MONITORING, EVALUATION & REPORTING SYSTEMS OVERVIEW

For the Rapid Response Program for HIV/AIDS Activities in South Africa
Why do you think this is...??

“Monitoring and evaluation is one of the most talked about, but least practiced aspects of organizational management.”
Did you know …?

Managers commonly state that measuring performance is complex, time intensive, and costly. Many organizations consider MER to be a requirement of the funding agencies that support them and thus see MER as an external necessity.

Few managers consider M&E to be:

The strategic system for:

Assessing organizational capacity;
Judging their economic effectiveness;
or
Predicting their organization’s future sustainability.
Today...

We will Discuss ...
A simple way to develop a MER system that is...

Straight Forward
Affordable
Time Efficient
&
USEFUL to your ORGANIZATION!
Session #1

Principles & Purposes of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting
In this session we will:

- Identify the benefits and purposes of tracking performance, measuring results and reporting the progress of an organization.
- Define terms.
- Identify essential elements in developing a successful MER program.
- Discuss 4 factors that contribute to monitoring program failure.
You will begin building your Monitoring Evaluation & Reporting Plan, by...

✓ Identifying why monitoring, evaluation and reporting is beneficial to your organization.

✓ Identifying your audiences and information needs.
Why monitor performance, evaluate results and report on the progress of organization?

People normally believe that change occurs as a result of natural and human factors. Civil Society Organizations believe in large part, that if they intervene with initiatives and programs, change will be promoted in a positive manner.

Organizations define the most significant change they would like to see by developing their vision statement and identify how their organization will affect change by defining a mission statement.

A MER system is simply a tool that organizations and managers use to see if they are achieving change.
Why MER

Vision: A healthy society with high life expectancy.

Mission: Provide quality health services to reduce morbidity and mortality of underserved communities.
Why MER is Important

Reason #1:

MER provides organizations with a tool to evaluate how EFFECTIVELY they promote change.
Why MER

After developing vision and mission statements, organizations lay out a realistic plan for influencing change by:

- identifying implementation strategies;
- specific program objectives;
- and key activities.
Why MER

- For example:
- Vision: A healthy society with high life expectancy.
- Mission: Provide quality health services to reduce morbidity and mortality of underserved communities.

- Strategy: Strengthen the district health system to enhance the quality of RH health services for youth.
- Objective: Ensure youth friendly RH service providers are knowledgeable in best practices, by July 2008.
Why MER

The strategies, objectives and activities are based on:

• Perceived skills and strengths;
• The anticipated availability (current or future) of resources;
• Certain time frames.

In short they outline how an organization will efficiently produce change.
Why MER is Important

Reason #2:

MER provides organizations with a tool to monitor how EFFICIENTLY the organization promotes change.
Why MER

• Once an organization identifies what it wants to change and how it plans to go about changing it, the organization seeks partners and donors.

• Partners and donors are interested in promoting change but have different ways of working.

• You have to interest them in joining your cause and when they do join, you have to provide information about your programs in a manner that supports their particular method of operation.

• **When your organization does this successfully public and political support is fostered.**
Why MER is Important

Reason #3

MER fosters public and political cooperation and supports particular information needs for target audiences (like your board, your donor, the GOT, etc).
The Information Circle

1) A donor (USAID) wants to promote a change - to avert HIV infection and provide improved care & support to PLHAs
2) They provide (through Pact) a grant to a local NGO who has a similar goal.
3) The NGO reports on how efficient and effective they have been in promoting a certain change.
4) Pact condenses this information and reports to USAID.
5) USAID condenses this information and sends it to Congress and African Government Partners.
6) African Governments and Congress read the information, look at results, and clear support for more programs improving democracy and governance.
7) And that means more money to YOU!
Why MER

Once your organization is in the process of implementing a particular project, managers want to:

Know how things are progressing.

Compare what was planned to what is actually going on in the field.
Why MER is Important

Reason #4

MER provides managers with a tool to gain timely information on the progress of project activities allowing them to compare what was planned to what is actually occurring.
Why MER

At key stages in the life of an organization it is important to ask:
What have we learned?
What are our lessons?
What are our successes and failures?

This type of analysis allows organizations to better their systems and practices.

Organizations prosper when they capture new knowledge and support learning.
Why MER is Important

Reason #5

MER promotes organizational learning and encourages adaptive management.
WHY IS MER IMPORTANT TO YOU?

• Reason.....
Definitions

- **Monitoring** is a systematic process of collecting and analyzing information to track the efficiency of the organization in achievement of goals.
- **Monitoring** provides regular feedback that helps track costs, personnel, implementation time, organizational development, and economic and financial results to *compare* what was planned to actual events.
- In its simplest terms monitoring is *collection and analysis of information to track what’s going on*
Definitions

- **Efficiency** measures how productively inputs (money, time, equipment, personnel, etc) were used in the creation of outputs (products, outcomes, results).
- An *efficient* organization is one that achieves its objectives with the wisest expenditures of resources.
Definitions

- **Evaluation** is a systematic process of collecting and analyzing information to assess the **effectiveness** of the organization in the achievement of goals.
- **Evaluation** provides regular feedback that helps analyze consequences, outcomes, and results.
- **Evaluation** also provides regular feedback that helps organizations assess their relevance, scope, and sustainability.
- In its simplest terms, evaluation is the *collection and analysis of information to assess the impact of your work*. 
Definitions

• *Effectiveness* measures the degree to which results / objectives have been achieved. An *effective* organization is one that achieves its results and objectives.
Definitions

- **Reporting** is the systematic and timely provision of essential (useful) information at periodic intervals.
- **Reporting** provides regular feedback that helps organizations inform themselves and others (stakeholders, partners, donors, etc) on the progress, problems, successes and lessons of program implementation.
Essential Elements in Developing a Successful MER Program

• Building a MER system begins with development of a Monitoring Evaluation and Reporting Plan.

• A MER plan documents data collection, evaluation and reporting procedures to be undertaken by the organization.
The MER plan identifies:

1) The mission and results sought and the need for a MER system.
2) Who needs information and data from the organization, why, and when.
3) What data (management information and indicators) will be collected by the organization.
The MER plan identifies:

• 4) The source, method, frequency and schedule of data collection.
• 5) The team or individuals responsible for data collection.
• 6) How data will be analyzed, compared, reviewed and presented, and associated tools to be utilized.
The MER plan identifies:

7) Plans, schedules, and tools for evaluating information.

8) Plans, schedules, and tools for communicating information.

9) Related budgetary information.
REMEMBER...

• THE STRENGTH OF A QUALITY MONITORING, EVALUATION & REPORTING SYSTEM IS NOT ITS ABILITY TO GATHER DATA, BUT RATHER IN ITS ABILITY TO PROVIDE USEFUL INFORMATION FOR MANAGING RESULTS.
STOP!

Don’t let this Happen to YOU!...

4 factors which contribute to monitoring program failure are:

1. Abandonment of system - initial measurements are never repeated due to inconsistent funding, selection of too many indicators, or poor documentation of initial procedures.

2. Sloppy techniques - poor measurement consistency.

3. Data pile-up - collected information is never analyzed or stored in useable form.

4. No manager action - information is never used in decision making.
REVIEW OF WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN YOUR MONITORING, EVALUATION & REPORTING PLAN

I. INTRODUCTION.
Present a concise statement of the need and purpose of the ME&R plan. Present a summation (from the table) of your audiences, and their information needs (attach table as an appendix).

II. YOUR RESULTS FRAMEWORK.
Present the impacts, outcomes, outputs and inputs you plan to accomplish as an organization. Presentation in table format (or log frame) is fine.
III. MONITORING PLAN.

A) Present indicators selected. Include an Indicator Protocol (which state the source, method, frequency and schedule of data collection, the individuals responsible for data collection, how data will be analyzed, compared, reviewed and presented, and associated forms or tools to be used in data collection).

B) Present any other monitoring tools to be utilized by the organization such as a benchmark calendar, line item budgets, comparison charts, deliverables lists etc...

IV. EVALUATION PLAN.

Present the evaluation program and schedule in table format as per worksheet provided.

V. REPORTING PLAN.

Identify reporting tools and schedules in table format as per worksheet provided.
Determining Audiences and Information Needs.

• One of the first steps in developing a MER Plan is to determine who will be using the information that you will be collecting and what it is they would like to know.

• You may collect the best information in the world but if nobody cares about it or it is in a form that people can’t or won’t use, then all your hard work will be wasted.
Determining Audiences and Information Needs.

1. Identify your Audiences (Who Needs Data/Information from your Organization).
   - Make a list of the various groups who you think might be interested in the results of your project and monitoring work.
   - Differentiate between those audiences who just need to know about your organization versus those audiences who actually need information or data from your organization.
Determining Audiences and Information Needs

2. Determine *What* Data/Information your Audience Needs

- Any project will have hundreds of possible questions that could potentially be asked about it. Your primary challenge in designing a MER Plan is to focus on only the most important ones.
Determining Audiences and Information Needs

3. Determine Why they Need the Data/Information

- Identify why your stakeholders need the data -- how will they use the information, for what purposes?

- Understanding why a partner needs data increases your ability to provide useful information and helps build a sense of teamwork among stakeholders.
Determining Audiences and Information Needs

4. Identify *When Your Audience Needs Data/Information*

- Capture specific time frames if you know them
## Determining Audiences and Information Needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>WHAT data they need from our organization</th>
<th>WHY they need the data</th>
<th>WHEN they need the data form our organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board members</td>
<td>Updates on activities, projects and programs. Updates on management issues. Updates on financial issues. Updates on resources (inputs). Lessons learned and info on program impacts.</td>
<td>To monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization its people, products and impacts. To provide guidance. To problem solve. To help us fund raise.</td>
<td>Monthly memo and financial statement to CEO. Quarterly meeting (Jan, April, July, October) Annual Report and Financial Statement (December).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Session #2

Results Based MER
In this session we will:

- Discuss the importance of results based management and monitoring
- Discuss levels of results
You will begin building your Monitoring Evaluation & Reporting Plan, by...

✓ Refining strategic plan elements into results statements to clarify linkages & hierarchy
The Development Objective

• Today organizations must present the results of their programs as contributing to a larger development objective.

• A development objective is the overall and long term effect of an intervention (it is your highest level of impact anticipated). Reduction in incidence of HIV, improved food security, a more democratic society, or improved biodiversity conservation are four examples.
Results based management

• A management approach by which an organization ensures that its processes, products and services contribute to the achievement of clearly stated results.

• A result is a consequence of a particular activity, project or program that an organization can effect and for which it is willing to be held accountable.

• Simply put—a result is a change in condition attributable in whole or part to your organization.
Results based monitoring

• Your MER system in addition to tracking general project information (such as how much money did we spend on an activity) also measures your organizations processes, products and services contributions to development objectives.
Levels of Results

1. Inputs & Processes.
2. Outputs.
3. Outcomes.
4. Impact.
Levels of Results
Inputs & Processes

• **Inputs & Processes** are the resources & methods you employ to conduct work.

• **Inputs** can be physical (e.g. equipment rental or purchase), material (e.g. supplies and provisions), human (labor cost such as salaries for technical assistance, staff etc.) or financial (such as travel costs, per diem costs, direct and indirect costs) resources.

• **Processes** are the methods you use (e.g. training, capacity building, service provision, message promotion).

• **Inputs usually produce a result immediately (0-1 years)** (e.g. people trained, computers purchased, messages developed).
Levels of Results

Outputs

- **Outputs** are information, products, or results produced by undertaking activities or projects.
- **Outputs** relate to completion of activities.
- **Outputs** reflect what you hoped to produce from a particular input. For example: You decide the process you want to use is to train people, thus *people trained* is the result at the input/process level while *knowledge level increased* would be the result at an output level.
- **Outputs** usually reflect a result achieved in a relatively short-time period (0-2 years).
Levels of Results

Outcomes

- **Outcomes** are broad changes in development conditions, answering the “so what” question (So... we trained 100 people and increased their knowledge but did or did they not change their behavior?).
- **Outcomes** often reflect behavior or economic change and show how our activities contribute toward development objectives.
- **Outcomes** usually reflect a result achieved an intermediate time period (2-5 years)
Levels of Results
Impacts

- **Impacts** are the overall and long term effects of an intervention. Impacts are the ultimate result attributable to a development intervention over an extended period. Improved food security, increased standards of living etc,
- **Impacts usually reflect a result achieved over a longer time period (5-10+ years)**
See tables in word doc
Session #3

Indicators
In this session we will:

- Identify what indicators are, and why they are important
- Learn how to select indicators.
- Learn 10 criteria for assessing the quality of indicators.
- Learn how (and why it's necessary) to develop indicator protocols.
You will begin building your Monitoring Evaluation & Reporting Plan, by...

✓ Identify some of the indicators for their organization at the strategic level
✓ Assess the quality of indicators selected
✓ Develop an indicator protocol
What is an indicator?

- Indicators identify what you will measure to know if conditions have or have not changed.
- An indicator is specific information that provides evidence as to the achievement of (or lack of) results and activities.
- Indicators can be quantitative (number related) measures or qualitative (narrative related) observations.
- Indicators are indicative - it enables you to reduce a large amount of data down to its simplest form.
Why are indicators important?

- Indicators serve as tools to examine trends and highlight problems.
- Indicators provide an early warning signal to predict future conditions.
- When compared with targets, indicators can signal the need for corrective management action, evaluate the effectiveness of various management actions, and provide evidence as to whether objectives are being achieved.
Indicators are Not…..

• Just anything you can think of to measure. Every measure is not an indicator.

• *Indicators are indicative – they reduce a large amount of data down to its simplest form*

• Indicators are not objectives, targets or results.

• *Indicators are not biased. Indicators do not specify a particular level of achievement -- the words, improved, increased, gained, etc do not belong in an indicator*
Remember....

• You do not develop an indicator for every possible issue - thus even the most ambitious program will only be able to include a limited number of indicators.

• Indicators represent the elements that are most important for monitoring, but usually no single indicator constitutes a comprehensive measure. Managers will need to select a few complimentary indicators to adequately assess whether a particular objective is being achieved.
Management Information vs Indicators

Increased capacity of your organization

- Number of computers
- Number of staff meetings held
- Number of staff members trained

versus

- Resources mobilized
- Ability of organization to implement field programs
4 Steps in Selecting Indicators

Step 1 - Clarify the Results Statements -
Identify what needs to be measured.
Good indicators start with good results statements

Step 2 - Develop a List of Possible Indicators - Brainstorm indicators at each level of results

- Internal brainstorming
- Consultation with experts
- Experience of other similar organizations
4 Steps in Selecting Indicators

A high quality ME&R system tracks all levels of data but DOES NOT use *input indicators* as evidence of results or to evaluate effectiveness of the program.
4 Steps in Selecting Indicators

Step 3 - Assess Each Possible Indicator

1) **Measurable** (can be quantified and measured by some scale).
2) **Practical** (data can be collected on a timely basis and at reasonable cost).
3) **Reliable** (can be measured repeatedly with precision by different people).
4) **Relevant—Attributable to YOUR ORGANIZATION** (the extent to which a result is caused by YOUR activities).
5) **Management Useful** (project staff and audiences feel the information provided by the measure is critical to decision-making).
6) **Direct** (the indicator closely tracks the result it is intended to measure).
7) **Sensitive** (serves as an early warning of changing conditions).
8) **Responsive** (can be changed by management control).
9) **Objective** (the measure is operationally precise and uni-dimensional).
10) **Capable of being Disaggregated** (data can be broken down by gender, age, location, or other dimension where appropriate).
4 Steps in Selecting Indicators

Step 4 - Select the “Best” Indicators

- Based on your analysis, narrow the list to the final indicators that will be used in the monitoring system.
- They should be the optimum set that meets management needs at a reasonable cost.
- Limit the number of indicators used to track each objective or result to a few (two or three).
- Select only those that represent the most basic and important dimensions of your objectives.
Common Problems -
To measure or not to measure

- Over doing it - selecting too many indicators, making the program too burdensome to implement
- Under doing it - Selecting indicators that narrowly focus on just the activities (inputs and outputs) rather than presenting an indicator of results (outcome and impacts).
- Selecting management information as a measure rather than indicators.
Common Problems...

- Selecting indicators which don’t meet the criteria of good indicators. Particularly selecting indicators that are not quantifiable or sensitive.
- Selecting impractical indicators - ones that the measurement procedure is too complicated or time consuming to be followed over a long period of time.
DEVELOPING INDICATOR PROTOCOLS

Indicator protocols are the ♥ of your MER Plan

• A protocol is an instruction sheet.
• Protocols capture the reason for selecting indicators, describe the indicator in precise terms, and identify the plans for data collection, analysis reporting and review.
• Protocols help ensure reliability of indicators as they provide critical information to help different people repeatedly measure the indicator with the same precision.
• Protocols provide the organization with the means to collect data over time.
activity

- WRITE 3 USES of the OBJECT
Review indicator form

• See protocol
Session #4

Monitoring Tools
In this session we will:

✓ Identify other monitoring tools that may be useful to management
Monitoring Tools

• In addition to indicator protocols, there are several other monitoring tools an organization may wish to use to track progress of their programs. Usually updated quarterly.
Examples

- **A benchmark calendar:** (planned) Listing of planned key/critical activities an organization is undertaking laid out by date (a weekly program over 1-2 years)

- **A line item budget of the benchmark calendar:** (planned) estimate of inputs required to undertake the benchmark activities. Completed once a year or one time per project.
Examples (Continued)

• A Comparison Chart: compares what was planned to what actually occurred during the quarter (benchmark activities and corresponding financial data)

• A deliverable schedule: captures what was required of the organization to deliver (to a donor), the date each item was due and updated when it was finally delivered.
Session #5

Evaluation
In this session we will:

- Discuss what evaluation is and why it is important.
- Review the different types of evaluations usually undertaken by organizations.
- Identify who should be involved in an evaluation.
You will begin building your Monitoring Evaluation & Reporting Plan, by…

✓ Develop an evaluation program and schedule
What is an evaluation and why is it important?

- Basic indicator data does not tell a manager why certain results are being or not being achieved.
- Evaluation is an analytic effort undertaken selectively to answer specific management questions regarding a project/grant e.g. why results are or are not being achieved, on unintended consequences, or on issues of interpretation, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.
Types and Purposes of Evaluation

Internal informal evaluation reviews / periodic self assessment:
- Conducted periodically during the year mostly at staff meetings.
- Performance data is presented and used to assess each project’s contribution towards larger program results.
- Outcomes of the evaluation used to make early adjustments or refinements in tactics or implementation strategies.
Types of Evaluation

**Mid-term evaluations:**
- If not required or planned should be considered as a way to review strategic plan half way through its cycle. Why?
  - Assess organization’s progress in implementing activities
  - Assess progress towards achievement of objectives or benchmarks
  - Assess if interventions are sufficient to reach desired results
  - Identify barriers to achievement of results, objectives and activities
  - Identify opportunities, unanticipated accomplishments or innovations.

*Advantage:* Provide an opportunity to make mid-course adjustments in the last half of the program
Should involve key stakeholders (participatory)
Types of Evaluations

Final (End of project/program) Evaluations:
- Usually required or planned; but should be seen as a chance to review and update organization’s strategic plan.
  - Assesses why progress towards planned results was unexpectedly positive or negative
  - Tests validity of hypothesis and assumptions underlying results framework
Final Evaluation

- Assesses how well needs of different customers are being met
- Identify and analyze unintended consequences and effects of assistance activities
- Examine sustainability of activities & results
- Distills lessons learned - useful elsewhere
Types of evaluation

External or donor evaluation:

• Required by a donor or their own rules
• Donor hires an external person or team to look at activities, processes, outputs, outcomes, and impacts of your project.
• Beneficial as it brings the unbiased fresh perspectives of a third party
• Organization’s role is to ensure the evaluators understand your objectives, approach, etc.
• NB: Request a copy of the results for internal use
Building an Evaluation Schedule

• What needs to be evaluated?
• What is the purpose of the evaluation?
• When should the evaluation(s) take place?
• Who should be involved?
**Evaluation**

**What is Evaluation?**

- A process to analyze / capture what we did (or did not do) and what results were achieved (or not) and why!!!

**Why Evaluate?**

To understand why things happened

- Indicator data does not tell a manager why certain results are being or not being achieved

Review our use of inputs, processes (efficiency) and hypothesis / cause and effect (effectiveness).
How to Evaluate

I. Review Goals of Project
II. Review methods used (what worked what didn’t)
III. Report Results to date (what was achieved what wasn’t)
   Impacts/Outcomes/Outputs/ Inputs
IV. Report the prospects for sustainability
V. Review of deliverables
VI. Identify lessons learned / Best practices
VII. Recommendations for course correction or future programs.
Session #6

Reporting
In this session we will:

• Discuss what reporting is and why it is important.
• The different types of reports and communication tools usually produced by organizations.
• Review sample formats for project quarterly reports and final reports.
You will begin building your Monitoring Evaluation & Reporting Plan, by...

✓ Developing a reporting plan / schedule
What is reporting

- A compilation of descriptive information
- Presents raw data and information as useful knowledge
- Provide an opportunity for project implementers and others to inform themselves of progress, problems, difficulties encountered, successes and lessons learnt during implementation
Why is reporting essential?

- Enables assessment of progress and achievements
- Helps audiences to focus on the results and hence improve subsequent work-plans
- Helps form the basis for decision making and learning at the program level
- Communicates how effectively and efficiently an NGO is meeting its objectives
Types of Communication Tools

- Oral presentation
- Discussion sessions
- Informal contacts
- Written progress reports/updates
- Written performance/evaluation reports
- Press and media releases
- Brochures and pamphlets
- Formal academic papers and books
- Visual presentations (video shows, films, etc.)
- Internet, e-mails and websites.
How to determine the tool to use

• What is the tool?
• Who will it reach?
• When is employing this tool particularly useful?
• When is applying this tool not particularly useful?
• What will it cost to use this tool?
• What other resources are required?
Types of Communication Tools Required by Donors

- Written progress reports (quarterly)
- Internal Mid-term evaluations
- Participatory End of Project Final Evaluations
Quarterly Progress Reports Format

I. Introduction
II. Comparison of planned vs actual events
III. Indicator data & ME&R databases
IV. Financial review
V. Notable lessons learned
VI. Issues requiring immediate support/attention by the donor

Annex 1: Benchmark Calendar
Annex 2: Status of Deliverables
Internal Mid-term Evaluation Format

I. Executive Summary
II. Overall progress made to date in achieving program objectives (results)
III. Main constraints, problems and areas of need of further attention
IV. Summary of the capacity building effects of the program
V. Summary of the prospects for sustainability
VI. List of priority recommendations
Annex 1: Fiscal report
Final Evaluation / Performance Report Format

I. Executive Summary
II. Introduction
III. Methods used
IV. Results/Impacts/Outcomes/Outputs
V. Summary of the prospects for sustainability
VI. Review of deliverables
VII. Lessons learned / Best practices
VIII. Recommendations for future programs
Annex 1: Fiscal Report
Don’t Forget ...

- Check spelling and grammar, on all reports
- Have a second project person proof read / edit your document before submitting it
- Include page numbers and a Table of Contents
- Ensure all acronyms and abbreviations are noted in their full text when they are used in the report and/or list them in a glossary of terms
Session #7

Review