Monitoring and Evaluation Basics

(2 hours)

Monitoring and Evaluation Skills Series
Staff Skill Building Library
Raising Voices

This module is part of a *Staff Skill Building Library* developed by Raising Voices. The *Library* consists of competency based training modules designed to strengthen skills of staff implementing or supporting community-based violence against women (VAW) prevention programs. The *Library* is designed for organizations using SASA! *An Activist Kit for Preventing Violence against Women and HIV* but can be used by anyone working to mobilize their community to prevent VAW. If you are not using SASA!, simply replace the word SASA! wherever you see it in the text with the name of your methodology.

This module is part of the *Monitoring and Evaluation* series in the *Staff Skill Building Library*.

All materials in the *Library* can be downloaded at www.raisingvoices.org/staffskills.php or requested at info@raisingvoices.org The SASA! *Activist Kit* can be downloaded at www.raisingvoices.org

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Monitoring and Evaluation Basics

(2 hours)

Objectives

- Understand purpose of baseline survey, program monitoring, and follow up survey techniques.

Competencies

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Explain why M&E is important to good implementation of any program.
- Explain the concepts of a baseline and follow up.
- Explain the concept of regular program monitoring.

Preparations

- Ask participants to read *SASA!* Start Phase Overview B and C—pp. 6-12[1], in advance of training.
- Write "What is Program Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)" on an otherwise-blank flip chart, for group brainstorm.
- Write M&E definitions and questions on a flip chart.
- Photocopy and cut apart scenarios: M&E Data- What is the point? (1 copy of page good for up to 12 participants, 2 copies for up to 24, etc).
- Pre-write bullets in *SASA!* M&E Methods No. 15 on flip chart.

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[1] *SASA! An Activist Kit for Preventing Violence against Women and HIV*. (2009). Kampala: Raising Voices. Available for download at www.raisingvoices.org

Steps

Part 1: Definition and Purpose[1]

1. Explain: *We know that some participants have experience doing Monitoring and Evaluation, or "M&E" but for others, it is very new.*

2. Post flip chart titled *What is Program Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)?*

3. Invite group to list what they think M&E is, writing their suggestions on the flip chart.

4. Uncover flip chart definition and questions. Go over any differences between the definition and the brainstorm. There is no need to go through the similarities in a very detailed way--as participants are demonstrating they already understand this. The questions are included to help clarify, as needed, and can be used in the group discussion.

Monitoring and Evaluation
The process of collecting and analyzing information about the project that tells you whether you are on track to reach your objectives, and whether or not the project achieved or contributed to the desired impact.

M&E addresses the following questions:

- Are activities carried out as planned?
- What is the organization providing, to whom, when, how often, for how long, and in what context?
- Are the activities accessible?
- Is activity quality adequate?
- Is the population you intend to engage being reached?
- What outcomes are observed?
- Does the program make a difference?
- To what extent is the program responsible for the observed changes?

[2] Adapted from Reproductive Health Response in Conflict Consortium (2004). *Gender-based Violence Tools Manual: For assessment and program design, monitoring and evaluation in conflict-affected settings*. New York: RHRC and Gage, A.J. & Dunn, M. (2007). *Monitoring and Evaluating Gender-based Violence Prevention and Mitigation Programs*. Measure Evaluation, USAID and IGWG.

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5. Explain:

    - *Because evaluation to researchers is something specific and implies something very rigorous, with random sampling, in SASA! we use the term "Assessment" rather than "Evaluation".*
    - *SASA! actually recommends you to have an external evaluator come and see the impact of your program and do a rigorous "evaluation".*
    - *What we will be talking about is technically "Monitoring and Assessment," but because many people in NGOs are more familiar with the term "M&E" we will stick with that for the rest of this training.*

6. Ask: *Why is M&E important to good implementation of any program? (Pause briefly).*

7. Explain: *To answer this question, we'll break up into pairs, and each of us will get a scenario to discuss for 10 minutes. You'll read your scenario and discuss—"How could M&E data help you?"*

8. Distribute scenarios: Monitoring and Evaluation Data - What is the Point?

9. After 10 minutes, call *"stop!"*

10. Invite all the pairs with Scenario 1 to share their scenario and how they thought M&E data would help to deal with that situation.

11. Summarize relevant reasons for M&E, e.g.

    - Group 1: M&E data could help you figure out where and when to do activities more strategically to create impact. It could help you to see if the intervention was doing any good, or if changes needed to be made to make a bigger difference in the community.

12. Repeat process with Scenario 2 and 3 pairs, adding reasons for M&E to the flip chart list, e.g.

    - Group 2: M&E data could help you to advocate with the Ministry of Health official, explaining the statistics on the other types of violence against women (VAW) and their connection with HIV. Sometimes officials respond very differently once they see statistics and numbers, especially when they relate to the specific area you are working or want to work.
    - Group 3: M&E data could help you to advocate with this donor, showing the impact of prevention programming with concrete results over the long-term. You could also help to strengthen the donor's knowledge of the connections between VAW and HIV, through use of data—either statistics or stories with all identifying information removed.

13. Invite other groups to comment or add to the list.

14. Summarize: *If we want to see our intended and unintended impact, catch any problems with implementation and fix them, achieve better impact, and be able to communicate that impact to others—including donors, public officials, and the community themselves—we need M&E. Ethical programming means staying in touch with what is happening as a result of our activities.*

15. Explain and write on flip chart: *To do this we need to:*
    - *Know what we want to achieve: Goals, Objectives, and Intended Outcomes/ Indicators of Success*
    - *Know where we started: Baseline*
    - *Collect information about how well we are doing with our plans: Monitoring tools*
    - *Know where we ended up after a certain amount of time has passed: Follow up*

16. Ask: *What is a baseline?*

17. Solicit responses, e.g.
    - A baseline is a measure of where we started—what was the extent of community knowledge about VAW and HIV? What were their attitudes? What were their skills like? What were their behaviors?

18. Ask: *What is a follow up?*

19. Solicit responses, e.g.
    - A follow up is a measure of where we ended up, after a set period of time working on the project. For example, with the SASA! pilot in Kampala, after 3 years we asked community members about the same things as we did at baseline to find out what changed in terms of levels of community knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviors.

20. Summarize:
    - *A baseline and follow up are like before and after photos of the community, so we can clearly see change.*
    - *Other M&E tools can be used throughout the life of the program to judge program impact. In SASA! we will be using the Outcome Tracking Tool and the Activity Report Form as M&E tools.*

Part 2: SASA! M&E Methods

1. Explain: *Looking back at the SASA! Start Phase Overview pp 6-12, we can see there are several monitoring and evaluation (assessment) techniques listed within SASA! that we will be using.*

2. Ask: *Can anyone name a monitoring method we will be using in SASA!*?

3. Solicit responses, and ask the volunteer to explain what they know about it. Fill in any gaps:

Monitoring Methods

a. **Check in Meetings:** Hold weekly or bi-monthly meetings with lead members of the SASA! team, to review successes and lessons learned since the last meeting, reflect, problem solve, and offer additional skills training as needed.

b. **Activity Report Forms:** Fill out a form after each activity conducted, to record what happened, who attended, what went well, etc. There will be more training on how to use this form.

c. **Outcome Tracking Forms:** Starting in the Awareness Phase, fill out an Outcome Tracking Tool after selected activities, to monitor the community's knowledge, attitude, skill and behavior change.

d. **Strategy Summary Reports:** Write a report designed to help summarize the Activity Reports from that quarter or phase in one document for each strategy. The report should include a list of activities completed, numbers of people reached, major successes and challenges and responses made to build on or overcome them.

e. **Quarterly Meetings:** Gather the SASA! team each quarter to ensure you are on track for achieving your desired outcomes and summarize lessons learned.

4. Ask: *Can anyone name an assessment or evaluation method we will be using in the SASA! baseline*?

5. Solicit responses, and ask the volunteer to explain what they know about it. Fill in any gaps, and note that these tools are in SASA! Start Phase:

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Assesemnt Methods

f. **Assessment Dialogues:** Qualitative data collection, similar to focus group discussions. Conducted at the beginning and end of SASA! implementation.

g. **Rapid Assessment Surveys:** Survey of community members about their knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviors about VAW and HIV. Conducted at baseline, after each phase, and at follow up.

h. **Baseline Information Meetings**: Held with the entire SASA! team to report the findings of the Assessment Dialogues and Rapid Assessment Survey.

i. SASA! **Phase Report:** Report written at the end of each phase, once there is enough evidence that key outcomes have been achieved. Created by compiling data from other monitoring and evaluation (assessment) exercises.

6. Explain: *We will be using each of these methods at different times to do SASA! M&E. For some methods like the Rapid Assessments, Activity Report Forms, etc, we will have practical sessions to teach us what we need to know about how to use these methods.*

7. Direct everyone's attention to SASA! Start Phase Overview, p. 4 - *Planning, Monitoring and Baseline Checklist*. As appropriate, schedule a calendar of times when all of these things will be accomplished.

Part 3: Data Feedback

1. Explain: *We have said we do not want to create data just for the sake of data. In order to make data specific to programs, we need to have a regular feedback mechanism for feeding our learning back to staff so we can make program adjustments.*

2. If the training group is comprised of more than 1 organization, ask organization representatives to sit together and discuss among colleagues in the organization.

3. Ask: *Thinking as program staff, what would you like to have feedback on that would help you to improve your programming?*

4. Write responses on flip chart. Responses may include:
    - Knowing what impact the activities are having on community knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviors and determine where and when and with whom we plan activities, strategically.
    - To learn who we are reaching (e.g., mostly men? women? youth?) and how we are reaching them (e.g., through organized activities that bring people together; going out and finding groups where they are, etc)
    - To learn the coverage staff are achieving in monitoring the activities
    - To learn the types of activities most frequently done
    - To learn if there are any 'trouble' spots in implementation
    - To assess the approximate numbers of community members reached
    - Being able to share successes and prove change is happening, to advocate with hard-to-convince leaders, politicians, donors, etc.—and to celebrate with current allies.

5. Ask: *How often would you need feedback about your M&E results in order to make these changes?*

6. Solicit responses, and come to a group consensus, balancing what would be useful to the program with what is feasible in terms of time.

7. Schedule the first M&E feedback meeting at a convenient time and identify a person responsible for preparations.

Validation Options

Validation is another way to say "assessment" or "pre/post-test". It is used to determine whether the participants in a training learned what the facilitator intended for them to learn. Instructions for how to use each validation method can be found in *Training Validation Methods: A how-to guide for assessing participant learning* downloadable at www.raisingvoices.org/staffskills.php

Select validation methods for each competency using the table below:

1. Choose whether the competency (specific skill) needs to be validated at a group or individual level.
2. Looking at the validation methods listed in that category (group or individual), select only **one** of the validation methods marked with and 'X' for each competency.
3. Plan a time in the training agenda to use the validation method you've chosen to test each competency.

	Suggested Validation Methods								
	Group Validation *Use if it is sufficient for the group, as a whole, to demonstrate the competency*					Individual Validation *Use if essential for each participant to demonstrate the competency her/himself*			
Competency *(Specific skill)*	Activity in Training*	Game Show	Card Game	Answers Bingo	Pick and Play	Activity in Training*	Exit Interview/ Role Play	Game Show (All Play)	Written Quiz
Explain why M&E is important to good implementation of any program**		**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**		**X**	**X**	**X**
Explain the concepts of a baseline and follow up*		**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**		**X**	**X**	**X**
Explain the concept of regular monitoring**		**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**		**X**	**X**	**X**

*Activity in Training includes many possibilities, depending on the module, including brainstorms, group practices, debates, agree/disagree/not sure exercise, and others. The *Teach Back* series can also be considered as an Activity in Training.

**See Validation Questions for this competency, to be used in Game Show, Card Game, Answers Bingo or Pick and Play methods, on next page.

PHOTOCOPY

Validation Questions

Why is M&E important to your program?

(Double points!) What are baseline and follow up?

What is monitoring and why is it useful?

Facilitator's Note: Find out what the participants really learned! These cards can be cut out and used with Game Show, Card Game, Answers Bingo or Pick and Play validation methods.

Full descriptions of how to use each of these validation methods are available in the *Staff Skill Building Library*. Download at: www.raisingvoices.org/staffskills.php and go to *Training Validation Methods: A how-to guide for assessing participant learning.*

PHOTOCOPY

Scenarios: Monitoring and Evaluation Data: What is the Point?

Scenario 1

Your program has been doing a lot of activities in the community lately, but you still hear some really negative comments coming from community members. You are starting to wonder if you are doing the right activities at the right places and times to really make a difference, or if you are wasting your efforts.

Discuss

How would having M&E data help in this situation?

✂--

Scenario 2

You are trying to advocate with a Government Health Official to get his clinic engaged with SASA! work, and to get the health clinic workers engaged. He is saying conflict related sexual violence is a big problem in the world, but he does not see that other types of violence against women are any problem.

Discuss

How would having M&E data help in this situation?

✂--

Scenario 3

A donor is interested in funding you, because she keeps hearing that violence against women and HIV are big problems that are somehow related, but does not see any proof that prevention works, so would prefer to put the donor resources into service provision, because it seems more concrete.

Discuss:

How would having M&E data help in this situation?