

Effective Monitoring & Evaluation

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It
Takes a
Village
to Raise a
Reader

Opening Thoughts..



- ✦ Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is seen as inherently good...
- ✦ M&E helps us:
 - ✦ Account for donor money;
 - ✦ Monitor how well a project is being implemented;
 - ✦ Show what difference our project is making.
- ✦ However, many organisations are slow to develop effective M&E strategies.
- ✦ This is because it is very difficult to measure complex social change processes.

My Background



- ✦ Teaching young children to read & work as a teacher-librarian;
- ✦ Canadian school library leadership; worked with local. National and international NGOs;
- ✦ Academic work (UPEI): researcher, educator in School Librarianship Masters programme;
- ✦ Research: early literacy; role of libraries in supporting literacy; reading for pleasure; the value of play; helping organizations build research capacity....

International work...



- ✦ Organisations: IASL and IFLA
- ✦ Academic conferences beyond librarianship: CIES, and many others;
- ✦ Canadian Organisation for Development through Education (CODE)
- ✦ CODE-Ethiopia (C-E): eight years working with members of this NGO – providing training, consultation, research support, dissemination, advocacy, evaluation....

CODE-Ethiopia (C-E)



- ✦ C-E- 25 years building community libraries (97 so far) in rural/remote areas of Ethiopia;
- ✦ Distributes books (donated ones and local published); trains staff; publishes 100s of local language books (in 6 languages); operates library programming for reading promotion and reading for pleasure and building a culture for reading in the community;
- ✦ Heavy focus on youth, girls and women and health education;
- ✦ Family literacy and reading promotion activities are big part of their library programming.

My Role in C-E Work



- ✦ Work closely with my research partner M Asselin (UBC).
- ✦ Teaching C-E staff and over 100 front line library staff strategies for reading promotion and helping users with their literacy skills (primarily information skills).
- ✦ Helping the organisation build a long-term strategy for monitoring & evaluation.
- ✦ Included: programme evaluation; implementation of reading strategies; using a repertoire of tools for M&E;
- ✦ Tools used: site visits; focus groups; checklists; pre- & post-tests; surveys; case studies; tracking tools; and externally imposed tools for funders.

Learning in Ethiopia



- ✦ Schools, churches, libraries- all support learning and literacy.
- ✦ Short video to introduce learning in the community....

An Ecological Framework for Library or NGO Development



Values/Goals/Passions

Context/Environment

Library or
NGO

Partnerships/Interactions

Action/Research

Values/Passions




- ✦ Our programmes/initiatives/innovations/projects all spring from a fundamental belief that we can make a difference. We have a passion about changing the world and making life better for our children.
- ✦ This is the BIG “why we do it”.
- ✦ Libraries have a fundamental commitment to inclusion, equity and responsiveness to changing social, political and economic values.
- ✦ C-E libraries have firm values around:
 - ✦ Services for girls and women.
 - ✦ Use of local language materials.
 - ✦ Increased emphasis on preschool children and family literacy.
 - ✦ Bringing computers and digital books into CLs programmes.

Context



- ✦ Once we have developed our set of values, principles and reasons for doing what we do, we have to look at the situation where we want to make the change.
- ✦ This is the “where, when, and how” we do it.
- ✦ Uniqueness of each community.
- ✦ Location, resources, staffing, clientele, ...
- ✦ Differing visions within the organization.
- ✦ Change/growth comes through long-term strategy and constant reflection and evaluation.

Partnerships/Interactions



- ✦ We cannot do it alone.
- ✦ This is the “with whom will we work to accomplish the project” part.
- ✦ Library staff must re-frame their identity and role from guardians and authorities of resources to that of learners, leaders, promoters and researchers.
- ✦ Local leadership is needed so everyone in the school and the community has a role to play.
- ✦ Partnerships with schools, government agencies, local authorities, international agencies to develop activities for all users.
- ✦ C-E: International collaborations with CODE and EIFL.

Action/Research



- ✦ Developing and implementing the project is only part of the work. We have to be sure we are monitoring and evaluating our work.
- ✦ This is the “how will we know we are doing what we set out to do” part.
- ✦ All participants must document their activities, share results with the community and identify new ways to build their library programmes.
- ✦ Research on our actions leads to more effective new actions.
- ✦ C-E: Libraries are required to maintain library stats, and programme information (frequency, attendance, feedback....).
- ✦ C-E: Working closely with Library Management Committee, sharing successes and building new initiatives.

Activity One



- ✦ Work together with members of your organisation;
- ✦ 1) First we explore: *What is it you want to change and improve for the children in your community?*
- ✦ 2) Then the Context: *Who will be part of the project? What resources are needed? What resources do we already have? What else do we need?;*
- ✦ 3) Then: *Who are the partners with whom you could work?: What role will they play?;*
- ✦ 4) Finally: *How will you know you have achieved what you set out to accomplish?*

One Size does not fit all...



✦ the ecological approach:

- ✦ helps keep the focus on school-wide approaches;
- ✦ permits a progressive re-visioning of the role of libraries;
- ✦ contributes to broader social and economic change;
- ✦ allows for flexibility/respect for unique contexts, & differing access to the quantity and quality of resources
- ✦ and recognizes the factors affecting the commitments of local community organisations to change and create partnerships.
- ✦ allows for mixed-methods in monitoring & evaluation processes.

Why monitor & evaluate?




- ✦ We are good at seeing a problem and developing a project to solve it.
- ✦ We struggle to provide evidence that our intervention caused any change.
- ✦ We cannot assume we are doing well.
- ✦ We need to question whether we are making a difference and how we are influencing change.
- ✦ In other words, what is the purpose for doing M&E?

Purposes...



- ✦ Accountability (upwards to the donor);
- ✦ Accountability (downwards to the beneficiaries);
- ✦ Control & supervision of staff & volunteers;
- ✦ Improving our performance;
- ✦ Project/programme management;
- ✦ Providing evidence for advocacy;
- ✦ Public relations & fund-raising;
- ✦ Resource allocation;
- ✦ Measuring impact.

Considering your purpose



- ✦ It is essential to prioritize the purposes; that will guide which tools you use;
- ✦ Pay attention to the different stakeholders;
- ✦ Think in terms of long-term strategies;
- ✦ Consider the interests of individuals involved;
- ✦ Always keep your eye on what it is you are trying to achieve.

Activity Two



- ✦ Review the list of purposes and pick the top three that you feel your organisation needs to address in a plan for M&E.
- ✦ Why is each one of these essential for improving your project or programme?
- ✦ Who will benefit from a M&E strategy aimed at these three priority areas?

Qualities of M&E



- ✦ Monitoring is: a continuous methodical process of data collection and information gathering throughout the life of a project.
- ✦ Evaluation is: measuring, analysing and interpreting data to help us determine our successes and to make judgments about effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of our work.
- ✦ Basically: Monitoring is following a process and Evaluation is measuring the product.
- ✦ Each focus on a unique set of questions...

Monitoring Questions

What is being done?

By whom?

Target population?

When?

How much?

How often?

Additional outputs?

Resources used? (Staff, funds, materials, etc.)



Evaluation Questions

Is the content of the programme or strategy being delivered as planned?

Has the programme or strategy achieved the expected results?

Has the programme or strategy been effective in improving literacy/reading goals?

Can we see the impact of the project the overall culture for reading?



Tools for M&E

There are many tools that can be used for M&E; which ones you use will depend on what kind of information you need.

Most common examples include:

Templates for recording quantitative data
(numbers etc.)

Surveys

Questionnaires

Interviews – informal and semi-structured

Focus Groups – small selected group

Participant Observation – observing daily lives of
beneficiaries.

Asset Mapping – community based.

Flow Charts- visual tool tracking the flow (over
time) of resources, benefits etc.

Testimonials – first person narratives

Case Studies – multiple tools are used to cross-
analyse the programme.



Five Step Model for Evaluation Research



Adapted from: Patton, M.Q., 1997)

Activity Three

Go back to your original idea for why you are doing this project. What is the big difference you want to make in children's lives?

Think about a strategy for Monitoring and Evaluating your project.

What information will you need?

What tools will you use?

To whom will you report your results?

How will it help you improve the project?

Sources

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Online NGO Assessment tool

<http://ngo-academy.org/resources/online-ngo-assessment-tool/>

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Questions....

Thank you.....