Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning

What is this course about?

This course provides a comprehensive understanding of Monitoring Evaluation Accountability and Learning (MEAL) concepts and fits them within the logical framework, commonly used to track humanitarian interventions. It also describes methods and approaches for an effective project monitoring and offers an overview of evaluation techniques, standards and criteria. Participants will also familiarize with the concept of learning and how to capture and capitalize lessons learnt and good practices from humanitarian interventions. The current debate on accountability and how this cross-cutting theme is relevant to project monitoring and evaluation will also be part of the training.

Who is this course for?

This course is for humanitarian and development aid workers in management positions (project officers/managers, program managers, country directors etc.) who want to understand theories, approaches and practices related to monitoring and evaluation and want to become familiar and appreciate the concepts of accountability and learning.

Module 1: Introduction to the concepts of Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Accountability

Why are these concepts important? Where do these concepts come in the logical framework? Which value do they bring to single projects, programs and more generally to NGO/organizations strategy and programming in a country and at global level? How do these concepts contribute to measuring impact at project and program level?

Module 2: Monitoring: what and how?

What needs to be monitored in a project/program? How to set up a monitoring framework and a monitoring plan starting from the basics: choice of indicators, data collection techniques and sampling, data management and analysis. Monitoring for donors or internal monitoring? How to meet both needs.

Module 3: Evaluation: how to evaluate a project/program

Participants will get understanding of the different types of possible evaluations: external/internal, impact evaluation, real time evaluation etc. A focus will be done on evaluations through the DAC criteria: what are they and to practically use them to conduct evaluations? How to carry out an evaluation: use of the criteria to draft ToRs, selection of the right consultant – generalist vs specialist. Principle of field research: the use of inception report to assess validity and coherence of study methodology, use of different data sets for triangulation of findings. Possible structure of the evaluation report, what makes an evaluation a programmatic tool: a critical look at findings, discussion and recommendation and their programmatic value. Dissemination of evaluation report through stakeholders and different learning platforms. Practical tools for drafting TORs, evaluation report will be provided to the participants.

Module 4: Quality in monitoring and evaluation: methods and tools

Different types of standards and methods are used. After the class, participants will be familiar with the widely recognized Core Humanitarian Standards (including Sphere Standards and sector-specific standards) and with the some of the most utilized project management standards (Compas quality and Prince 2). Examples will be provided on how monitoring and evaluation may vary according to the different sector of intervention (health, food security, protection). Case studies will be presented and focus will be placed on the results-based management.

Module 5: Accountability: its value and importance

Accountability towards Affected Population (AAP) is rightly becoming a focus for donor programming and often a pre-requisite for funding. What is accountability, why is it considered so important? How to include this component in programming and at project level? How to engage and empower beneficiaries through project design, implementation and monitoring to hold organizations to account and improve quality? Participants will be made familiar with the concept of Accountability and the underlying principles linked to it (such as participation, representation, information sharing etc). A specific focus on feedback and complaints mechanisms will be included.

Module 6: Learning: defining learning and how to learn form a project/program

What is learning? What is the purpose of learning and capitalization, what do we need to learn from a project/program? Participants will be familiar with different types of learning e.g project-based, program-based, country-based, sectorial vs intersectoral and management and thematic learning and different practical systems and tools commonly used to capture lessons learnt and good practices, including evaluation and project monitoring.

Methodology

The training grounds itself in the adult learning approach, based on experiential learning, experience sharing, co-creation and reflective analysis, with participants playing an active role throughout. The training consists of 5 days of in-presence course that will include cases studies, group exercises, presentations, intervention by external experts and with mentoring and networking during and in-between lessons.

Participants who will attend all the modules will be granted a certificate by HumCap.

	Session 1 9.00 - 11.00	Session 2 11.15 - 13.00	Session 3 14.00 - 15.45	Session 4 16.00 - 17.30	Wrap-up session 17.30 - 18.00
	MEAL training Program				
Day 1	**Introduction to the concepts of Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning** Where do these concepts come in the logical framework? Why are these concepts important? Which value do they bring to single projects and more generally to NGO strategy and programming in a country and at global level?	**Monitoring** What is monitoring and why is it important? When does monitoring come within the project cycle? What is the relation between monitoring and the project implementation?	**Evaluation** What is evaluation and why is it important? When does evaluation come within the project cycle? What is the relation between evaluation and the project implementation?	**Accountability and Learning** What are learning and accountability and why are they important? When does evaluation come within the project cycle? What is the relation between evaluation and the project implementation?	**Wrap up** of main concepts, final comments and session evaluation
Day 2	**Monitoring: what and how? (I)** What is monitoring? Project monitoring vs program monitoring? what needs to be monitored and how?	**Monitoring: what and how (II)?** How to set up a monitoring framework and a monitoring plan starting from the basics: choice of indicators, sources of verification.	**Monitoring for donors or for internal monitoring**? What is requested by major Institutional donors (i.e. ECHO, DEVCO, USAID-OFDA, AICS) and how to critically integrated the requirements of the various donors in monitoring frameworks /plan.	**Monitoring: tips and tricks for data collection** Data collection techniques and sampling, data management and analysis.	**Wrap up** of main concepts, final comments and session evaluation
Day 3	**Evaluation: how to evaluate a project/program** What is an evaluation? What are the possible types of evaluation? E.g. impact, real time, external vs internal, mid-term/final, project vs program	**Evaluation: standards in use** The use of DAC criteria: what are they and how can they be used together to provide a comprehensive overview of a project/program.	**Evaluation: practical actions (group work)** Use of the criteria to draft ToRs and prepare for an evaluation. Examples from the field. Principle of field research: the use of inception report to assess validity and coherence of study methodology, use of different data sets for triangulation of findings.	**Evaluation: field research and report writing** The evaluation report format presentation, what makes an evaluation a programmatic tool: a critical look at findings, discussion and recommendation and their programmatic value. Dissemination of evaluation report through stakeholders and different learning platforms.	**Wrap up** of main concepts, final comments and session evaluation

Day 4	Quality in monitoring and evaluation	Quality standards in the Humanitarian action	Adapting monitoring and evaluation to the sector of intervention (I)	Adapting monitoring and evaluation to the sector of intervention (II)	Wrap up of main concepts, final comments and session evaluation
	What is quality in humanitarian system, difference between quality control and quality insurance.	Overview of the key and most widely recognized quality standards (Core Humanitarian Standards- including Sphere-) and how and when to use the most appropriate method and tool (sector specific vs general management tool: e.g Compas quality, Prince 2)	How monitoring and evaluation may change depending on the sector. *Case studies from three different organization in the sectors: protection, food security and public health*	*Group works -practical utilization of the sector-specific tool to improve the quality in monitoring and evaluation*	
Day 5	Accountability: what and how?	Accountability: practical cases	Learning: what and how? (I)	Learning: what and how? (II)	Wrap up of main concepts, final comments. Course evaluation and certificate
	What is accountability and how to include this component in programming and at project level? How to engage beneficiaries in accountability through project design, implementation and monitoring? *Examples of key participatory processes throughout project cycle and communication and information sharing and their link to accountability*	*Examples of Feedback and complaint mechanisms: how to set it up and how to make it work.*	What is learning and why do we learn? Different typologies of learning e.g project-based, program-based, country-based, sectorial vs intersectoral, management/ops learning and thematic learning .	Learning throughout the project cycle. Learning from bad and good practices: monitoring, evaluation, observation, coordination, using internal and external eyes to capture learning. Tools for learning: monitoring plans, case studies, evaluation and feedback and complaints mechanisms. How to use learning: Dissemination of learning	