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Appreciation Programme

Monitoring Adult Education Programme

Module - I

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Monitoring Adult Education Programme
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Content Developers and Authors:

Dr. Budd Hall (Director) of community based research at University of Victoria, BC Canada, is a researcher and educator. Currently he is the director of Adult Education, community based research at the University of Victoria, working on building networks linking local, regional, national and international persons using community-campus partnerships for community well-being and sustainable development. He is also the UNESCO Co-Chair in community based research and social responsibility in Higher Education.

Dr. Mandakini Pant is a researcher and educator with over 25 years of research and teaching experience. She has worked in PRIA for over 10 years in areas of women & gender studies, citizenship, governance, social development, and adult education and lifelong learning. Dr. Pant has also taught at SNDT Women's University, Mumbai, India.

Dr. Rajesh Tandon is president-founder of Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), a voluntary organisation providing support to grass roots initiatives in South Asia. Dr. Tandon is an internationally acclaimed leader and practitioner of participatory research and development. He has served on numerous government task forces and committees both nationally and internationally. He is also the UNESCO Co-Chair for community based research and social responsibility in higher education.

Content Packaging:

Ms. Aparna

Ms. Sonia Preisler

Conceptualization and Technical Expertise by:

Ms. Apoorva Sharma- Communication and visual branding

Dr. Martha Farrell- Adult education and online distance learning expert

Mr. Prashant Dambhale- Technological platforms for delivery

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Ms. Anupma Gajwani- Visualizing and setting up of MOODLE platform

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MONITORING AND EVALUATION FOR ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

MODULE 1: CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- Unit 1: Introduction to the concept of Monitoring
- Unit 2: Introduction to the concept of Evaluation
- Unit 3: Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

INTRODUCTION

Monitoring and Evaluation are integral components of the sustainability of any programme or project. In order to achieve long term success in a project, it is crucial to have a strong monitoring and evaluation system in place. This will ensure that the programme is always moving along on its intended path, while correcting itself for earlier unforeseen obstacles that may be faced in the implementation. This module will explore the various facets of monitoring and evaluation, with reference to adult education programmes (AEPs) and the use participatory monitoring and evaluation methodology.

OBJECTIVES

After completing this unit, you should be familiar with the following

- The concepts features and characteristics of monitoring
- When and why is the component of evaluation needed
- The difference between monitoring and evaluation

- The benefits of participatory monitoring and development, in the context of adult education programmes

UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE CONCEPT OF MONITORING

Monitoring is a continuous internal management activity, whose purpose is to ensure that the programme achieves its defined objectives within the prescribed time-frame and budget. This Unit will first focus on the concept of monitoring from a generic perspective. It will examine the needs and purposes of monitoring and its role in improving programme delivery. It will then consider monitoring in the specific context of adult education programmes.

1.1 Monitoring

Monitoring in simple terms implies looking at what and how much has been achieved, when compared with the plans of the programme. It is the system which follows a well-designed process, primarily to generate information to improve programme implementation. It involves provisions of regular feedback on the progress of programme implementation, and the problems faced during this process.

It is a systematic effort to compare the performance with laid-down objectives and standards, in order to determine whether progress is in line with them. It also envisages the taking of remedial measures, when unintended aspects emerge that affect planned implementation.

A major function of managers, planners, field administrators and other practitioners is to monitor progress at various levels and stages of implementation. The first step then is to have a clear plan on the criterion of monitoring that have to be observed during implementation. This has to be done at the planning stage.

The manager will then need field-based information in order to make appropriate decisions about programme directions and operation strategies. The planner needs data

on the strengths and weaknesses of the programme plan, in order to identify possible gaps between the planned, and the actual activities implemented in the field.

Field administrators and other practitioners would be keen on monitoring to determine whether or not clients and other beneficiaries are gaining from the programme. A well-designed and carefully scheduled programme monitoring follows a systematic framework for collecting and analyzing information in implementation activities, with the end view of improving the management and operations at the various stages of the programme.

1.2 Features of Monitoring

1. Continuous on-going activity that tracks each activity from the start to its finish
2. Dynamic feature because its processes and details evolve and change as the monitoring functions are in progress
3. Forward looking process, as it seeks to anticipate problems and shortcomings
4. Corrective approach, suggesting remedial measures to rectify defects and failures even as they occur
5. Consolidative methodology, seeking feedback of initiatives from the authorities at the top, to the grassroots at the bottom
6. Enforces clear thinking and constant alertness, as the objectives and standards of the programme/project need to be clearly established. This is critical, as shortcomings will need to be identified and addressed immediately, in order that the highest levels of programme quality are maintained

(UNESCO. APPEAL, 2001, pp. 201-202)

1.3 Characteristics of a Good Monitoring System

In order to ensure the chances of success of the programme, monitoring is needed at various stages of the programme cycle from the inception of the programme, to the completion of the final activities. Thus a good monitoring system should:

- Provide periodic and timely feedback on physical and substantive programme accomplishments, as well as financial status
- Identify problems that require solutions and action. Problems may be specific to the programme (changes in procurement procedures), or institutional in nature (changes in the context where it is being implemented)
- Be relatively simple, to incorporate the basic information required by programme management. The use of complicated forms requiring a large volume of data creates confusion and reduces the enthusiasm of all those involved.
- For effective problem solving, monitoring should ensure timeliness of information and ensure that the feedback is implemented

Further, the monitoring process should take in to consideration, the different areas of accountability, such as:

- ✓ *Coverage accountability:* Is the programme serving the intended beneficiaries? Are there any beneficiaries that are being excluded from the programme? Are there beneficiaries that are being wrongfully included in the programme?
- ✓ *Service delivery accountability:* Are the services being delivered in proper amounts? Are the activities and interventions provided really the intended programme services?

An example of wrongful inclusion and mistaking exclusion takes place when accounting for below poverty line (BPL) individuals in India. Because of this lack of accountability a number of beneficiaries may miss out the policy programmes targeting them.

Can you think of any other example of other programmes where the lack of monitoring has hindered project implementation in your country?

- ✓ *Fiscal accountability*: Are the allocated funds being effectively used? Are the expenditures properly documented?
- ✓ *Legal accountability*: Are the relevant statutes and rules being observed by the programme?

(UNESCO. APPEAL, 1999)

1.4 Monitoring in Adult Education Programmes

The basic approach to monitoring and evaluation, in terms of real and intended plans, remains the same in AEPs. However, in such cases the 'beneficiaries' can be identified as the learners, the community and related organisations.

Some basic questions that monitoring should seek to answer are:

- Who are the learners and what are the associated demographic characteristics they display?
- How do they participate in adult education in terms of access, relevance, quality and efficiency?
- Why are certain potential learners not participating in adult education?
- To what extent are planned activities of programmes actually realised?
- How well do the programmes satisfy the learning needs of the learners?

Thus we see that monitoring as a component in adult education programmes is ***necessary***, in order to allow for the programme to achieve its intended learning outcomes.

UNIT 2: INTRODUCTION TO THE CONCEPT OF EVALUATION

Often, there is a tendency to equate monitoring with evaluation even though they are two different programme components.

Monitoring ensures that the programme is functioning as planned,

Evaluation aims to judge programme performance and impacts

Thus, evaluation of programmes is an essential feature which comes into action only after the programme has been implemented. This Unit will first focus on the various components of evaluation, when they are required, and what are their uses. It will then examine the necessity of evaluation in adult education programmes. Finally, it will draw the distinction between monitoring and evaluation.

2.1 Evaluation

Evaluation is the systematic process of collecting and analysing information to determine whether and to what extent the objectives are being realized. Evaluation thus aims to examine the project in its entirety – the context, inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes. It aims to make recommendations that may lead to the revision of the programme design or replacing it entirely. It may also recommend changes in the future course of action for the programme.

Programme evaluations are less frequent than monitoring activities, considering factors of costs and time. These evaluations are usually conducted by social research experts, who are not considered an internal part of the programme implementation function.

Evaluation fulfills two functions. The first is an *internal support function* which aims to analyse the past and provide inputs for the future. The second is a *control function* to assess the real outcomes of the programme.

This includes control over accounts and financial operations. However, it is important to make a distinction between the two functions, so as to not emphasise one over the other (Satyamurthi, 1997). Evaluation can be said to be an 'appraisal' and thus has a few basic criteria of assessment, cutting across all kind of development programmes - effectiveness, efficiency, viability, reproducibility, intervention strategy, satisfaction and impact, which together form the core foundations for an evaluation process.

2.2 Classification of Evaluation

Evaluation can take place in different phases of the project, including a simultaneous evaluation process, which studies different components of a programme, across periods of time. Some common classifications of evaluation are:

- *Concurrent Evaluation* done at periodic intervals throughout the lifetime of the project
- *Mid-term Evaluation* conducted half way through the project duration. Thus if a project is to run for three years, the mid-term evaluation would be taken up at the end of eighteen months.
- *Final Evaluation* is taken up only after the project has run its course, which helps in understanding the impact of the programme. This is essential as even though the programme might be over, the analysis of this data can be foundation for the next set of programmes.

2.3 Purpose of Evaluation

It is important to understand the broad purposes of evaluation, so that such a process may be conducted using a credible methodology and in the right spirit. It provides

- an objective and reliable assessment of the learning, as well as the socio-economic impact of the programme

- an assessment regarding the sustainability of the programme
- feedback to local organisers, implementation personnel and other stakeholders regarding the outcomes of the project, its strengths and weaknesses, and suggests remedial measures for future phases
- analytical inputs to the planning of future programmes

2.4 Evaluation of Adult Education Programmes

Evaluation is one of the key features of adult education programme, as it provides for information regarding direct and indirect impacts. Through systematic methodology, one can assess different types of impacts that may be anticipated through the programme such as:

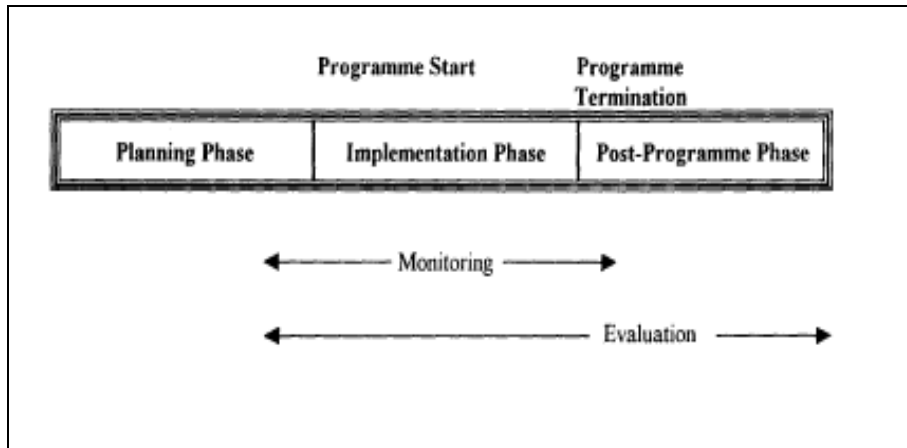
- Literacy and skill levels of the learners
- Participation of women learners
- Reduction in socio-economic gaps
- Employment and income generation
- Political participation and active citizenship

2.5 Differences between Monitoring and Evaluation

Thus we see that monitoring and evaluation are two different project management tools that are closely related, interactive and mutually supportive. Through routine tracking of project progress, monitoring can provide quantitative and qualitative data useful for designing and implementing project evaluation exercises. On the other hand, evaluation can support project monitoring. With the assistance and inputs of periodic evaluations, monitoring tools and strategies can be refined and further developed. Some might argue that good monitoring substitutes project evaluations.

This might be true in small-scale short-term projects, or when the main objective of monitoring and evaluation is to obtain information to improve the process on implementation of an ongoing project. However, evaluation is essential in order to assess the impact and future development of the project.

Monitoring and Evaluation Cycle



- The *purpose* of monitoring is to improve efficiency and adjusting work plan, while evaluation improves effectiveness, assesses for impacts and provide inputs for future programmes
- The prime *focus* of monitoring is present inputs/outputs, process outcomes and work plans, whereas evaluation looks at effectiveness and relevance of programme
- Monitoring is a continuous process over a shorter period of time, while evaluation can be periodic efforts over long periods of time
- The process of monitoring involves regular meetings, preparation of reports, monthly/quarterly reviews. Evaluation processes, however, may require additional data-collection and surveys
- Evaluation uses baseline data to compare impacts and gauge improvements due to programme implementation.

Thus we can see that evaluation is a very distinct feature on its own and an essential component of project management (UNESCO. APPEAL, 1999).

UNIT 3: PARTICIPATORY MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The term participation refers to sharing of experiences and engaging with others. A participatory approach recognises that all stakeholders in the programme, including the target beneficiaries and/or learners have responsibilities, obligations and accountability. This Unit will on elucidate participatory monitoring and evaluation by drawing parallels with conventional monitoring and evaluation. It will then introduce how participatory monitoring and evaluation methods can further facilitate adult education programmes.

3.1 Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

Conventional and participatory monitoring and evaluation are not always distinguishable. 'External' experts are usually involved in both forms of monitoring and evaluation, but assume different roles. Conventional processes are more 'expert-driven' in nature where they direct the design, data collection process, analysis and report writing. Participatory monitoring and evaluation on the other hand are 'expert-facilitated' in nature. They encourage the existing stakeholders (programme implementers and beneficiaries) to participate in the formulation and implementation of monitoring and evaluation plans.

Perhaps what distinguishes participatory monitoring from the conventional approaches is its emphasis on the inclusion of a wider sphere of stakeholders in the monitoring process. Project management practitioners believe that stakeholders who are involved in the development, planning and implementation, should also be involved in monitoring changes and determining the evaluation indicators for 'success'. (Parks, 2005)

Thus participatory monitoring and evaluation is a way of learning from and with the community members to investigate, analyse and evaluate constraints and opportunities faced during the implementation of a programme. Such a methodology allows for collective, informed and timely decision making practices regarding the programme.

It is based on the belief that people external to a situation learn best about it from those who are most closely involved in the situation and it is the latter that can best analyse their own problems, albeit with facilitation from the former. Participation then allows for a self-determined change, which goes further than any externally induced change. (Satyamurthi, 1997)

3.2 Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation in Adult Education Programmes

Adults are typically self-directed and self-motivated learners who learn as a response to their own need for information, knowledge and skills that can be immediately useful to them. Participatory methods break away from conventional monitoring and evaluation techniques and allow for a broader involvement of learners in assessing their progress towards learning outcomes. Learners can now be exposed to more personal forms of evaluations. One of its unique features is how self-evaluation can be enabled in context of AEPs.

Self-evaluation here is the process of systematic collection, analysis and exchange of data concerning education processes of individuals, groups or organisations by those who are themselves undergoing that learning experience. This facilitates learning among all parties concerned such that value judgments and decision-making may be based on evidence generated from those in the process itself. (SEALLL, 2013)

However, it is crucial to bear in mind that evaluation has threatening connotations to many adults. They perceive it as something that may lead to criticism or to being watched and controlled. These fears might not be expressed in a straightforward manner but through protests and obstruction. Through participatory monitoring and evaluation, there is a directed and autonomous way of assessing programme implementation and progress on learning. Such negativity and resistance to monitoring and evaluations may be overcome by encouraging active participation, strong emphasis on critical self-reflection, and leaving the analysis and the conclusions to participants, themselves rather than presenting and imposing conclusions made by an external party.

As a form of participatory monitoring and evaluation, self-evaluation has been extensively practiced in adult education programmes and has even increased enthusiasm for evaluation.

Thus participatory monitoring and evaluation can:

- Be conducted by all actors (the 'experts', programme developers and learners) in order to systematically record and analyse the information which they have determined to be important for assessing progress and impacts.
- It Raise critical challenging questions, while simultaneously creating self-confidence. The learners and the community can have a space to be critical about the programme without taking it personally.
- Be an active process for framing questions and seeking answers, rather than a passive method of giving answers to questions posed by others. In other words, it can allow for an opportunity wherein people investigate and analyse their own work, aims and impacts.
- Provide learners with opportunities for interactive dialogue to check and cross-check their understanding and to get peer feedback on their progress. This not only lets them see where they make mistakes, but also to learn from them.
- The results of such an evaluation can be used as a part of the community learning, not just as an individual process. If all members and learners of the community are aware of the process at every stage, it helps minimizes the repetitive mistakes and it can then become a truly empowering learning experience.

3.3 Benefits of Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation in Adult Education Programmes

- It provides an ongoing picture that allows the community to determine whether activities are progressing as planned.
- It may also be able to predict when an activity may not lead to achievement of certain objectives, in which case adjustments and corrective measures can be made at an earlier stage.
- There is a development of common understanding of need, worth, roles and ways to realize the development objectives through continuous feedback and reflections, which ensure improvement in the quality of the programme.
- It is process oriented as it does not focus solely on quick, rapid and tangible counting of progress. It allows for monitoring the process of learning and development in an evolutionary fashion.
- Primary stakeholder, both learners and local communities, are empowered in the process. While building their confidence, it also enables both individuals and community to demand for greater accountability and sustainability of programmes.
- It bridges the gap between an 'expert' perception and local experiential knowledge.
- Participatory monitoring and evaluation can involve both the 'insiders' and the 'outsider' as co-facilitators.

SUMMARY

Monitoring is a system which can follow a well-designed process, and its primary purpose is to generate information that can be used to improve programme implementation. Monitoring and evaluation are two different management tools that are closely related, interactive and mutually supportive. While monitoring ensures that the programme is functioning as planned, evaluation aims to judge programme performance.

Participatory monitoring and evaluation involves the learners, the community and the concerned organisation to collectively decide on monitoring and evaluation criteria and methods of assessment. This ensures that the programme is not '**expert-driven**' but only '**expert-facilitated**'. Key steps to approaching participatory monitoring and evaluation in adult education contexts are; to first identify and engage stakeholder groups and community researchers; understand the local context, issues and barriers to change; and then identify information needs and interests.

The next module will provide details on how to develop, report and analyse a monitoring and evaluation plan of a programme.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

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