Example M&E Topics/Tasks

Drawing upon several monitoring and evaluation (M&E) learning curricula, this listing of M&E topics can be used to inform M&E training task analysis and curriculum design, as well as organizational M&E capacity assessment.

Core course topics for the International Program for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET, 2015)

1. Introduction to Development Evaluation
2. Understanding the Issues Driving Development Evaluation
3. Building a Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation System
4. Understanding the Evaluation Context and the Program Theory of Change
5. Considering the Evaluation Approach
6. Developing Evaluation Questions and Starting the Design Matrix
7. Selecting Designs for Cause-and-Effect, Normative and Descriptive Evaluation Questions
8. Selecting and Constructing Data Collection Instruments
9. Deciding on the Sampling Strategy
10. Planning Data Analysis and Completing the Design Matrix
11. Evaluating Complex Interventions
12. Managing an Evaluation
13. Presenting Results

Topics for Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) evaluation framework (Davis, 2006)

1. Introduction
   - Purpose of Evaluation
   - Evaluation Principles and Standards
2. Engaging Stakeholders
   - Evaluability Assessment
   - Program Analysis
   - Reaching Consensus on Evaluation Purpose
3. Defining the Program
   - Logic Models
4. Focusing the Evaluation Design
   - Designing Research/Evaluation Questions
   - Needs Assessment
   - Formative Evaluation
5. Process and Performance Evaluation
   - Impact Evaluation
6. Gathering Credible Evidence
   - Quantitative and Qualitative Mixed Methods
   - Pilot Testing/Validating Methods Evaluation Plan Implementation
   - Data Collection, Analysis, and Storage
   - Institutional Review Board issues
7. Justifying Conclusions
   - Organizing Evaluation Data
8. Ensuring Use
   - Reporting Results

Topics for ‘Easy Evaluation’ (Adams & Dickinson, 2010)

1. Program planning (Day one)
   - Needs assessment
   - Stakeholder review
   - Identification of relevant evidence
   - Program logic
   - Introduction to theory-driven evaluation
   - Uses of program logic
2. Evaluation approaches and forms of evaluation
   - Evaluation theory tree
   - Selected evaluation approaches
   - Forms of evaluation (formative, process, and outcome)
3. Ethics and evaluation practice (Day Two)
4. Evaluation priorities and questions
5. Evaluation criteria and standards
   - Developing outcome criteria and standards (success in achieving outcomes)
   - Developing process criteria and standards (quality of activity/intervention)
6. Data collection and analysis (Day Three)
7. Evaluative conclusions
8. Reporting and dissemination

Topics for M&E blended learning training (INTRAC, 2014)

1. Definitions used in M&E
2. Purpose of doing M&E
3. How it fits into the project cycle
4. Hierarchy of objectives (including log framing)
5. Developing Indicators
6. Approaches and methods to M&E
7. How to select and use various methods and tools for data collection
8. Basic skills required for effective M&E
9. Drawing up a terms of reference
10. Effective and purposeful reporting
11. Ensuring M&E leads to organizational learning

Topics for advanced M&E training (INTRAC, 2014b)

1. Clarifying different use of M&E terms
2. Issues to consider when designing an evaluation process
3. A structure for identifying issues to be addressed in M&E
4. The components of a good project or program M&E
5. Indicators and how to identify them
6. Tools to understand the logic of the interventions
7. Case studies that illustrate some of the challenges in conducting evaluations and introducing M&E systems
8. Quantitative and qualitative data collection methods/tools
9. Some newer tools to collect outcomes and impact data
10. Examination of recent methodologies e.g. contribution analysis, outcome mapping and most significant change
11. Some challenges with logframes (particularly recent donor requirements) and how to overcome them
12. Principles and strategies to support staff teams and partners to improve the evaluation of their projects/program
13. Strategies and tools to help participants to act as ‘agents of change’ within their own organizations
14. Reflection time on course input and application to real life case study and think through what needs to happen on return to implement the learning from the workshop

1. Results-Based Management (RBM)
   - Project cycles - Initial Assessment, Planning, Implementation & Monitoring, Evaluation

2. Initial Assessment Stage
   - Vulnerability & Capacity Assessment
   - Field Assessment & Coordination Team (FACT) / Emergency Assessment
   - Participatory rapid assessment
   - Stakeholder analysis – who is involved
   - Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis –
   - Problem analysis

3. Planning
   - Logical Framework
   - Objective hierarchy
   - Indicators
   - Means of Verification
   - Assumptions
   - Logframe limitations

4. Plan for data analysis
   A. Develop a data analysis plan, identifying the:
      - Purpose of analysis
      - Frequency of analysis
      - Responsibility for analysis
      - Process for analysis.
   B. Follow the key data analysis stages:
      - Data preparation
      - Data analysis
      - Data presentation
      - Data verification
      - Recommendations and actions

5. Plan for information reporting and utilization
   A. Anticipate and plan for information needs:
      - Reporting needs
      - Reporting frequency
      - Reporting formats
      - Reporting responsibilities
   B. Plan for information utilization:
      - Information dissemination
      - Decision making and planning

6. Plan for M&E human resources and capacity building
   - Assess the projects/program’s capacity for M&E

7. Prepare the M&E budget
   - Itemize M&E budget needs
   - Determine which M&E costs are included in the overall project/program budget
   - Review any donor budget requirement