schools with 31% of student’s absenteeism attributed to school fee related issues (Mukudi, 2004). The World Bank urges that abolishing fees should be part of a broader government commitment to attaining FPE.

To ensure smooth implementation of FPE programme, the government supported by development partners had to avail huge amounts of money. Free Primary Education idea was indeed a welcome relief to the parents and no wonder that is why the idea also went down very well with the donors. It was encouraging that the World Bank had to avail a grant of Kshs. 3.9 billion towards FPE, British government gave Kshs 1.6 billion for the project with the treasury on its part pumping Kshs. 2.8 billion to kick start it (Kenya times 6th April, 2003). United Nations Children Education Fund (UNICEF) gave 192.5 million to benefit 450,000 girls and boys in standard 1-3. It also provided learning and teaching

materials in 8 districts including Nairobi (East Africa standard 16 Jan 2003). In April 2003, the Ministry of Education disbursed 3 billion. Each pupil was allocated Kshs. 633, Kshs 498 to be spent on

instructional material while Kshs.135 to be spent on other operational costs in school. The task force on implementation of FPE came up with a figure showing financial implication for implementation of FPE.

**• Primary School managers**

Odhiambo (2005) observes that the most important purpose of a school is to provide children with equal and enhanced opportunities for learning, and the most important resource a school has for achieving that purpose is the knowledge, skills and dedication of its teachers. Teachers therefore need to be well managed. The head teachers’ responsibility in human resource management involves: Leading and motivating staff; delegating responsibilities effectively; and conflict management.

With increased number of students as a result of free primary education, teacher student’s ratio is likely to be high, leading to increased workload for teachers. This is likely to pose a challenge to head teachers, who are expected to ensure that the quality of education is not compromised. Poor staffing and provisioning have also adversely affected the attainment of UPE in Kenya. Many schools are grossly understaffed. There have been conflicting estimates of the extent of the teacher shortage with the government claiming that the number of teachers needed is 45, 000 while the Kenya National Union of

Teachers puts the estimate at 60,000 (Kimani, 2008). UNICEF estimates a required 31,000 teachers

(UNICEF, 2005). Despite the obvious evidence of inadequate personnel audit mechanisms, the undisputed point is that there is a huge teacher shortage for primary schools. The teacher shortage is even more severe in remote rural schools. The 2006 *Economic Survey* reported that the teacher-student ratio in Kenya rose from 1:40 in 2003 to 1:44 by 2005 (GoK, 2006). The situation is grimmer for schools in the arid and semi-arid areas, as well as those in the slums of urban areas, where the ratio could be as high as 1:100

The Kamunge report (Government of Kenya, 1988) recommended that the school committee should establish sub-committees (to guide and support heads of schools in the management of such schools). Therefore, head-teachers must be persons with appropriate academic professional qualifications, experience, ability, competence, integrity and initiative if the country is to realize millennium development goals especially in the education sector. They must also have undergone courses in institutional and financial management. In view of these observations the committee recommended that; the appointment of head-teacher and other management be based on institutional management training, and on proven competence and possession of appropriate qualifications and relevant experience.

**• Government**

No meaningful teaching takes place without adequate resource materials. This implies to curriculum implementation as well. Supply of adequate learning/teaching materials such as text books, teaching aids and stationery should be made available in order to enable teachers to play their role satisfactorily in the curriculum implementation process.

Stakeholders must provide physical facilities such as classrooms, workshops and equipment in order to create an environment in which Implementation can take place. The availability and quality of resource materials and the availability of appropriate facilities have a great influence on curriculum implementation (Government of Kenya, 2010).

A study carried out by Mbaabu (1983) revealed that lack of physical facilities, materials, equipment and tools were among the major problems that primary schools are faced with in Kenya. The study found out that in most schools classes had over 50 children. This study revealed that free education at the primary level brought about problems related to over-enrolment, lack of physical facilities, and inadequate teachers.

The primary education department of the Ministry of Education caters for the largest number of pupils in Kenya’s education system. To manage this massive number requires management skills, appropriate organization and adequate human and material resources Otembo, Waga and Karagu (1992 cited by Nyaega, 2011). The Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MOEST) is responsible for the provision of administrative and professional services in education at the National Provincial and District level.

The management of primary schools at the local level is organized in such a way that the authority from the headquarters in Nairobi is delegated to Provincial, District and Divisional Education’s office. Head-teachers, school committee and parents association have organizational functions in the management of primary education at individual school levels.

The management of material resources entails planning, acquisition, allocation, distribution and controlling the use and maintenance of the materials. Onyango (2001) 24 states that planning for material resources involves the identification of the resource requirements, assessing quality in terms of the needs, establishing criteria for standards, determining the cost per unit and the use of the materials whether by individuals or groups.

**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.**

1. **What are the advantages of participatory evaluation methods?**

Participatory monitoring and evaluation is not just a matter of using participatory techniques within a conventional monitoring and evaluation setting. It is about radically rethinking who initiates and undertakes the process, and who learns or benefits from the findings.”(Institute of Development Studies, 1998).

Participatory evaluation is a partnership approach to evaluation in which stakeholders actively engage in developing the evaluation and all phases of its implementation. Those who have the most at stake in the program, partners, program beneficiaries, funders and key decision makers play active roles.

Participation occurs throughout the evaluation process including:

1. Identifying relevant questions;

2. Planning the evaluation design;

3. Selecting appropriate measures and data collection methods;

4. Gathering and analyzing data;

5. Reaching consensus about findings, conclusions and recommendations;

6. Disseminating results and preparing an action plan to improve program performance. (IDS 1998).

Fundamentally, participatory evaluation is about sharing knowledge and building the evaluation skills of program beneficiaries and implementers, funders and others. The process seeks to honor the perspectives, voices, preferences and decisions of the least powerful and most affected stakeholders and program beneficiaries. Ideally, through this process, participants determine the evaluation’s focus, design and outcomes within their own socioeconomic, cultural and political environments. (Rossman G 2000).

U.S. Agency for International Development, 1996 and Institute of Development Studies, 1998, quotes that participatory approaches require the commitment and valuable time of many. Yet, the benefits are far-reaching. Participatory evaluation therefore allows groups to.

**Identify locally relevant evaluation questions**

Participatory evaluation ensures that the evaluation focuses on locally relevant questions that meet the needs of program planners and beneficiaries. Participatory approaches allow local stakeholders to determine the most important evaluation questions that will affect and improve their work.

**Improve program performance**

Participatory evaluation is reflective and action-oriented. It provides stakeholders, including beneficiaries, with the opportunity to reflect on project progress and generate knowledge that results in being able to apply the lessons learned. It provides opportunities for groups to take corrective action and make mid-course improvements.

**Empower participants**

A participatory approach is empowering because it claims the right for local people to control and own the process of making evaluation decisions and implementing them. Participating in an evaluation from start to finish can give stakeholders a sense of ownership over the results. Recognizing local talents and expertise builds confidence and pride in the community, and among participants.

**Build capacity**

Conducting a participatory evaluation promotes participant learning and is an opportunity to introduce and strengthen evaluation skills. Active participation by stakeholders can result in new knowledge and a better understanding of their environment. This, in turn, enables groups to identify action steps and advocate for policy changes. It can provide participants with tools to transform their environments.

**Develop leaders and build teams**

Participatory evaluation builds teams and participant commitment through collaborative inquiry. Inviting a broad range of stakeholders to participate and lead different parts of the process can develop and celebrate local leadership skills. It can lead to stronger, more organized groups, strengthening the community’s resources and networks.

**Sustain organizational learning and growth**

Finally, a participatory evaluation is not just interested in findings; it is focused on creating a learning process. It creates a knowledge base among local people and organizations, which can be applied to other programs and projects. The techniques and skills acquired can lead to self-sustained action.

Other advantages from theAfrica College of Program Management Module 2 diploma in monitoring and evaluation notes 2018

**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 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 them.

**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.

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

Kusek and Rist (2004) explains that building an M&E system that responds to the results in an organization’s strategy is a 10-step process, as summarized below.

**Step One:**

Conducting a Readiness Assessment to determine the capacity and willingness of the government/organization and its development partners to construct a results-based M&E system. This assessment addresses such issues as the presence or absence of champions, the barriers to building a system, who will own it, and who will oppose the M&E system.

**Step Two:**

Agreeing on Outcomes to Monitor and Evaluate addresses the key requirement of developing strategic outcomes that then focus and drive resource allocation and activities. These outcomes should be derived from the strategic priorities (goals).

**Step Three:**

Developing Key Indicators to Monitor Outcomes, so the degree to which the outcomes are being achieved can be assessed. Developing indicators is a core activity in building an M&E system and drives all subsequent data collection, analysis, and reporting. Both the political and methodological issues in creating credible and appropriate indicators are not to be underestimated.

**Step Four:**

Gathering Baseline Data on Indicators involves describing and measuring the initial conditions being addressed by the outcomes. It is the first measurement of the indicators and defines the starting point.

**Step Five:**

Planning for Improvements requires setting realistic targets and recognizes that most outcomes are long-term, complex, and not quickly achieved. It is helpful to establish interim targets that specify how much progress towards an outcome is to be achieved each year (or other time period) and the resources needed. Measuring results against targets can involve both direct and proxy indicators and use of both quantitative and qualitative data.

**Step Six:**

Monitoring for Results is the administrative and institutional task of establishing data collection, analysis and reporting guidelines; designating who will be responsible for activities; establishing quality control processes; establishing timelines and costs; working through roles and responsibilities; and establishing guidelines on transparency and dissemination of the information and analysis. It is emphasized that, in constructing an M&E system, the challenges of ownership, management, maintenance, and credibility need to be addressed clearly.

**Step Seven:**

Evaluative Information to Support Decision Making focuses on the contributions that evaluation studies and analyses can make throughout this process to assess results and move towards outcomes. Analysis of program theory, evaluability assessments, process evaluations, outcome and impact evaluations, and evaluation syntheses are among the strategies discussed that can be employed in evaluating a results-based M&E system.

**Step Eight:**

Analyzing and Reporting Findings is a crucial step, as it determines what findings are reported to whom, in what format, and at what intervals. This step has to address the existing capacity for producing the information, and focuses on the methodologies for accumulating and assessing information, and preparing analyses and reports.

**Step Nine:**

Using the Findings emphasizes that the crux of the system is not simply generating results-based information, but getting the information to the appropriate users in a timely fashion so that they can take the information into account in making decisions. This step also addresses the roles of development partners and civil society in using the information to strengthen accountability, transparency, and resource allocation procedures.

**Step Ten:**

Sustaining the M&E System recognizes the long-term process involved in ensuring the longevity and utility of an M&E system. Six criteria are seen as crucial to the sustainability of an M&E system: demand, structure, trustworthy and credible information, accountability, incentives, and capacity. Each dimension needs constant attention over time to ensure the viability of the system. As noted earlier, building an M&E system does not have to be done according to these 10 steps. One could define a more detailed number of steps, or fewer. The issue is to ensure that key strategies and activities are recognized, clustered together in a logical manner, and then completed in an appropriate sequence.

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