USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

WORLD EDUCATION

ADVANCING PARTNERS & COMMUNITIES

Training Economic Empowerment Assistive Technology Medical Rehabilitation

Introduction to Monitoring and Evaluation

TEAM Laos

World Education Laos TEAM Capacity Building Approach

As well as providing funding to 15 local and international organizations to develop and strengthen the disability and rehabilitation sector in Laos, World Education USAID-LWVF funded TEAM project works with sub-recipients to strengthen their ability to manage grants and to efficiently implement their projects. WEL-TEAM conducts an *Organizational Assessment* of all applicants for TEAM funding to look at capacity in grants management, financial management, human resources, activity implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. If the organization is approved for funding, WEL-TEAM staff work with the organization to discuss the outcomes of the assessment, including both organizational strengths and areas for improvement. TEAM and the organization then work together to create a *capacity-building plan* with specific measurable objectives. Most of the capacity-building relates to the organization's ability to successfully implement the project activities and manage the sub-award, but if there are specific areas that the organization has identified as priorities, these are included if possible.

Capacity-building is one of the core components of the TEAM project, and inputs by World Education take many forms. One approach is individual coaching, where a TEAM staff member who has the required expertise will work closely with one or several members of an organization regularly over a longer period of time, to discuss a specific issue, either by phone, email or in person, or a combination of those methods. Other times WEL-TEAM organizes formal trainings for all sub-recipients. So far, TEAM has conducted trainings on USAID Regulations, World Education TEAM Finance Procedures, and Monitoring and Evaluation. In addition, some trainings are provided on an optional basis, allowing the sub-recipient to choose topics which are most relevant or needed for their organization. So far, TEAM has offered trainings on Curriculum Development, Psychosocial Support, Training of Trainers (ToT), Project Cycle Management (PCM), and Gender Inclusion. TEAM encourages sub-recipients to send an appropriate staff member to the training, and all trainings are open to any staff member as relevant, not just project staff who are funded by TEAM. All WEL-TEAM trainings are participatory, reflective and allow as much time as possible for ‘learning by doing’ and practical application of skills and knowledge.

TEAM recognize the importance of reflection, goal setting, and the long-term, regular follow up needed for effective capacity building. Examples of how TEAM promoted these values are:

- Many WEL-TEAM trainings are followed up by practical sessions conducted by the trainer or TEAM staff with each sub-recipient individually or in small groups to allow opportunities for the organization to apply and practice what they learn in the training to their own situation with guidance and feedback
- Video sessions are used in the ToT training practice session to allow the participants to view themselves delivering a training as a tool for self-reflection and self- assessment
- Participants in trainings set SMART goals at the end of the sessions for future action which are followed up by the organization’s management, the trainers and/or TEAM staff
- Capacity building plans with individual sub-recipients are followed up on monthly in some cases to assess and reflect on progress of specific observable behaviors to measure capacity over a long period of time

These participant handbooks were used in 8 trainings for TEAM sub-recipients, and are available in print on request from WEL TEAM (bernard_franck@la.worlded.org), or online at https://sites.google.com/site/teamlaopdr/capacity-building

Currently available:

1. USAID Rules and Regulation for TEAM

2. TEAM Finance Processes and Regulations

3.1 Introduction to Monitoring and Evaluation

3.2 TEAM M&E Monitoring Tools.

4. Curriculum and Training Design

5. Introduction to Psychosocial Impairments

6. Training of Trainers (TOT)

7. Project Cycle Management (PCM)

8. Gender Inclusive Development

Under development and available soon:

9. What to Know about Disabling Conditions

10. Understanding impairment and disability in line with UNCRPD, ICF and World Report on Disability

11. Optimizing functioning of persons with impairments by using diversified assistive technology

12. Case Management in Disability Inclusion

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1. Objectives of the handbook

This handbook's target audience is the TEAM project sub-grantee staff who will be in charge of coordinating M&E. It aims at:

- Introducing the purpose of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) to the sub-grantees, highlighting why it is needed and how the collected data will be used.
- Providing practical support and guidelines in order to understand how to use the proposed M&E tools for reporting to World Education, which will itself report to USAID.
- Listing minimum evidence that will be kept to document the activities. This aims at showing the donor that activities have been performed well and in a transparent way.

The proposed monitoring instruments for following up activities will help you to report on a quarterly basis, making sure that all required information has been collected on a regular basis during implementation.

2. Result-Based Management (RBM): An overall spirit

Result-Based Management (RBM), also called Performance Management, is a program/project life-cycle approach to management that integrates strategy, people, resources, processes and measurements to improve decision-making, transparency, and accountability.

The approach focuses on achieving outcomes, implementing performance measurement, learning, and adapting, as well as reporting on performance.

- ☞ **RBM is not a tool, but rather a way of working that looks beyond activities and outputs to focus on actual results; the outcomes of projects and programs**.[1]

A well-designed and well-used M&E system will support Result-Based Management.

In practice, it is important to monitor activities implementation, looking at indicators (e.g. looking at the car dashboard to see how fast you are going, how much fuel you still have and what the water temperature is), but don't forget where you wish to go (look at the road outside of the car).

Figure 1: Comparison between Result-Based Management and driving a car

[1] http://www.international.gc.ca/development-developpement/partners-partenaires/bt-oa/rbm-gar.aspx?lang=eng

3. Monitoring and Evaluation purpose (M&E)

What is M&E ?

Project managers have the task of establishing sufficient controls over a project to ensure that it stays on track towards the achievement of its objectives and desired changes. This is done by monitoring (internal): the systematic and continuous collection, analysis and use of information for management control and decision-making.

Project monitoring is an **integral part of day-to-day management**. It provides information by which management can identify and solve implementation problems and assess progress. The Logical Framework, the implementation schedule, activity schedules, and project budget provide the basis for this monitoring. There are a number of different levels of monitoring, each related to what kind of information is relevant, and the regularity of monitoring. The table below illustrates some examples.

Monitoring Level	**Regularity**	**Remark**
Which Activities are underway and what progress has been made?	Weekly	Internally managed by sub-grantee (SG)
At what rate are means being used and cost incurred in relation to progress in implementation ?	Every 2 to 4 months	Internally managed by SG. Followed by fund request to WEI according to the sub-grantee contract agreements.
Are the desired results being achieved? To what extent are these Results furthering the project goal? What changes in the project environment occur? Do the Assumptions hold true?	Quarterly	Quarterly meeting with World Education and reporting to USAID, according to the sub-grantee contract agreements
Final report	End of the SG contract	

Table 1 : Monitoring level and regularity

Monitoring and evaluations are interactive and mutually supportive processes since evaluations rely on data collected during the monitoring process.

Narrative reports and indicator reports are due every quarter and will be referred to as Quarterly Narrative Reports. Quarterly Narrative Reports are distinct from financial reports and submitted following a different schedule. This schedule is slightly different for each sub-grantee depending on the overall duration and start date of the sub-grant, so each sub-grantee should check the dates for submissions in the reporting deadline table that is included in each sub-grant agreement. Please ensure that all relevant staff are aware of the reporting schedule and deadlines.

World Education will provide templates for narrative and indicator reports.

Why have an M&E system ?

There are different reasons for having an M&E system:

- **Accountability to the donor**. Each donor requests to know in detail how the budget was spent. Project budgets usually come from taxes in financing countries, thus the use of public money should be justified and control mechanisms should exist. USAID For example should report on a list of indicators to the American Congress. The implementing agencies should therefore provide all information requested by USAID.

- **Project management**. A Monitoring and Evaluation System corresponds to a tool that should help projects to learn, react and improve their performances. As a management tool, M&E looks back on implementation achievements and practices and addresses different aspects:

For decision making	☞ ***Is the project on track***? Where are we compared to the quantitative targets set? Are the activities leading to the expected outcome and impacts? How should we possibly adjust?
For learning	☞ Document "***good practices***": What is going on well and what is needed / how to handle activities? ☞ Document "***lessons learnt***": What are the challenges faced and why? How could they be overcome? This also helps to avoid repeating mistakes.

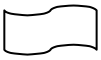
- **Rights-based approach[2]:** Persons with disability frequently experience social exclusion, isolation, alienation, discrimination, and inequality. A rights-based approach (RBA) is a method of developing and implementing development programmes by looking at development from a "human rights angle".

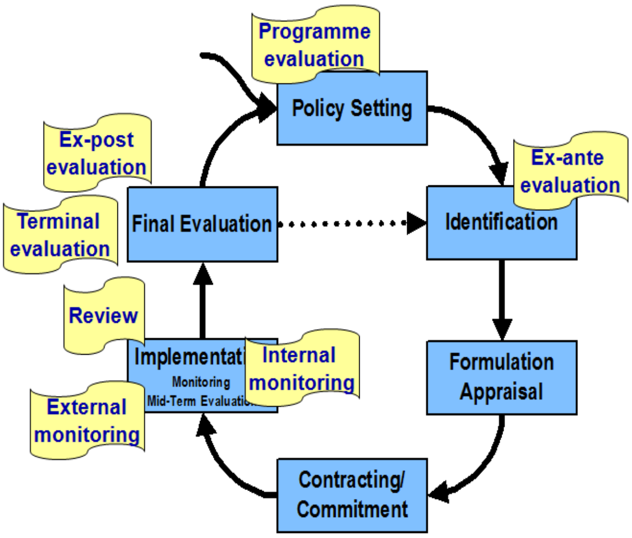
  Accountability on disability mainstreaming is fundamental in the rights-based approach.

Conventional M&E	Focuses mainly on the deliverables and less on the qualitative or soft aspects of programme delivery.
In RBA	The process for delivering the programme is as important as the intended outcomes, and qualitative data is crucial.

[2] Source: https://www.concern.net/sites/default/files/resource/2011/07/tanzania_lessons_from_rba_programming_2011.pdf

4. M&E in project cycle

There are 6 phases in the project cycle that appear in the blue rectangles below, from policy setting to final evaluation. Monitoring and evaluation happens at different moments in the project cycle (see  in yellow).



Monitoring takes place all along the project implementation to follow up activities implementation, how the budget is spent and the immediate effects of activities (for example the quantity of health services delivered to PwD and their quality).

Evaluations look at a higher level: the project impacts. For example how the PwD's health has improved, how it allows them to be more involved in community life. Evaluations are generally performed by people who are external to the project and can take place at different moments:

- ***Ex-ante evaluations*** take place before a project starts, assessing what could be the positive and negative expected effects of the project, e.g. social or environmental effects. It is used to design the intervention.
- ***A Mid-term evaluation*** is organized at mid-life of the project. The project strengths and weaknesses are assessed and the project is possibly adjusted on this basis.
- ***A final/terminal evaluation*** takes place when the project is over. This is an accountability tool but also a way for the implementation partners to draw lessons learned and discuss improvements (recommendations) for the project second phase or for a new project.
- ***Ex-post evaluations*** don't happen very often although they can be very useful. They occur a while after the project is over. The main purpose is usually to review whether activities still continue; in other words, what is sustainable and what is not, in order to gain additional lessons learned for improving further projects.

5. M&E information nature - Two sets of indicators

A good M&E system provides a combination of qualitative and quantitative information:

- ***Qualitative information*** included in the narrative report will be very helpful to make sure the project is on track. Summarizing challenges met helps to address them, possibly adjusting the project's way of working. Challenges will be discussed during the quarterly meetings attended by all sub-grantees, in order for them to share their experience and encourage a participative learning process.
- ***Quantitative indicators*** have been identified by USAID for all TEAM projects in the world. They should be in annex of quarterly reports.

In the case of TEAM, M&E is more complex than usual because the information should be provided in different formats:

- ❖ Two sets of indicators exist: (1) six specific tables that were provided by USAID to be filled quarterly and (2) TEAM Laos set up their own indicators and objectives to be followed up quarterly as well.
- ❖ Different targets exist: (1) sub-grantees individual objectives; (2) TEAM Laos project global objectives.

6. Chain of intervention and M&E information flow

The following figure shows the chain of intervention, from the tax payer in some foreign country down to the target group, and information flow:

1. The arrow 1 is related to the **bottom up flow** from data collection to reporting up to the donor and political authorities who want to ensure that the budget has been well spent: the data collected by SG field workers are sent to the SG M&E officer, who will in most cases take care of data entry and data compilation in the tables provided by World Education. World Education receives the data from all sub-grantees and summarizes all to send to John Snow Inc., then USAID who is due to report to the tax payers represented by the US Congress.
2. The arrow 2 illustrates that **information is shared** back, between World Education and the sub-grantees during quarterly meetings: challenges met are discussed, lessons learned and good practices highlighted. Sometimes it is relevant to share information with some target groups.

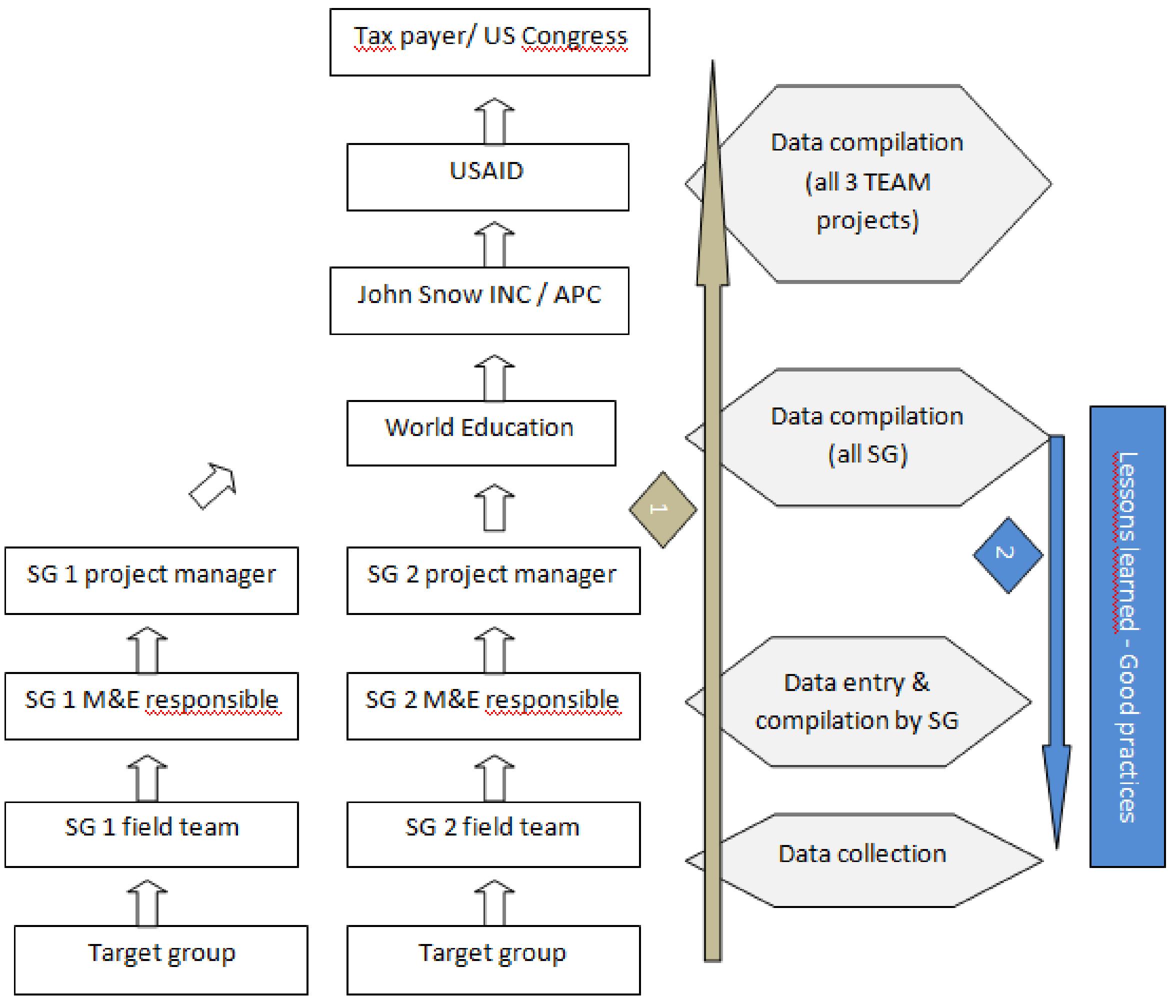


Figure 2: Chain of intervention and information flow

Evidence for following up processes

This type of forms correspond to internal tools to document what was done, e.a. the distribution of material, equipment, loans, etc. Evidence can be the contract signed by a beneficiary where commitments are taken, a list of material signed for reception by the beneficiary, possibly with an associated picture (as HI current practice), attendance sheets related to a training, etc.

After the training, each sub-grantee will internally think about relevant evidence and propose to World Education standard evidence to be kept corresponding to the implemented activities.