PRIA

INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY
Initiative in Education & Lifelong Learning

Certificate in
International Perspectives in
Participatory Monitoring and
Evaluation

Instructional Guidelines for Learners

Course Overview

In the contemporary context, the concept of participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) has become an important means to enhance effectiveness and relevance of programmes, organisations and institutions in their pursuit of inclusive development, good governance and social change.

Critical reflection and analysis are integral components of one's existence or those involved in the enterprise of development and social change. The process of monitoring and evaluation (M&E), however, has becomes more systematised. In recent years, concerns regarding effective management and result orientation of the *diverse range of programmes and projects* are on the rise. It is being recognised that the active participation of the primary stakeholder, i.e. the community or the beneficiaries of the project, in the process of M&E can address some of these concerns more effectively. The process of PM&E also is important for *organisational strengthening and institutional learning of* the diverse range of organisations. PM&E approaches have also entered the arena of *governance*, assisting in ensuring accountability of the institutions of State and Market to the citizens.

PM&E thus is fast becoming an important dimension of international development debate and practice. There are however not many development courses, internationally, which focus on the concept of PM&E from an educational and learning point of view. The courses that do exist are expensive and thus out of reach of many practitioners. Moreover, many practitioners lack adequate time to attend face-to-face development courses on monitoring and evaluation. This Course is offered by PRIA and the University of Victoria (UVic) in a distance education mode, to address the above learning needs.
It will facilitate critical analysis of different debates and perspectives on the theme. The programme is based on PRIA's more than three decades of involvement with the subject of PM&E. The programme and course materials are designed and prepared by PRIA and UVic. The certificate will be jointly awarded by PRIA and UVic.

Assignments

a) Assignment 1: Reflection Paper

b) Assignments 2 & 3: Quizzes

c) Assignment 4: Project Paper

You may submit your assignments 1 & 4 in the respective forums. For assignments 2 & 3 which are quizzes you may click on the same to attempt the quiz online.

ASSIGNMENT 1: Reflection Paper

The purpose of this assignment is to give the instructor(s) a sense of your conceptual understanding of participatory monitoring and evaluation.

Instructions

This note should build from your existing understanding of participatory monitoring and evaluation, and should also incorporate insights gained from Units 1 and 2 of the course.

We suggest that before writing the reflection paper, you make a 1--2 page concept outline, wherein you logically sequence the concepts to be covered in the paper. This outline will help you in organising your thoughts and subsequently your paper in an organised and methodical manner. Organise your paper such as to have a clear beginning, body and conclusion. Once the outline is in place, begin writing the paper.

Make efforts to develop your own understanding of participatory monitoring and evaluation, rather than reproducing what has been covered in the units. It would help to include illustrations of participatory monitoring and evaluation from your day-to-day experience; to raise critical questions; and to develop your own critique of the concept. If you are using someone else's ideas, please do acknowledge the same in your reference list.

Length: Please ensure that your paper is not less than 2500 and does not exceed 3000 words. The paper must be in 12-point, Times New Roman font and in 1.5 spacing format.

Value: 25% of your final grade

ASSIGNMENT 2 & 3: Individual Quiz

There will be a total of two quizzes that each learner is expected to participate in. The first quiz is based on course contents, including readings, from Units I-III and the second quiz is based on Units IV-VI.

We shall upload the first quiz on the 31st March – it shall remain open until 13th April. The second quiz shall be uploaded on 20th June – it shall remain open until 7th July.

There are two reasons why you should take part in the quiz. Firstly, it ensures that you go through the prescribed readings in a detailed manner, which is an essential component to your learning. Secondly, it is an easy and fun way to add to your overall assessment. So don't lose this opportunity.

Please note, in case you attempt the Quiz more than once, the software will only consider the first submission of the Quiz as the one for grading purposes. So please do not send in revised versions of the Quiz in order to get a better score.

Value: 20% of your final grade (10% for each Quiz).

ASSIGNMENT 4: Project Paper

The purpose of this assignment is to demonstrate your understanding of the concept of Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation in a project context. This assignment will further guide you to begin thinking about how you might apply your knowledge in a real-life setting.

Instructions

A.   You should consider the following steps while working on your project:

1. Identification of a Development Project

Identify one development project. If you are working with a development organisation, then you can select an existing or future project for this assignment.

2. Develop a plan for building a participatory monitoring and evaluation system for the given project.

(*Note*: The plan can be for initiating a new project or while revising and expanding the M&E of an existing project)

B.   Project report

The project report should capture both the above-mentioned steps adequately. Some key issues to keep in mind while preparing the project report:1

- How did you identify the project? (Identification process and reason for selection of that project).

(*1 Adapted from IFAD. Using M&E to Manage for Impact, In Managing for Impact in Rural Development: A Guide for Project M&E. (Section 2, p 23) www.ifad.org.*)

- Brief description of the project (i.e. Name, objective, nature, scope, implementing organisation).

- Key components of PM&E system, which need to be built or strengthened (keeping in mind the following dimensions):

1. Establish the purpose and scope (Why do we need PM&E and how comprehensive should   our PM&E system be?).

2. Identify performance questions, information needs and indicators (What do we need to know to monitor and evaluate the project in order to manage it well?).

3. Plan for information gathering and organising (How will the required information be gathered and organised?).

4. Plan for critical reflection processes and events (How will we make sense of the information gathered and use it to make improvements?).

5. Plan for quality communication and reporting (What, how and to whom do we want to communicate in terms of our project activities and processes?).

6. Plan for the necessary conditions and capacities (What is needed to ensure that the PM&E system actually works?).

- How do you plan to initiate the process of building/strengthening PM&E system?

- Emerging principles/lessons/challenges for building and strengthening PM&E systems in projects.

Length: Please ensure that your paper is not less than 4500 and does not exceed 5000 words. The paper must be in 12-point, Times New Roman font and in 1.5 spacing format.

Value: 40% of your final grade.

Guidelines for Writing Assignments

- Read the instructions for the assignment and any other information given in the instructional guideline carefully. Sometimes there are several questions or steps embedded within the instructions, so be sure to address all of them in your writing.

- Introduce the reader to your paper by clearly stating your purpose or thesis statement and then provide an outline of how you will go about explaining or arguing it. In the introduction, you can also provide some context for your topic and why it is important. If you are addressing one small piece of a complex problem, the introduction should define the scope of your paper. ☐

- The body of the paper should follow logically from the outline stated in the introduction. Sometimes it is useful to indicate to the reader when you are making a new point or moving into the next step of your explanation, argument or analysis. This can be done simply by using headings or words such as 'first… second… or next…finally.' Introduce the main point of each paragraph and ensure that the information in that paragraph supports your point.

- Whenever you are citing from an article or referring to a theorist's ideas, you must include the author's name and year of publication in parentheses.

- If you are using direct quotes from the original text, use quotation marks ["..."] and include the page number. For example, Kothari (2001) argues "participatory approaches to development research and planning attempt to challenge the apparent power relations in society by recognizing the control that certain individuals and groups have over others" (p 142)

- If you are paraphrasing the author's ideas, but are not using a direct quote, you still need to acknowledge that this is not your original idea. For example: Kothari (2001) cautions that while participatory approaches can challenge the relations of power embedded in every society, we must take care not to oversimplify the nature of power, or to reassert new forms of social control.

- For excerpts of more than 40 words, start on a new line and indent the block of text. (Do not end a paragraph with this indented quote, comment on it.) These indented quotes do not need quotation marks. For example: Kothari (2001) has described how powerless groups can have their knowledge validated through participatory approaches:

- Participatory approaches to development research and planning attempt to challenge the apparent power relations in society by recognizing the control that certain individuals and groups have over others. This is based on the recognition that those who wield little power have limited opportunities to express their interests and needs and is generally excluded from key decision-making processes, and that there knowledge is considered insignificant. Nevertheless, she goes on to caution that we must take care not to oversimplify the nature of power, or to reassert new forms of social control. Indeed, relations of power are embedded in participatory approaches as well.

- The conclusion often provides a brief summary of what has been covered in the paper and reiterates the purpose statement. While no new arguments should be introduced in the conclusion, it is sometimes appropriate to call for

action. For example, further research into a subject when there are obvious gaps in the literature. In a more personal paper, you may also speak about your own reflections on the subject, what you have learned or what implications it has in your life.

- Do not trust the spell check – always re-read, and if possible, have someone else read your paper. Grammatical and spelling errors are distracting and can sometimes weaken your credibility to the reader.

*(Note***:** You will not be graded for your spelling or grammar for e-mail postings; however, as noted above, these will be taken into account in the evaluation of the two written assignments you submit.)

Tips for Online Communication

Online communication requires slightly different skills from face-to-face interactions, as the people you are communicating with do not have access to all the usual visual signals (tone of voice, facial expressions, hand movements, body language, etc.). In addition to typing skills, you may also need to give some context to your statement. For example, if you are making a joke, or being ironic, you need to indicate this clearly to the readers.

Please remember that your peer learners may come from different regions, as well as other nationalities, and therefore there are many different idiomatic expressions that are used in specific countries, regions or communities. There are also a number of acronyms that have become popular through online communication through e-mail, chat rooms, text messaging, etc. Keep in mind that not everyone will be aware of what these expressions or acronyms mean; so if you choose to use them please give a definition. Likewise, if you do not understand what others – including what we – have written, please ask for clarification.

Evaluation

During the course, you will be evaluated on the basis of your written assignments, the quality of content and frequency of your online participation with the guest faculty and instructor.

The division of marks for all assignments and online participation is as follows:

S No.	Assignment	Title	Total Marks
1	Assignment 1	Reflection Paper	**25**
2	Assignments 2&3	Individual Quiz	**20**
3	Assignment 4	Project Paper	**40**
4	Online Participation		**15**
			100

Grading

The letter grades do not fully measure how much you have learned and internalised, but are more indicative of your performance in the virtual classroom and quality of assignments. As such, you should take responsibility for your own learning in the following ways:

At the beginning of the course, the instructor will ask you to send your personal learning objectives. At the end of the course, you should reflect upon those objectives, whether you have met them, whether they were realistic, and which parts of the course structure have helped or hindered you in meeting them?

During the course, you will get an opportunity to participate and make contributions through discussions, reflections and comments by using the Discussion Forum on the Moodle. You should reflect upon your own contributions to such virtual exchange.

At the end of the course, you will be asked to provide a 'balanced feedback' on your overall performance. This will include two positive comments and one suggestion for self-improvement.

Please provide these comments in the feedback form as they will be considered as one of the components towards your overall grade.

Grading Scheme

Grade	Qualitative Value	Point Grade	Equivalent Numerical Value (%)
A	Excellent	5	70 and above
B	Very Good	4	Above 55 and below 70
C	Good	3	Above 45 and below 55
D	Satisfactory	2	Above 35 and below 45
E	Unsatisfactory	1	Less than 35

(*Note*: You must get at least Grade D to claim the Certificate in International Perspectives in Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation)