

Assignment Five Discussion

Online Learning: OL 204 Designing and Funding Non Profit Projects. The Community Focus

Center for Sustainable Development: <https://nonprofit.csd-i.org/ol-204-designing-and-funding-non-profit-programs-4/>

Assignment Five. Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PME): Community Based M&E Plan Simplifying your monitoring and evaluation plan with user-friendly indicators

Introductory Quotes

FAO: training module on participatory community monitoring and evaluation

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/006/AD346E/ad346e0e.htm>

"Aim of participatory monitoring and evaluation (PME)

1. To assess information or generate data on development activities being carried out at the local community level.
2. To facilitate monitoring and evaluation by beneficiaries of different development activities.
3. To increase beneficiaries' commitment and understanding in designing, planning and implementing community-based development projects or programmes.

Participatory monitoring involves local beneficiaries in measuring, recording, collecting, processing and communicating information to assist local development project extension workers and local group members in decision-making.

Involving local people in project evaluation is one of the learning objectives of participatory management. Apart from project's impact on the life of the people, it is also worthwhile to evaluate: i) attitudinal changes in the local community about their role and sense of responsibility; ii) if people have gained confidence in their ability to undertake new activities; and iii) lessons about people's capacity, extent of participation and community responsibilities.

It provides an opportunity to the project implementation committee to assess deficiencies in the project design - if objectives and work plan were realistic, if local funding was adequate and whether project was actually owned by the people. Answers to these questions indicate future precautions and modifications in the method and approach. This in itself is an achievement in capacity building at the local level."

CARE: Framework of Milestones and Indicators for Community Based Adaptation

https://careclimatechange.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/CBA_Framework.pdf

"The Framework of Milestones and Indicators for CBA extends the CBA Framework with a set of proposed milestones and indicators to help project teams in planning activities and tracking progress towards achieving the enabling factors. The approach reflects the fact that adaptation is a process – the milestones and indicators are focused on monitoring and evaluating the adaptive capacity of target populations rather than fixed outcomes.

It is important to note that the framework is designed to show the wide range of results that adaptation projects could aim to achieve at household/individual, local government/community and national levels. No CBA project will be able to achieve all of these results. Rather, the framework is intended to provide a "menu" of milestones and indicators to guide project teams in selecting specific results and indicators that are within the scope and focus of their project."

Intercooperation: Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation-Field Experiences

https://sswm.info/sites/default/files/reference_attachments/Intercooperation%202005%20Participatory%20Monitoring%20And%20Evaluation.pdf

"Decide with the key informants what parameters should be used for recording observations. Typical ones might include land type, soil type, natural vegetation (perhaps recording certain key 'indicator' species), local fauna, crops, water bodies, and land ownership. Local definitions of these parameters should be explored – for example, names of land and soil types, or of locally important plant or animal species. It is best to limit the parameters covered to five or six at maximum; trying to collect too much information may only result in confusion.

Participatory Resource Mapping. These maps may be used for participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation purposes, if changes are recorded on it on a regular and participatory manner. This may be done on the same map, but is usually better done by overlaying an updated version (tracing paper may be used for this), or simply asking participants to draw new maps at certain time intervals and comparing the results."

Discussion:

One of the biggest challenges for me in developing these courses has been to decide the order in which to present material, and also the quantity of work and the amount of information within each assignment.

I think that many of you upon having completed OL 202, were able to look back on the previous 12 assignments and think to yourselves "I get it now!" However in the middle of each individual assignment it may not have seemed that clear how all 12 were finally going to fit together.

We're coming to another one of those junctions right now. In this assignment, Assignment Five, we are going to be reevaluating our monitoring and evaluation plan so that the community can adopt it and carry it forward into the future. This will help them make sure that they are continuing to meet the outputs, outcomes, and goals of the project—and are continuing to move in the direction of the long-term impact that we had all hoped to achieve.

Consequently, I made the decision to present this assignment now. Technically, this may have been something that you might have done with the community three or four weeks ago, but my concern was that it would've been too much information.

There are two general phases for this week.

One, is to reframe the indicators that we developed in our log frames such that they are readily identifiable by, and comfortable for the community members to use.

Two.

Earlier in this course, we empowered the community by:

- establishing the committee to oversee and maintain the project
- developing skill sets so they can carry on with the activities
- inviting a community member to join our field staff so that they can learn how to become more versatile and adaptable as the project unfolds

We are now going to give them some simple tools so that they can continue monitoring the project long into the future, and then evaluate whether they feel it is moving in the correct direction.

This week I'm not going to ask you to hold another community workshop—don't worry! I also think that you may already have all of the community information that you need based upon your meetings with the committee and community members.

1. I'm simply going to ask you to take one of your programs from your log frame and place in the cells where the indicators and means of verification are, indicators which would be meaningful to the community members that will help them to evaluate if what they're doing is progressing as planned and is fulfilling their expectations.

Now, during the course of future committee/community meetings workshops, you can share these new indicators with them and fine tune the indicators so that they make sense to them—and so that they are representative of the outcomes and impacts at the project is attempting to achieve.

2. I'm also going to ask you to put together a very simple monitoring schedule. This is just a simple matrix with dates across the top and activities along the left column. Some activities may need to be monitored only once a year—others may need to be monitored every six months.

So, in your meetings with committee members over the next two years (or however long your project is scheduled for) you can continue to share these new indicators, involve them in their monitoring activities, and discuss with them the successes and the lessons learned. At the end of the two years they should be so accustomed to the M&E plan using their user-friendly indicators and their user-friendly M&E schedule, that they should just simply be able to carry on using it long into the future.

At the point of project handover, you're going to want to prepare for them a second, very simple, M&E schedule that will allow them to continue the monitoring and evaluation for the long-term. This matrix will be remarkably simpler than the one that you used during the project, because of the fact that many of the activities that you were monitoring will have concluded. The matrix will now be looking at benefits, outcomes and impact.

Please move on to Assignment Five—I look forward to seeing your work.

Sincerely, Tim Magee