

Participatory monitoring and evaluation refers to getting all project stakeholders, particularly the target group, involved in a project evaluation (and also the design of the evaluation). The level of participation can vary, from the getting the target group to set objectives, targets, and data sources themselves, to getting participants to gather data, tell their story, and interpret results. Participatory evaluation generally requires good facilitation skills and commitment from all the stakeholders, including the participants, to the process.

Participatory evaluation is about valuing and using the knowledge of insiders (target group and other stakeholders) to provide meaningful targets and information, as opposed to solely relying on objective and external indicators of change. It also refers to getting stakeholders involved in the collection and to interpretation of results.

There is an increasing use of participatory evaluation so that a project's accountability is not just to the funding agencies and implementation teams, but also to the participants themselves.

Participatory monitoring and evaluation also provides a meaningful way to learn about the process of change, based on the participants' own experiences.

There does however need to be some care taken with participatory monitoring and evaluation. You may need to clarify whose views are being represented. If you are using insider knowledge to find out about the process of change, for example, you need to ensure that the validity of the information, such as whether they are representative of the entire experience.

Participatory evaluation is not always appropriate in every project. There are a number of constraints which may impact on the quality of the process, and hence its overall value to the evaluation. These include:

- Cost and time involved in building capacity to implement participatory evaluation
- Cost and time involved in collecting and analysing data
- The process can be unpredictable and result in unexpected consequences and this may require facilitation skills and risk management processes.

Further links & resources

A collection of resources on the broader complimentary topic of community engagement can be found below

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