

PART THREE – FILLING IN THE PICTURE

Some years ago John Kingdon observed that things happen quickly in civil society when three normally separate streams converge; the problem stream, the political stream and the policy stream. The problem stream is the list of items of current concern to the public, popular media and lobbyists. The political stream is the matrix of potential political pay-offs elected officials might reap from enacting various strategies. The policy stream comprises the “primeval soup” of policy solutions developed by experts, such as researchers and government bureaucrats. Two streams converging isn’t enough - it has to be all three. The convergence cannot be brought together deliberately, life is way too complex for that degree of control. But skilled social entrepreneurs know intuitively when this convergence happens and seize the moment. Have Kingdon’s “Garbage Can Model” in mind as you read this intriguing article.

Reference: Kingdon, J. W. (1995). Agendas, alternatives, and public policies (2nd ed.). New York: Longman.

Civil Society Partnership in Promoting an Evaluation Culture in the Development Process – experience of the Sri Lanka Evaluation Association (SLEvA)

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The Sri Lanka Evaluation Association (SLEvA) is a voluntary civil society organization established by an interested group of professionals to promote evaluation as an integral element in the development process in Sri Lanka to contribute to better management, transparency and accountability both in the Governmental and Non-Governmental sectors.

The need for a professional organization focusing on evaluation

The primary need for an organization such as SLEvA, stemmed out of the mindsets and practices that did not enable the optimum use of resources in the country. Existing evaluation practice, as an assessment and a learning process left much to be desired. This situation was caused by many factors and significant among them were as follows:

- Evaluations were “donor” driven for funded projects and therefore had a low acceptance and low utilization of findings by the implementers and decision-makers. Nor did evaluation create an impact on or generate a sense of ownership in the minds of the ultimate beneficiaries. Such evaluations were considered as “outsider’s views” and were not made use of to improve performance. Stakeholders were not partners in the process of evaluation and treated evaluation only as a learning exercise.
- Evaluations were considered to be “fault finding missions” rather than inputs for program improvement. Various stakeholders in the development process were gravely concerned about the failure to understand the discipline of evaluation as a mechanism to identify information gaps, promote lessons learned from experiences to feed in to new projects or programs in order to avoid bottlenecks, delays in implementation, and unplanned negative outcomes or impacts.
- No institutional mechanism in the form of a professional body to further the discipline of evaluation. Consequently there was no-one to promote evaluation, encourage capacity building towards developing a critical mass with the potential to influence the establishment of evaluation standards. This situation resulted in inadequate standards for quality evaluations and the absence of a sense of collective commitment towards achieving development goals.

How SLEvA came to be – a historical sketch

The evolution of SLEvA as an Association and a professional body took place against the backdrop of the above situation. Like many other professional bodies, SLEvA came into being when a group of like minded individuals formed an interest group to foster, nurture and develop a concept towards a common goal with the view to contribute to the betterment of the society. In this case a group of professionals committed to the promotion of evaluation as a development discipline, who met informally, discussed and developed the concept and the mechanism to operationalise evaluation.

The group formulated a constitution specifying the aims and objectives. Within an year of the initial meeting of the group SLEvA was formally established in September 1999, with an inaugural meeting attended by the initial group and invitee professionals of different disciplines, engaged in research, assessments and evaluations. At the official inauguration of SLEvA, a total of 35 persons registered as members of SLEvA, and membership drive since then has increased the membership to beyond a hundred.

The catalyst of SLEvA, among the initial group of individuals, was the then incumbent Monitoring and Evaluation officer of UNICEF – Sri Lanka. The group came from various disciplines such as monitoring and evaluation, socio-economic research, medicine, nutrition, geography, sociology, economic development, accountancy and chemistry. In terms of organizational representation there were individuals from UNICEF, UNDP, Government research organizations and Ministries, Graduate and Postgraduate Faculties of Universities, Private Sector and Non-governmental Organizations.

The Sri Lanka Evaluation Association is a non-profit, non-governmental organization registered with the Ministry of Social Services as per the regulations of the country, as a voluntary professional organization. Its role is to encourage greater accountability and transparency, across all sectors, towards a culture of evaluation for improved wellbeing of the community.

Process followed by SLEvA to promote an evaluation culture

SLEvA has a clear definition of “evaluation culture”. Evaluation culture within Sri Lanka is defined as internalizing and incorporating evaluation in program design and implementation as an input to improving management of projects and programs. This input enables corrective action where resources were under or inefficiently utilized and to maximize benefits to and impact on the target population.

SLEvA was fortunate to have a number of international partners who assisted in furthering the aims of the Association. The UNICEF primarily along with the UNDP and the GTZ were among the key agencies that assisted with capacity building and studies for promoting evaluation standards.

SLEvA formed early links with the Ministry of Plan Implementation (MPI) – a key Ministry in the Sri Lankan government. This Ministry is mandated to coordinate, monitor and evaluate projects/programs and is the focal point for the Millennium Development Goals in the Government promoting Results Based Planning and Management. SLEvA considers partnership with this agency critical to promoting an evaluation culture. Being the stakeholder handling funds owned and derived from the population at large, the Government’s accountability to the public surpasses any other stakeholder in that respect. Therefore, SLEvA thought it appropriate from the beginning that the Government needs to be brought on board in promoting an evaluation culture in the development context. Such a partnership could also indirectly influence the non-government and private sector interventions, particularly in capacity building and creating opportunities for information sharing.

Four key focal areas were identified after a series of discussions among the membership and other stakeholders:

- Assisting policy formulation
- Capacity building
- Information dissemination
- Networking

Together they would help promote an evaluation culture and further the Results Based Management focus of the Millennium Development Goals.

Towards Policy Formulation

A significant achievement of SLEvA has been the Draft National Evaluation Policy for the Government of Sri Lanka. The Government of Sri Lanka believes that evaluation, a powerful tool in results-based management, is not adequately utilized in development programs. Thus the need for a national evaluation policy was highlighted at the SLEvA Conference in January 2003 by the chief guest, Secretary Ministry of Finance and Policy Development and Implementation. He requested SLEvA, as an independent professional body, to prepare a draft National Evaluation Policy (NEP) document.

The Association formulated the first Draft in April 2003 followed by an open discussion/consultation session in June 2003. The unedited draft of the NEP was placed on the International Development Evaluation Association (IDEA) website which resulted in sharing the contribution to policy formulation at an early stage and receiving responses from interested organizations. On receiving comments from various sectors and SLEvA members, the draft was revised and presented to the Government in late 2003. It was further revised adjusting to policy changes and finally presented to the Secretary, Ministry of Plan Implementation in June 2006. Despite the time taken to develop the draft and its subsequent adoption, by the Ministry the acknowledgment by the Government that an evaluation policy is required marks the beginning of the process of institutionalizing an evaluation culture in the country. However, the Ministry of Plan Implementation has already taken meaningful steps to institutionalize the concept of evaluation more widely across government.

Implementation of the NEP is the responsibility of all Ministries and Agencies engaged in national development functions. The MPI has to provide necessary assistance and guidance, training and refresher programs to enable efficient and effective implementation of the National Evaluation Policy. The National Operations Room (NOR) of the MPI plays the role of the focal point for implementing the NEP. The Secretaries of Line Ministries are responsible for the implementation of the evaluation process in their respective Ministries, organizations or projects. (Details of the Draft National Evaluation Policy can be obtained from SLEvA Website: <http://www.nsf.ac.lk/sleva/pdf/nepdraft.pdf>).

Towards capacity building

As explained before, capacity building at different levels was considered as a key intervention to develop an evaluation and results based management culture. SLEvA's contributions are as follows:

- at District¹ level, together with the MPI, SLEvA conducted a series of advocacy workshops related to the MDGS and Results Based Management;
- at the central level, together with UNICEF and MPI, SLEvA conducted **MDG advocacy workshop** with underlying RBM framework **for key policy makers** in the government;
- at individual level, SLEvA conducted several *capacity building workshops on M&E (one*

1 The administrative unit in the country.

- *week duration*) for government, non-government and private sector personnel; and
- again at individual level, SLEvA conducted *evaluation methodology training workshops* as fore-runner to the International Conference held in March 2007. These workshops were conducted by reputed international evaluators and was attended by all professionals from all sectors.

Towards information dissemination

Information dissemination and knowledge management were also used by SLEvA to promote an evaluation culture. Highlights of such achievements are as follows:

- National Conferences were organized with the focus on *Evaluation Practices and Development in the Public Sector, Universities, NGOs, Private Sector and Donors (2003)* and on the theme *Development Evaluation improving outcome (2004)*. These were organized together with the annual general meetings of the membership to allow new methodologies and areas in evaluation to be presented as means of experience knowledge and information exchange.
- Two International Conferences were held on the themes, *Evaluation, Good Governance and Development (2001)* and *Evaluation an Essential Element in the development process (2007)*. Participants from overseas and Sri Lanka had the opportunity to exchange their experiences and knowledge and learn new methodologies in evaluation and standards in evaluation.
- *Periodic meetings* were held for the members to enable interactions with visiting evaluators.
- A *newsletter* was produced for the membership with information of SLEvA activities and evaluation information including standards.

Towards networking

SLEvA has established close collaborations with UNICEF, UNDP, German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), JBIC and the American Red Cross. These relationships have helped the association in securing assistance to promote participation in capacity building workshops and conferences overseas and to conduct capacity building workshops and conferences in the country.

In the year 2006, SLEvA became a member of the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE). SLEvA hosted the formation of the Evaluation Network of South Asia (ENSA) an initiative of the UNICEF Regional Office. SLEvA expects to continue to play an active role in ENSA by promoting exchange of experiences and sharing of information among member countries.

Other Government activities that have promoted the development of an evaluation culture

The establishment of the **Information Communication Technology Agency (ICTA)**, the Government body responsible for implementing the e-Sri Lanka Development Initiatives, is yet another outstanding contribution towards institutionalizing the process of evaluation in the public sector. ICTA functions under the President which is an indication of the importance placed on promoting evaluation as a discipline. It is noted that during the bidding process for selection of consultants for the Agency, the Draft National Evaluation Policy was used as reference.

The ICTA has helped the Department of Foreign Aid and Budget Monitoring of the Ministry of Plan Implementation comprehensive *web-based National e-Project Monitoring System*. The aim of the M&E system of ICTA is a move beyond measuring inputs and outputs to capture outcomes and development results. In line with the National Evaluation Policy, the monitoring system captures implementation progress as well as results of all key development projects and program and provides policy makers and senior officials with on-line and real time access to progress information. The system generates early warnings and assists in trouble shooting of problem projects and projects behind schedule. It is under pilot implementation at the moment.

ICTA decided to establish an Advisory Board to the ICTA M&E unit and SLEvA has been invited to be a member of that Board. This provides SLEvA further opportunities to contribute further towards promoting an evaluation culture and contributing towards policy formulation at the National level.

Challenges and way forward

In his address to the International Conference organized by SLEvA in collaboration with the Ministry of Plan Implementation (March 2007), the Secretary to His Excellency the President of Sri Lanka requested SLEvA to deliver the following to improve the evaluation capacity of the Government:

- assist the Government to set up small units for evaluation in the departments and other institutions capable of in-house evaluation of all development and administrative work they perform
- work with the Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration to establish a useful, dynamic and realistic performance evaluation and appraisal scheme for public service taking into consideration the different levels at which the government functions
- market the concepts of Program Evaluation, Project Evaluation, and Personnel Evaluation effectively to the highest levels of the government.

The Secretary to His Excellency emphasized that his requests were based on Government policy, similar to the original task of developing the NEP. SLEvA considers this request as a reflection of recognition on the part of the Government of the role played by SLEvA as an independent professional body and is currently considering ways and means of meeting the request in addition to its planned activities.

Also in the paper presented to the International Conference the Director General, Department of the Foreign Aid and Budget Monitoring in the Ministry of Plan Implementation set out other planned activities for monitoring and evaluation:

- *Monitoring Performance of Ministries and Agencies:* Results Based Monitoring and Evaluation System used with technical support of the UNDP complemented with performance agreements to ensure Ministries and Institutions to manage priorities in a results oriented manner accountable for the targets they set.
- *On-going, Ex-post and Impact Evaluation:* the Department of Foreign Aid and Budget Monitoring of the Ministry Plan Implementation will undertake on-going, ex-post and impact evaluation on selected mega Projects and disseminate evaluation findings to concerned stakeholders.
- *Evaluation Information System:* for evaluation and feedback to be followed up with the establishment of a web-based Post-Evaluation Information System to ensure effective dissemination of evaluation findings.
- *Poverty Monitoring and Tracking of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and National Development Goals (NDGs)* also known as Mahinda Chinthana Goals (MCGs).

Much of the efforts of SLEvA have been focused at the Government and policy level. However it also recognizes the significant role that evaluation can play at the grassroots level/village level. Consequently SLEvA intends to help beneficiaries of development interventions

become aware of the need for self-evaluation of the delivery system. This involves the development of concepts, methodologies and capacities for facilitation at the level of grass-root level development activists. This will also require advocacy of the concept and methodologies to the Government and the Non-Governmental Institutions in order to gain acceptance for the concepts – which may be easily said than done.

However, it is encouraging to note the commitment of the Government and the Non-Government sector, private sector and donor community in promoting evaluation as a culture and a discipline as expressed by their appreciation of the efforts made by SLEvA at the International Conference held in March 2007. Accordingly SLEvA looks forward to a future of success in its endeavors to promote evaluation as an integral element in the development process.

A discussion between the editors and the authors

Q. The SLEvA strategy has been so far very “Top Down”. At the end of the article you mentioned the need now to work at the community level. Why did you choose to do things in that order?

A. SLEvA had no choice. Development activities of the Government and the NGOs and INGOs are top down and do not have a monitoring or evaluation process built into their plans other than monitoring of physical and financial progress followed by post project evaluations to meet Donor requirements. Therefore, the priority for SLEvA was the advocacy and introduction of evaluation as an integral component to the development process, responding to the prevailing scenario. Further, SLEvA strategy has been to focus on creating an enabling environment, both policy wise and institutionally, which is considered a pre-requisite for operationalizing an evaluation culture at the various levels in the development process, primarily at community level. Therefore, it is timely to focus on ways and means of how community participation in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the development interventions could be strengthened.

It is not that meaningful or feasible to introduce grass-root level monitoring and evaluation with in the context of a “Top Down” development process.

Q. What lessons have you learned so far from SLEvA activity? What advice would you give other South Asian countries that are establishing a national evaluation body?

- A. • SLEvA has evolved in the Sri Lankan context attempting to meet the prevailing Sri Lankan development environment. Any attempt in establishing a national evaluation body should be placed in the country specific context.
- SLEvA has worked closely with the Government with a view to advocating the adoption of evaluation as an integral component in the development process and has achieved a fair degree of success and acceptance.
 - SLEvA recognizes the fact that civil society organizations cannot work in isolation, particularly in promoting an evaluation culture. Hence collaboration with the Government is considered crucial as joint efforts are found to be more productive and complementary.
 - SLEvA upholds voluntarism among its membership which had been a strong contributory factor. However, the limitations should be taken into consideration for sustenance of voluntarism.
 - SLEvA has provided a catalytic role to professionals interested and committed to promote evaluation.
 - SLEvA activities have been conditioned by limitations of resources in the form of time available to members to devote on SLEvA activities as well as financial resources.

- Enlisting support from Donor Agencies for promoting an evaluation culture and sharing of experience as the resource based of a voluntary organization is limited.
- Capacity building and networking contribute to the success of promoting an evaluation culture.

Q. So from those lessons, what are the must dos and must not dos?

Some must dos

- A.
- Uphold the voluntary nature of the organization.
 - Focus on advocacy and promotion of evaluation as a discipline.
 - Collaborate with the Government for policy influence for the cause
 - Accept a complementary role
 - Network with other development organizations for sharing of experience
 - Uphold the independent and apolitical nature of the organization
 - Focus on capacity building at all levels.

Some must not dos

- Should not become a commercial enterprise
- Should not have political biases.

This article started out life as a description of the Pakistan Evaluation Network. But as the subsequent dialogue between the editors and the author developed, something more personal, more reflective and richer started to emerge. What we now have is an open and honest description of the challenges faced by those wishing to promote useful evaluation within program management contexts that, historically, have been anything but evaluative. And then some insightful ideas of how these challenges can, and are, being addressed.

Evaluation challenges in Pakistan and establishment of Pakistan Evaluation Network – PEN

Khadija Khan, Ph.D

Introduction

The objective of this paper is to describe the evaluation scenario in Pakistan, identify issues and draw some conclusions for future action. I begin by briefly defining some commonly used terms and clarifying their relevance to the development process. This will provide a rich picture of the wider context for readers of this journal. Since extensive literature is available on M&E, I do not get into detailing various concepts, models, standard practices, tools and techniques.

Brief Definition of M&E

The concept of evaluation is better described together with monitoring in the perspective of commonly known phrase of M&E i.e. monitoring and evaluation. ‘Monitoring’ is a practice through which programme/project progress is tracked, problems are identified and corrections are made, usually with shorter turn around time so as to keep the work going in the right direction. ‘Evaluation’, on the other hand is a systematic assessment of various aspects of the programme/project to reach some conclusions about the performance as well as success or failure of the programme/project. Therefore assessing the effectiveness of policies driving a particular programme/project is central to evaluation. Evaluation gets its input partly from regular monitoring and partly from specific exercise at mid-term or end-term evaluation of the project. Additionally, there are also ‘Impact Assessment’ studies undertaken to gauge changes that occur in peoples’ lives due to the interventions of the programme/project.

Evaluation Scenario in Pakistan

Pakistan reached its 60th birthday on 14 August 2007. Being a developing country, it receives significant financial and technical assistance from International Development / Financial Institutions (DFIs/IFIs), bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors, consortiums and UN Agencies in the form of soft loans and grants for development. The bulk of the development funding is channelled into the Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) through the government system. To better understand the evaluation scenario in Pakistan, it would be useful to provide some background information on current planning process.

Conventional Project Planning Cycle

All professionals concerned with planning in Pakistan, including those working in regular ministerial/departmental (non-development) or development planning areas are familiar with 'Project Planning Cycle' and 'Annual Work Plan' as well as the longer term work plans such as the 5-Year or 10-Year Work Plans prepared at the country, provincial and ministerial level. The conventional Project Planning Cycle has five steps:

- i. Feasibility Study;
- ii. Project Plan;
- iii. Implementation (includes monitoring & mid-term evaluation);
- iv. Completion; and
- v. Evaluation.

These steps of the Project Cycle are called PC-I, II, III, IV and V.

While there is a focus on results, the emphasis is on the intended results rather than the actual results. The government department responsible for planning such as the Planning Commission stays at the helm of affairs and consolidates all the individual plans into a national document and undertakes the process for approval and allocation of resources with input from two relevant authorities - the Central Development Working Party (CDWP) and Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC).

Normally, projects are taken from PC I through PC III stage i.e. up to the 'Implementation' stage during which monitoring as well as random inspections are conducted and reports are prepared. Only those projects where mainstreaming is required are taken up to PC IV stage as the 'Completion Report' is obligatory to shift a development project (with specific development funding) to regular budget. It is our understanding that very few projects are taken to PC V stage.

Development Project Planning Approach

An alternative to what is currently happening in Pakistan would be to embed M&E from the first step and run right through the project cycle. This would mean that pre-feasibility study and needs assessment to diagnose problems and ascertain needs would be done through participatory processes that genuinely capture the needs of the community. Traditional top down planning alone would not suffice. The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) related to inputs, outputs, outcomes and impact would be defined together with stakeholders/communities and an M&E mechanism evolved jointly to provide relevant quantitative and qualitative information periodically using various sources at administrative and community levels. Similarly periodic/final evaluations and impact assessments would be conducted with stakeholders' participation. Mid-course corrections can be made as necessary. Lessons learnt from evaluations and impact assessments would provide guidance for future planning and therefore used to evolve best practices/standards. When widely shared, the experiences turn into common basis for knowledge creation.

The Advantages of the Alternative Approach

The advantages of using the alternative approach rather than the conventional approach is that the development programmes are well monitored and evaluated. It would provide a valuable opportunity for learning lessons and making use of the experiences and knowledge gained at the individual and institutional level.

The alternative approach is derived from ground experience. A small group of NGOs are using these kinds of approaches – largely because of their tendency to involve stakeholders in development projects and their ability to reach out to the communities more effectively than the government ministries and departments. Unfortunately, it is difficult to compare the government and non-government sectors' achievements in the context of M&E practices. However, the growing influence of non-profit sector in policy making on cross cutting developmental issues such as gender equity, environment, social protection, human rights and child labour, is a result of their learning from experiences in the field that comes through continued evaluation practice.

Main Issues of Development Monitoring and Evaluation in Pakistan

There are several reasons for the Government's continued use of the conventional system. These include issues related to :

- Conceptual clarity
- Institutional framework and mechanisms
- Capacity
- Financial resources
- Attitude towards evaluation practice
- Commitment

Conceptual Clarity

In the development context in Pakistan, the thrust of the work is still focused towards achieving objectives rather than results and on implementation rather than impact. Therefore, evaluation and monitoring are focused on measuring outputs rather than on generating feedback on outcome and impact. This practice is a result of low levels of awareness and understanding of the role monitoring and evaluation can play in supporting development processes.

There are also very few examples of published reference and training material on the theme of development monitoring and evaluation in the local context for use by development planners, practitioners and young scholars.¹

Institutional Framework and Mechanisms

In Pakistan, there are two main official institutions that monitor and evaluate the socio-economic development process - the Poverty Monitoring Cell and the National Accountability Bureau. While the former has a specific focus on implementation of Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme (PRSP), the latter focuses on investigation of corruption and accountability at the national level. In addition, there are some research institutions that primarily collect statistical data such as the Federal Bureau of Statistics, Population Census of Pakistan, Pakistan Institute of Development Economists, Agricultural Research Council and some sector based research and training institutes. The institutional arrangements cover only the government sector. The non-profit sector works out its own

1 Mostly the World Bank, ADB, International and UN agencies have developed and placed material on their websites for public use. Recently NGORC - NGO Resource Centre, Karachi, Pakistan, has dedicated the quarterly journal for July-October 2005 to the theme of Monitoring and Evaluation.

mechanism organization by organization. There is no centralized authority or entity to provide guidance, set standards and undertake the M&E activity on behalf of the sector.

Since, there is no institutional mechanism across the board, there is an overlapping of functions between project planners/supervisors and implementers with regard to monitoring and evaluation.

A progressive development is that the Planning Commission of Pakistan has developed a Project Monitoring and Evaluation System and tested it with the assistance of the Asia Development Bank (ADB) and also conducted a number of ex-post evaluations. This system could be used to more effectively facilitate decision making by developing and making available a database of monitored projects.

Systematic monitoring and evaluation of the development sector has also started to get attention of the Planning Commission. There is a recognition that the planning process needs efficient management tools such as an authentic database and periodic evaluation findings/lessons learnt to be able to make quality decisions. This is a good starting point.

Capacity

As in many other South Asian countries, there is a lack of professional expertise and skills to conduct effective monitoring and evaluation. Development programs have become so diverse that for every new theme, specialized knowledge and expertise is required and this can be challenging.

International organisations such as UN agencies and financial institutions have realized the problem and are trying to strengthen the Government's capabilities. However, this tends to be only in their specific area of work and thematic interest. For instance, the ADB² is assisting the government in enhancing capacity for project monitoring and evaluation including the financial management within the framework of its financial assistance to Pakistan. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) is playing the major role in the PRSP (Poverty Reduction Strategy Program), to design and carry out a comprehensive M&E system that includes critical mechanisms such as performance monitoring and impact assessment. UK Department for International Development is also supporting the Planning Commission of the Government of Pakistan in monitoring poverty and establishing a poverty line.³

Financial Resources

Normally due to chronic resource crunch, authorities try to economize on the project's administrative costs and therefore do not carry out regular monitoring and evaluation. Except under the coverage of capacity building as described above, there is no large funding for specific investment in strengthening the area of development monitoring and evaluation at the national level. An exception is the Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) who have established an M&E system to ensure that the investment is managed efficiently.

² ADB approved a TA on Strengthening Portfolio Performance and Monitoring in November 2002, while a TA on Strengthening the Financial Management Capacity of Project Management Units is earmarked for 2003.

³ Government of Pakistan Paper on Planning Commission's Activities.

Attitude towards Development M&E

Then there is the issue of attitude that determines the need and utility of M&E. Even if it is included in the agenda, the actual implementation is not geared to find results and draw lessons for future application. There are several reasons for this. One relates to the consequences of an evaluation. At times, monitoring and evaluation have been used for punitive measures rather than for enhancing performance through efficiency, efficacy and transparency. This creates fear and prevents most public officers from supporting monitoring and evaluation.

Evaluation carries a further risk of inappropriate accountability. Many a programs fail for reasons that are out of the influence or control of program managers (eg lack of pre planning, needs assessments and proper technical and financial assessments), Yet, program managers bear the brunt of the criticism, losing their jobs and professional reputation. On the other hand when projects succeed everyone claims credit.

As far as the operational matters are concerned, the debate is on as to who should conduct and lead monitoring and evaluation and who owns the results.

Commitment

Political will to adopt effective monitoring and evaluation could be strengthened by creating right conditions (eg institutional mechanisms, financial resources, increased awareness). There is also increasing external pressure. The World Bank report on Pakistan Public Expenditure Review (October 1988) recommended strengthening monitoring and evaluation practice in order to ensure appropriate allocation and management of public sector resources.⁴

Strategy to address the Issues

A strategy has been developed to address these issues by the Pakistan Evaluation Network (PEN – see later). The main aspects of the proposed strategy are:

- Creating awareness, disseminating information, building knowledge and enhancing skills across social, economic and political sectors;
- Developing adequate institutional framework, systems, mechanisms, tools and techniques for monitoring and evaluation of government and non-government sectors;
- Networking within the domestic institutional framework and outside with international organizations; and
- Encouraging talent for innovation, experimentation, testing and exchange of new ideas through collaboration.

Creating Awareness, disseminating information, building knowledge and enhancing skills

The idea of clubbing together four important themes under one key aspect is meant to emphasize the need for interlinking and complementing each other to maximize the impact on the recipients and users of awareness, information, knowledge and skills.

4 Pakistan Public Expenditure Review by the World Bank - October 1998

The table below shows how these four interlinking factors can be implemented⁵

Concept of the Awareness Framework – Interlinking Themes

	What?	Creating Awareness	Disseminating Information	Building Knowledge	Enhancing Skills
Creating Awareness	How?		Conducting discussions and meetings; writing and printing ideas; information, facts and figures	Using discussions notes, written and printed ideas and information, documenting and publication	Learning from participation and verbal and written sources of information
Disseminating Information	Why?	Making relevant information available to stakeholders enabling them to participate in the decisions making process that affects their lives		Adding information to existing knowledge for creating new knowledge through analysis, evaluation and reporting for dissemination	Providing input to skills enhancement, including diverse options available for people desirous of learning and improving their skills
Building Knowledge	When? and/or Where?	On receiving input from awareness activities, making solid and concrete ideas available for people across board	On receiving information, consolidating information and documenting ideas to establish sound knowledge based on technical, thematic and management issues for further dissemination		On arising training need, making training and reference material available to people for skills enhancement
Enhancing Skills	Who? and (for) Whom?	All stakeholders with relevant information, knowledge and skills conducting trainings, discussions, exchanging experiences, collaborating in documenting ideas and publishing books that build the overall capabilities and capacities in the development monitoring and evaluation			
Model 1 evolved by Khadija Khan 2006 - Presentation made at the 2 nd International Conference of Malaysian Evaluation Society – MES on 27-31 March 2006, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia					

5 It is to be read as, ' How is Creating Awareness linked to Disseminating Information?; or Why is (what for) Disseminating Information linked to Building Knowledge? and so on.

Developing Adequate Institutional Framework and Systems

The second aspect of the strategy focuses on developing an adequate institutional framework and systems. The following three steps are proposed to create and sustain a multifaceted institutional monitoring and evaluation framework :

- Gear up the operation of existing institutions;
- Enhance current institutional capacity by using the above awareness framework to address emerging challenges;
- Build mechanisms for sustaining the institution over a long period of time.

The first two items will be addressed first by a survey to assess capacity of current systems, mechanisms, tools and expertise. This analysis will establish the need and focus for building new institutions with specialized knowledge and skills at various levels in order to undertake regular monitoring and evaluation of both, on-going and future development initiatives. The final task will be to mobilize resources and create an enabling environment to sustain the institutional framework.

Networking within National Institutions and with International Organizations

As the institutional framework gears up, networking among national institutions will develop. It will lead to further extension of the network to international organizations for collaboration on addressing not only the above challenges, but also any future emergencies.

The international networking could be multi-faceted and multi-layered. It would also encourage grass root level institutions to come together for learning from each other and sharing their local knowledge with institutions in other countries. Following that will be the networking of networks such as Pakistan Evaluation Network (PEN) collaborating with Malaysian Evaluation Society (MES) and both meeting with International Development Evaluation Society (IDEAS). This has already started with the establishment in 2007 of the Evaluation Network of South Asia (ENSA), a regional network of five evaluation societies

Encourage Talent for Innovation, Experimentation, Testing and Exchange of New Ideas through Collaboration

Finally, in order to make the strategy work in the ever changing development scenario, there needs to be incentives to develop innovative methodologies, tools and techniques on monitoring and evaluation. Platforms for launching new ideas and collaboration opportunities for sharing experiences could be provided for motivated professionals and young scholars.

Proposed Implementation Plan

For the implementation of the above strategy, a plan is being proposed with the following main activities:

- Vetting strategy by stakeholders;
- Mobilizing funds for implementation of final plan;
- Preparing kits with informative material for awareness;
- Conducting systematic, multi-level training;
- Developing M&E designs for selected programmes/projects; and
- Re-assessing capacity building needs

The plan could be implemented in phases so that its effectiveness could be assessed periodically and modifications incorporated if required.

Vetting Strategy by Stakeholders

The strategy will need to be placed before a plenary of stakeholders for review. This plenary has to be tripartite i.e. government, DFIs/IFIs/donors and implementing non-government organizations including communities representatives. The above plan and models will almost certainly be modified to incorporate the needs of the stakeholders.

Mobilizing Funding

Funding is essential. Most of the donor agencies in Pakistan are already aware of the resource crunch faced by the government departments and some are assisting in specific situations to finance M&E capacity building e.g. ADB, UNICEF and DFID. Even if bulk funding is not possible to obtain from one source, part of the plan could be sponsored by various donors.

Preparing kits with informative material for awareness

The plenary would be the first step in creating awareness and identifying 'Agents of Change' who can carry the message to other audiences. In order to strengthen the learning process, adequate material based on national and international experiences has to be developed and packaged in multi-level kits.

Conducting Systematic Multi- Level Trainings

While preparing the resource material, resource organizations/individuals would be identified to deliver training. Participants would include policy makers, planners, top management, middle management, program managers, field workers and community representatives.

Developing M&E Design for Selected Projects

To make the training worthwhile, workshop methods would be used where groups will develop and implement M&E designs for their selected projects. If this worked well, the designs could be replicated in similar projects.

Conducting re-assessment of capacity

A re-assessment of capacity would be conducted at various levels during the implementation of M&E design for future activities.

Mainstreaming the M&E Design

The final step in the implementation plan would be to mainstream the M&E Design. During activity 5.5, groups will prepare M&E designs for specific projects and test in their departments. Once the design is tested and refined it can be mainstreamed in the organization.

A discussion between the editors and the author

Bob

This is an ambitious plan. Early in the article you suggest that this is best carried out by the Pakistan Evaluation Network (PEN). Tell me more about PEN.

Kahdija

Pakistan Evaluation Network (PEN) was established in 2004 by a group of development sector practitioners whose concern was to facilitate both the government and non-government organizations to effectively carry out monitoring and evaluation of development programs through creating awareness and building capacities.

There were 15 founder members, mostly from the development field, but this has grown to 57 members including 5 institutional members

Bob

Why was PEN necessary?

Kahdija

Pakistan has an active civil society represented by non-government/non-profit organizations, media, academic institutions, citizens groups and, of course, individuals. All these groups have in one way or another expressed their concern over the performance of development programs and their impact on communities and individuals. Their informal oversight does help the government identify areas for improvement. However, PEN adds a particular focus to this activity with its specific belief that monitoring and evaluation is essential to ensure good governance, professionalism and high performance

Bob

So what has it done so far?

Kahdija

The initial period was focused on organizational matters such as developing a proper mission statement, objectives, program and range of activities. Then, it established an executive body / board constituting the founder members to manage the affairs of the Network. Since all 15 members in the first year are actively engaged in development programs/organizations, it has been difficult for them to meet face to face. Therefore e-mail communications have become the norm among the members.

Currently PEN is undertaking a range of activities:

- Carrying out advocacy with government departments, in particular the Planning and Development Division which is responsible for preparing the national development plan and conduct monitoring and evaluation of PRSP (Poverty Reduction Strategy Program) and MDGs (Millennium Development Goals).
- Proactive participation in the development process through close interaction with the government departments, UN and international agencies and civil society organizations.
- Conducting regular training of its members and members of partner organizations on relevant themes.

- Disseminating information and knowledge through issuance of brochures, PEN newsletter and e-mail communication.
- Making efforts to mobilize funds for enhancing the scope of activities to benefit its members and members of partner organizations.

Bob

In your paper you wrote about networks of networks. Who does PEN network with?

Kahdija

PEN has strong network with national organizations such as government departments, private sector and non-profit social sector organizations including trade unions across Pakistan.

PEN is also well connected internationally. It is an Associate Member of International Organization for Cooperation on Evaluation - IOCE, USA. It also has the intellectual and technical support on the subject from international forums i.e.:

- International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation - IOCE, California, USA
- International Development Evaluation Association – IDEAS, South Africa
- Program Planning & Evaluation, Inc. Michigan, USA
- Malaysian Evaluation Society, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

It was also a founder member of ENSA – the Evaluation Network of South Asia

Bob

You clearly see PEN taking the lead role in promoting the M&E Strategy and Plan. That's a big task – what do you see as the main challenges?

Kahdija

PEN faced the kinds of challenges described in the first half of the paper. It started from developing a common understanding among its own members regarding monitoring and evaluation and building their capacities to perform their respective jobs better to set an example. Although a lot of moral encouragement and support was available, there still remained a large resource gap that restricted PEN from enlarging its scope of work. Time was and still is another rare commodity among professionals who have to rely mostly on e-communication for information and knowledge sharing. So the main challenges are time and resources.

The relationship between program monitoring and program evaluation is much debated. Some people regard them as synonymous, some see them as separate but linked and some regard them not only as separate ideas, but often opposed to each other.

These debates can seem separated from reality. You've got to start somewhere, and to an extent it doesn't really matter where you start as long as you keep going and finish. This article describes just that kind of strategy – first try and get some order in to the situation, start to exploit the potential, reflect on what's been achieved and move to the next stage.

Instituting a Standardized Monitoring and Evaluation System for Assessing Development Performance: An Experience from Bhutan

*Karma Galleg
Alexandru Nartea*

This paper describes the experience of developing and instituting a standardized monitoring and evaluation system in Bhutan. The paper is divided into four sections. The first section provides the background outlining the rationale for developing the standardized system; section two covers briefly the objectives and key components of the National Monitoring and Evaluation System (NMES); the third section discusses the main lessons learnt and the challenges in developing the system; and ends with a conclusion in section four.

Background

Since the inception of First Five Year Plan in 1961, Bhutan has pursued a holistic development approach. Based on the vision of Gross National Happiness, it encompasses economic development, preservation of cultural and traditional values, balanced and equitable development, and environmental conservation, to enhance the well being and happiness of the Bhutanese. As a result,, in the last four decades of planned development, considerable achievements have been made in every aspect of development. The economy has grown at an average rate of nearly 7% per annum for more than two decades. The life expectancy has increased to 66 years, infant mortality rate has reduced to 40.1, and primary school net enrollment ratio has increased to 79.4%.

Despite these achievements, difficulties have been encountered in identifying the relationship between the development interventions and the results achieved. A key challenge has been to assess the impacts of development plans and in particular, to understand what difference they have made in improving the lives of the people. Like most developing countries, Bhutan lacked a good monitoring and evaluation system to effectively monitor, evaluate and report on the effectiveness of its development interventions and accomplishments. The main problems faced were:

- Absence of proper M&E institutional mechanism and clear M&E responsibilities at different levels
- Different systems and associated reporting requirements and formats of government agencies and development partners
- No coordination between the different systems
- Lack of systemic use of reports and data for learning and decision making
- Deficient feedback mechanisms on the reports submitted

- M&E limited to physical and financial inputs, as opposed to focusing on higher level/ longer term results, such as outcomes and impact
- Limited capacity for conducting M&E.

In the absence of appropriate M&E mechanisms, it was difficult to gauge the effectiveness and impact of development plans and programs. While concerns have been raised time and again on the lack of holistic and systemic approach to monitoring and evaluation of the Five Year Plans, it was only in 2003 that concerted effort to develop a standardized National M&E System was spearheaded by the Planning Commission.

National Monitoring and Evaluation System (NMES)

The need for a standardized approach to managing M&E required an integrated system linking various institutional responsibilities and supporting the work and knowledge flow. A framework was also needed to incorporate the expected and achieved results of the national development plans.

Objectives of NMES

The overarching objective of the NMES was to institute a standardized system for monitoring and evaluation of development plans and programs in the country.

Specifically, the NMES aimed to achieve the following objectives:

1. Provide uniform and consistent M&E procedures for line ministries/agencies and districts for monitoring and evaluation of all development policies, programs and projects planned under the Five Year Plans
2. Focus greater attention in assessing achievements of outcomes and impacts of development plans and programs
3. Promote greater efficiency, transparency, and accountability in the use of national resources
4. Provide critical information to decision-makers for timely remedial actions and policy directions and planning.

While the system was standardised, it also provided high degree of flexibility to the individual program managers, units, sections to set up their own M&E mechanism for their own internal management purposes.

The system was developed through a participatory process involving all relevant stakeholders from the line ministries/agencies and districts. A series of consultative workshops and meetings were held to foster a sense of partnership and inform thinking around system development. Accessing expertise and knowledge of diverse stakeholders in this developmental stage ensured that the system was relevant and suited to their needs.

The Planning Commission has now completed the development of the conceptual framework of NMES. The National Monitoring and Evaluation Manual was published in 2006.

Main Components of NMES

There are two main components of the NMES:

- M&E institutional set-up and procedures
- a web-based computerized system called the Planning & Monitoring system (*PlaMS*).

A more detailed description of the M&E institutional set-up and procedures is available in the National M&E Manual. The manual will serve as a guide for ministries, agencies, Dzongkhags (districts) and Gewogs (blocks) in undertaking systematic monitoring and evaluation of their plans and programs.

The web-based computerized system (*PlaMS*) is a centralized data collection and management system. It enables real time online data entry, storage, analysis to generate various planning and monitoring reports on development plans and programs.

The two components are interrelated. The institutional set-up and procedures describes the planning, monitoring and evaluation process, frequency of data collection, information requirements and responsibility of the different groups involved. The *PlaMS* on the other hand is the platform for entering, analysing and reporting on this information. In addition, the computerized system allows quick and secure real time information flow and retrieval, thus strengthening inter-institutional coordination. In order to ensure consistency and efficiency in planning, budgeting and reporting systems as well as coordination between the Planning Commission, Ministry of Finance, line ministries/agencies and local public administrations, efforts are underway to integrate the *PlaMS* with budgeting and accounting systems of the Ministry of Finance.

M&E Institutional Setup

Monitoring and evaluation in the country will be conducted at four levels of functional and administrative structure:

1. National Level
2. Central Ministry/Agency Level
3. Dzongkhag (District) Level
4. Gewog (Block) Level.

At each level, a M&E Review Committee will be instituted as a review and decision-making body for issues relating to development policies, programs and projects.

A M&E Coordinator or focal point will be appointed at each level for coordinating M&E activities and supporting the M&E Review Committee.

The cross-institutional linkages between M&E Coordinators and focal points will be strengthened through establishment of M&E networks which will help pull together the existing capacities in the M&E area to sustain cooperation, knowledge sharing, mutual support, capacity development and learning based on local experiences.

Lessons Learnt to date and Challenges

One of the unique features of NMES is that it will be used as a common M&E system across all line ministries, agencies, districts and blocks in the country. The process of developing and instituting this standardised system across all functional and administrative levels has been a slow and complex process. The NMES system had to fulfil the needs of diverse stakeholders, which was often difficult as many of the ministries/agencies had or were already in the process of developing their own procedures and systems. However, unlike in other countries, given the relatively small size of the Government functionaries and strong linkages between different levels in the Government, it was highly feasible to adopt a standardized system in Bhutan.

Our reflections

In the process of developing the system, some important lessons have been learnt and challenges identified that need to be addressed for ongoing successful implementation of NMES. Some of the most critical learnings are:

1. The need for a high degree of advocacy and championship for NMES

There is strong political will and support from the decision-makers in the Government to build a credible and effective M&E system in Bhutan. Nevertheless, the actual success of this effort will depend on a lead agency taking the initiative to advocate and guide stakeholders to implement the NMES. In the context of Bhutan, the Planning Commission has a critical role to play and champion the adoption and implementation of NMES in the public administration. However, this will require sufficient time, resources and dedicated staff in the Planning Commission Secretariat.

2. Creating sustained cooperation from the stakeholders

As stated earlier, the purpose of the NMES is to establish a standard M&E system for all the sectors involved in the implementation of Bhutan's Five Year Plans. There is need for ongoing consultation and involvement of partners throughout the entire implementation phase in order to promote ownership of NMES by all the stakeholders.

3. Building capacity at all levels

One of the biggest challenges in implementing the NMES is the lack of trained M&E personnel in most of the sectors and in the districts. Substantial efforts will need to be devoted particularly in the initial phase of implementation for building capacity to manage M&E activities and ensure sustainability of the system. The new features of the system will have to be understood and embedded into the organizational culture so that over time it becomes "*a way of doing business*" at all levels. Consequently guidelines and training need to be delivered to the users in the public administration once the system is launched.

4. Harmonizing donor M&E requirements with NMES

In spite of increased donor coordination, many donor-funded programs and projects, until now, required different M&E mechanisms to fulfil the donor agency's information needs. For instance, projects initiated with cooperation and support from different donors are required to prepare separate reports for each donor. This has led to a multitude of reporting requirements for a single agency. There is also need for dialogue with donor agencies in Bhutan to encourage greater harmonization of data collection and reporting on monitoring and evaluation. NMES is flexible enough to accommodate as far as possible the specific requirements of the stakeholders including the donors.

Conclusion

The evaluative culture in the current public administration system in Bhutan is still at a nascent stage. While there is strong acknowledgement by senior policy makers about the value of using evaluation findings as a means for rational and effective decision-making, as of today, not much has been realized in practical terms. The reason has been mainly due to the absence of leadership from a lead agency in the Government. The proposed introduction of NMES by the Planning Commission is directed towards creating this leadership and building a strong evaluative culture across the system.

The NMES particularly the information management component of the system – the PlaMS is a monitoring and a compliance tool for ensuring consistency and efficiency in planning, budgeting and reporting. NMES also provides mechanism to integrate evaluation and impact assessments as monitoring data will feed into the evaluation process. However, it is expected that evaluations will continue to be promoted as independent exercises.

Since the NMES is yet to be operationalized, it is too early to assess the success of the system. The NMES is expected to be implemented from July 2008 for monitoring and evaluation of country's Tenth Five Year Plan. Nevertheless, with strong political support from the Government, it is hoped that a successful system will be in place in the future.

The ultimate goal of NMES is to promote efficiency, effectiveness and transparency in the public sector management. Can this goal be achieved? What are its impacts? Let's wait for the ex-post evaluation results from few years from now.

The editors thought it would be valuable to follow up on some of the issues raised by authors of this paper. What follows is a conversation between Alexandru Nartea and Bob Williams.

Q. Much of the focus in the paper is on monitoring processes rather than evaluation processes.

A. I would probably agree with you that NMES is more of a monitoring tool intended to help track progress towards the expected results of the Five Year Plan/Multi Year Rolling Plan/Annual Plan (which is all part of the same planning process and feed into each – the results logic model applied also in other agencies and Governments – a one year expected result contributes progressively (year by year) to the realization of a five year/higher/longer term result).

However, going back to the planning outlines and results logic model, often the inputs and activities (and probably outputs) can be measured through ongoing monitoring. As we move to higher level results such, outcomes and impacts (which are at a program/sector level) the type of indicators which are defined may only be verified through more complex means, such as administrative data, surveys, assessments etc. Could this be part of evaluation? The planning framework with its computerized replication defines and standardizes all these types of results (activity, output, outcome, impact) and its respective M&E framework (indicators, baselines, targets, MoV), plus the reporting formats and periodicity (quarterly, annually, five year). So, I would say, the system is about both of them.

Q. In terms of being a monitoring tool is it about gaining some degree of compliance or consistency?

A. Both. Through having one system we make sure that, for example, the Ministry of Health, would use the same type of results statements (impact, outcome etc.) and respective indicators just as Ministry of Agriculture and any other ministries/agencies. Also we are making sure that the definition and the actual formulation of the result is consistent across agencies. Otherwise, can you imagine how confusing it would be to evaluate and report on the progress made of the Five Year Plan, when, for example, one says objective, the other says impact, or when each agency has a different understanding of the concepts. Not to mention that we define indicators for the results statements, so we would also have different types of indicator - higher/lower. And with that when it comes to reporting, every structure would have different formats and reports. So yes, consistency.

Q. If it is about monitoring and evaluation, consistency and compliance, then how do you see the potential conflicts and contradictions between the four being handled?

A. No conflicts from my point of view. As I said, I see ongoing monitoring being used at the input, activity and probably output level, while more complex data is gathered for the outcome and impact level indicators. I often see monitoring being underestimated. Knowing that evaluations usually take place at certain intervals, we can lose the momentum for taking corrective measures if we wait till we reach the evaluation stage. The activity is usually well in progress and funds heavily utilized by the time we evaluate. Monitoring feeds in critical information in a more frequent and timely manner. Why can't the ongoing monitoring observations on the progress of implementation of a certain activity or project add pressure to undertake a deeper analysis/evaluation?

Q. Is there an evaluative culture in the current system, and if not what challenges have been (or are anticipated) in developing one?

A. The concept of "evaluative culture" may have different meanings. However, and no matter how we understand it, it is hard to say there is a well developed evaluative culture in the current system. The whole idea of the NMES is to systematize the evaluation function in

the public administration, which could fit into the concept of building an evaluation culture. This would basically mean planning for evaluation, designing and assigning responsibilities for evaluation, budgeting for evaluation and standardizing evaluation requirements and practice within the different structures. It would also create demand for evaluation since the computerized system (with its periodic reporting requirements) would basically ask for data/information on progress towards the expected results.

Although this is work in progress (so not yet in place) we can well say that the demand for information/data as part of evidence-based planning, program formulation, decision making is presently quite strong in Bhutan. That is quite recent. As never before, increasingly, and at different levels, the demand for data is felt more and more. We may even say that the demand is greater than the supply. Again, the idea of the computerized system is to facilitate easy input and retrieval of data, which in turn would facilitate meet up to the demand.

The challenges are:

1. evaluation is part of everyone's responsibility, and not only an M&E officer, which would rather have a coordinator, support role. I would probably not be mistaken if I say that we have the same issue in UNICEF. It is about institutionalizing the function of evaluation across the board. Because at the end, what we evaluate is either a project, program, sector/plan etc. and the findings are equally useful for program implementers, sector planners and decision maker, not just the M&E officer.
2. changing the way people are doing development work. Whilst many believe that M&E is implicit to development work, the reality is that practitioners are focused more on implementation of the activities, projects, programs and plans. Evaluation comes secondary if not forgotten entirely.

Q. What's the "theory of change" operating here? What assumptions are you making about the change process?

- A. The system will become a necessity and a way of working built into responsibilities carried out by all: whether they are program people, M&E officers, decision makers, managers etc, or budget/accountant officers. If we succeed with the integration of planning and budgeting systems (the work done presently) we will add the budgeting component which will make the system even more indispensable.

It will take great efforts to make the system fully functional. We are embarking on a big project. It is one thing to have it integrated and technically ready, and quite another to have it embedded and utilized by the entire public administration. Training and resources therefore will be needed. And we established an ambitious target to have this implemented as much as possible by the beginning of the 10th Five Year Plan, which is mid 2008.

Q. What evaluation lessons were learned developing this framework?

- A. Interesting question: Karma and I realized how important the knowledge and skills of Results Based Management are in building and refining this system. And since the computerized system is a replication of the planning process in Bhutan we basically ensured we had an impact on key documents. This is because at the end of the day much starts with planning, and planning is about formulation of expected results and indicators to measure those results. The computerized system, being also a replication of the planning process with its documents and respective M&E framework, goes hand in hand with the RBM approach to development.

Another lesson learned is that much of the work is more about how to integrate two computerized systems into one. The two systems were developed in parallel, two processes not informing each other. I would say, it is more challenging to integrate something already existing than to build something new (already integrated) from the beginning

- Q. Is your learning relevant to all countries, or is it relevant to a few countries, or just Bhutan?**
- A. Bhutan's approach of standardized M&E could be replicated in smaller countries like Bhutan where the administrative and government functionaries are small. It could also be replicated for a program that is implemented nation-wide in a particular country.

