Chuuk State,
Federated States of
Micronesia

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Policy

Preamble

The focus of this policy note is to articulate the design and development of the monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) policy in support of the role of the Information Systems and Data Management Unit (ISDMU) under the Division of Planning, Research and Development at the CDOE. It highlights a systematic process of obtaining, processing and utilizing data gathered from educational policies, projects and programs before, during and after implementation to assess how an intervention evolves over time, the effectiveness of the intervention and whether there are gaps between the planned and achieved outcomes, including whether the impact is exclusively due to the intervention.[1] Overall, the nature of this MEL policy combines monitoring, evaluation and learning into one integrated structure. Essentially, the MEL will be instrumental in fine tuning policies/programs/projects outcomes to meet intended benefits for beneficiaries of these initiatives towards securing improved outcomes.

Scope

The MEL policy shall apply to all educational policies, programs, projects and related initiatives. The ISDMU, under the Division of Planning, Research and Development is tasked to give guidance on how to interpret the policy and its application to all CDOE partners.

Development and design

The development of the MEL instrument is part of the CDOE initiative in attempting to improve its operations and intervention processes in order to deliver planned outcomes efficiently and effectively. The design of the MEL framework sets a clear plan on how a project is monitored and evaluated. Specifically, the drafted MEL instrument is envisioned to guide programs, projects and policies on how to collect data to track indicators, how monitoring data will be analyzed, and how the results of data collection will be disseminated to donors and internally among staff members for program, project and policy improvement.

Theory of change

The CDOE ISDMU adheres to a causal/result chain (see Figure 1 for the logical framework) that outlines how the sequence of inputs, activities and outputs of an educational policy/program/project will attain specific outcomes (objectives), impact and gaps analysis. This in turn will contribute to the achievement of the overall aim. A causal chain maps: (i) inputs (financial, human and other resources); (ii) activities (actions or work performed to translate inputs into outputs); (iii) outputs (goods produced and services delivered); (iv) outcomes (use of outputs by the target groups); (v) impact (or final, long-term outcome of the intervention) and (vi) knowledge sharing and application of best practices.

Figure 1: Results chain/Logical Framework[2]
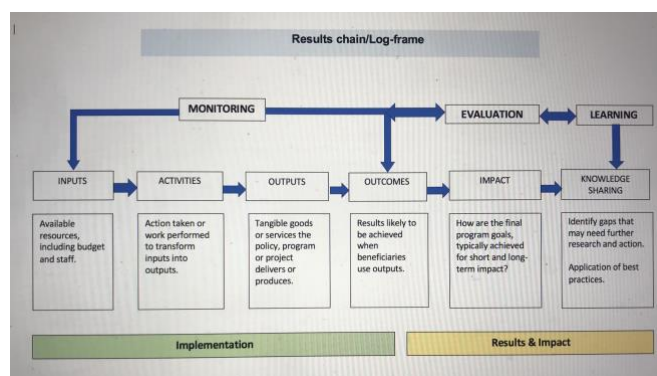
Risk assessment and management

In any project, all expected activities will involve risk that could compromise the achievement of the objectives and reduce impact, as COVID-19 pandemic showed. A Risk Management matrix to identify possible risks, its associated risk level and mitigating measures will be developed as part of the compliance process. Essentially, the Risk Management matrix will be used as a basis upon which the CDOE through the ISDMU will develop specific risk assessment and management tools envisioned to be utilized at the department and shared to its partners.

[1] MEL Policy draft. Chuuk Department of Education.

[2] Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Policy draft. Annex 1 – Results chain/Log-frame.

Capacity building

The best approaches in setting up a rigorous monitoring and evaluation system for enhanced organizational performance is building strong capability in our staff and processes. This is covered by the MEL elements of:

- **MEL Planning** to ensure that effective management of projects, programs and policies are followed towards successful completion and for maximum benefit.

- **MEL Consultation and Communication** is critical to building mutual trust, transparency and accountability for the successful delivery of activities by those responsible.

- **MEL Induction and Training** is equally critical in building knowledge, skills, values and attitude required to instill commitment towards fulfilling project/program/policy objectives and outcomes within a given time frame.

To capacitate our staff, the CDOE will provide the technical expertise and resources focused on measures of effectiveness (e.g. 0 to 100%) and efficiency (input/output rate), rather than activity/workload (amount). In essence, the MEL indicators are instrumental in tracking the quality of implementation progress over measuring the quantity of activities.

Specifically, a participatory approach will be adopted through *asoos*, the Chuukese (in)formal conversation space to include personnel at the CDOE/ISDMU who will be trained to carry out the following, in addition to emerging requirements:

- review the Integrated Plan (IP) and Strategic Development Plan 2023-8 under the new MEL tool;

- specify targets or standardized practices including data management procedures for monitoring and evaluation of projects, programs and policies;

- develop a training needs analysis, plan and deliver MEL training activities;

- comprehend, record, and clearly state the MEL performance goals of the CDOE/school; and to

- declare any gaps in the CDOE ability to achieve MEL performance goals.

Implications

What are the implications for establishing a MEL policy? The CDOE is committed to reviewing its policies and procedures to ensure adoption of and adaptation to global best practices in MEL profiles. In this light, the CDOE is making conscious efforts in keeping up with contemporary tools and ensuring legislative compliance relating to good governance. In particular, the CDOE staff as well as school principals and teachers will be provided with adequate support to track progress, collect and submit data to the ISDMU for:

- regular and sporadic surveys, as well as reporting and disseminating results.

- data analyses and record keeping as part of the CDOE education management information system (EMIS) procedures;

- disseminating useful information with insight and innovation to support decision making and create value to improve operations at the CDOE and partners including school systems; and

- ensuring that data quality is maintained and enhanced across disparate data sources in addition to leading the development of any data-oriented guidance.

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[3] The author acknowledges the contributions of the Chief of Planning, Research and Development for her contributions to this policy brief.