

4. Planning for Monitoring and Evaluation

4.1. Rationale

We are all accountable for the work we do. We are accountable for the use of the resources that we are given. We are accountable to a variety of people, but foremost to the people and communities we serve, though we are also accountable to those who provide resources.

We also need to learn lessons. We need a system that is reflective and analytical, examining performance both:

- f* On an on-going day-by-day, month-by-month basis so that we can change direction and improve what we are doing; and
- f* On an occasional basis, perhaps annually or every three years, when we can examine our effectiveness and the changes that have occurred so that we can build lessons from such experience into our future plans.

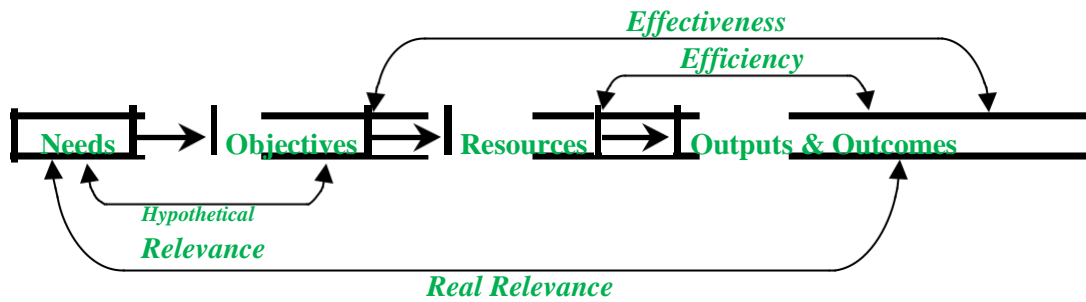
In response to these needs for accountability and feedback, three main questions should be addressed when preparing education development plans or programmes:

- f* What can enable us to judge and measure whether an objective or an expected result is achieved and an activity implemented?
- f* How can we assess the achievement of an activity, an output or an objective?
- f* What level of result are we going to assess?

In general terms, monitoring and evaluation consists in measuring the status of an objective or activity against an “expected target” that allows judgement or comparison. This target is an indicator. This implies that one has to define at the stage of planning some indicators that can enable measurement whether and how an output or an activity is delivered in comparison with the initial targets.

Another question concerns how to assess the status of each level of the programme (activity, output, purpose and goal). Your boss might want you to produce results, no matter how you achieve them. However, you ought to care about the use of the means that you are given in order to attain the results expected by your boss. This can be done by regular monitoring of the achievement of your activities. On the other hand, you may need an external and objective point of view to assess the impact of your activities in meeting the purpose of your programme, which can be done by a more formal form of assessment, an evaluation.

Figure 2: Relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness.



It is very important to plan M&E from the outset: e.g. when doing a strategic plan or planning a programme or a project. A system is needed that will help answer the questions of:

- f Relevance: does the organization or project address identified needs?
- f Efficiency: are we using the available resources wisely and well?
- f Effectiveness: are the desired outputs being achieved? Is the organization or project delivering the results it set out to deliver?
- f Impact: have the wider goals been achieved? What changes have occurred that have targeted individuals and/or communities?
- f Sustainability: will the impact be sustainable? Will any structures and processes so established be sustained?

It is important to note that credible indicators cannot be constructed without a reliable information system. Without the production of reliable statistics, the quality of monitoring and evaluation will be questionable at the stage of the plan implementation. In other words, one must start by establishing a reliable information system in order to ensure the quality of the monitoring and evaluation.

DR. MOUSUMI BORAL