Monitoring and Evaluation

Research by CoLab   Packaged by CoLab   Literature Review   Used to design course

The world we live in today is fraught with challenges across the sectors of health, education, livelihoods, gender, human rights, among others. In the past two years, many of them have been amplified as the pandemic swept across the globe, leaving in its wake a trail of disruption, forever altering lives for many. As we assess, design and implement crucial interventions, an important component that does not always get the attention it warrants, is the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) design. The monitoring and evaluation framework is the foundation of any development project, and key to its successful implementation and in achieving the envisaged goal and objectives. Starting a project without one is akin to starting a business without enough financial resources. (Sita Shankar Wunnava)

As a part of this literature review, we will be deep-diving into the following elements

Did you know?

The Ancient Egyptians regularly monitored their country's outputs in grain and livestock production more than 5,000 years ago (Kusek & Rist 2004)

Yes! Monitoring and evaluation is not new.

What is Monitoring and Evaluation?

Monitoring is a continuous process that process ongoing indications of the progress of intervention activities
E.g. Tracking teacher's attendance of training session

Evaluation is the assessment of a project or project phase to understand causal relationship between plan, activities and results
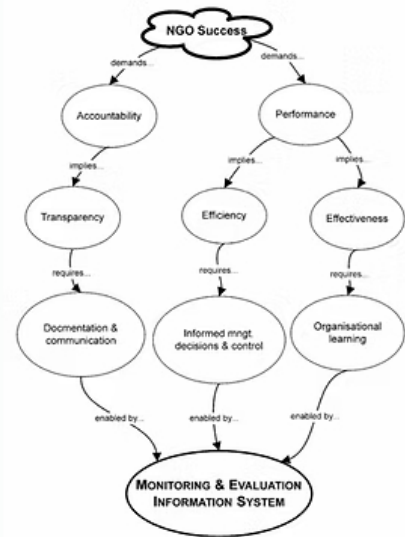E.g. How did implementation activities relate to changes in teachers capacity?

Source: Kusek & Rist 2004

Both monitoring and evaluation should be done throughout the intervention, not just the end.

Why Monitoring and Evaluation?

- Impact assessment of intervention* ** † o
- Project management & planning**
- Accounting and fund management* † o
- Self-reflection to improve org. capacity** o
- Understanding & negotiating stakeholder perspectives** - involving various stakeholders in project planning and tracking
- Public accountability** - communicating project activities and results to public

*Kusek & Rist 2004; **Estrella & Gaventa 1998; †Stem 2005; Shukla et al. 2016

World Bank M&E process*

1 Creating a Theory of Change - outcomes - outputs - activities

2 M&E Framework - indicators for the Theory of Change

3 Plan - actual processes of monitoring and evaluation (data collection, data analysis, etc.,)

4 Tools - instrument that helps in M&E processes (e.g. survey for data collection)

Key performance indicators

- Indicators are quantitative or qualitative variables that provide a simple way to measure achievement or to reflect the changes connected to an intervention
- Should be indicators for all Theory of Change - Outcomes, Outputs & Activities
- Indicators answer 2 questions:
    - "How will we know success or achievement when we see it?"
    - "Are we moving toward achieving our desired outcomes?"

	Outcomes	Outputs	Activities
Description	What improvement for the target groups do we expect?	What tangible result is addressing the root problem?	What is being done to make improvement?
Example	Improved learning outcomes	More teachers with improved pedagogy	Organising teacher training workshop with the government department; Developing partnerships; Creating training session documents with the partners
Indicator	Change in student ASER score (Target: 20% improvement)	Total teachers using teaching learning materials in class (Target: 60%)	No. of workshops (Target: 5; No. of training session documents (Target: 9)

Participatory M&E

- Rather than only implementers/designers conducting M&E, all types of project stakeholders (e.g. beneficiaries, admin, funders) are involved
- Assessment of impact conducted entirely or jointly by end user/beneficiaries

Theoretical Benefits

- enhanced participation improves understanding of the devt. process itself
- authenticity of M&E findings
- improved project sustainability - by identifying project strengths & weaknesses
- increased local capacity in M&E, greater self-reliance
- sharing of experiences
- Allows different stakeholders to share their needs, interests and expectations
- Better communication of project to the public
- greater accountability to donors
- more efficient allocation of resources

Participatory data collection - to keep in mind

- should be perceived by members of community as way to address problems
- involve beneficiaries in collecting and analysing data
- match skills of participants
- fit people's day-to-day responsibilities reinforce community solidarity
- be sensitive to different social groups only collect necessary information

(Estrella & Gaventa 1998)

Practical considerations

- choice of M&E indicators by orgs has been criticised as being selected for ease of
- measurement rather than relevance/quality of work
- some NGO workers feel that M&E targets did not capture their 'real work' and
- the ways in which they go above-and-beyond. Social indicators, like building
- trust, often not captured
- meeting M&E targets has led to NGOs using expensive incentives to meet
- targets:
    - leading to short-term results rather than sustainability
    - incentives can also cause falsification of data
- meeting M&E targets has led to some NGOs using coercive methods to get cooperation from stakeholders
  a focus on standardised/de-contextualised indicators might achieve large no.s for reporting, but not have relevance to actual beneficiaries
- including local perspectives when creating indicators helps contextualise
- indicators, but makes comparison across contexts difficult
  because of the use of indicators as a measure of NGO performance, M&E does not reflect reality but becomes the reality in many eyes. e.g. to a donor, project reality is what indicators tell them, not what happens on-ground
- excessive data can lead to an inability to analyse, preventing project
  improvement based on data

M&E activities can constitute identities which may not be acceptable to those
- whose identities are being constituted. e.g. if today is a day for HIV +ve people to come into a health centre, leads to outing people as HIV+ve

Bibliography

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