

Self-Monitoring & Evaluation and its Contribution to Organisational Learning: A Self-Monitoring & Evaluation Model for a Peacebuilding NGO / Maya Reggev

Abstract

A Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system aims to review the performance of not-for-profit organisations (nfp) by a coordinated implementation of interconnected actions intended to measure and assess projects, programmes and organisations; to collect and analyse information; to report; and to support decision making and execution of improvements (Woodhill, 2007). M&E is the most accessible and useful organisational learning tool for nfps (Church & Rogers, 2006). However, in reality, the field includes mostly the performance of external evaluations dictated by funding bodies that does not take into consideration the nfp's needs nor generates the involvement of the organisation and its staff. Therefore, this kind of evaluation is not conducive to organisational learning (Britton, 2005; Lewis, 2001; Torres & Preskill, 2001; Woodhill, 2007). Despite the longstanding recommendation for nfps to also conduct self and participatory evaluation in order to meet organisational learning needs (ALNAP, 2003; Mebrahtu, 2002; Solomon & Chowdhury, 2002; Torres & Preskill, 2001; Woodhill, 2005), in the peacebuilding field a practical base has not been developed and there is a lack of general self-evaluation models (Scharbatke-Church, 2011).

This action research aimed to answer two questions: (1) how to perform M&E in an effective and participatory manner; and (2) how the developed M&E model affected organisational learning. By using participant observation, in-depth interviews, group interviews and document analysis, two to four cycles of the action research spiral

model (design, action, reflection, implementation and documentation) were implemented for each of the different M&E tools that were amended and developed and for the model as a whole.

The developed M&E system includes project and logic model design tools, M&E tools and learning channels. It was found that effective M&E happens through the adoption of evaluative thinking. Evaluative thinking includes reflection, asking thought provoking questions, methodical investigation, and system thinking and evidence-based decision making. Other elements were found to contribute to the system's effectiveness: dialogue and reflective discourse, professional/technical mediation, external evaluation that holds a belief in the organisation and its work and that creates internal knowledge, and managers and staff's ownership of M&E.

Furthermore, it was found that the M&E model contributed to the improvement of organisational learning through the three learning loops. The system's learning products were used on a regular basis and supported project design and decision making processes of practitioners and managers.