



SEEK WISDOM, ELEVATE YOUR INTELLECT AND SERVE HUMANITY |

Rectangular Snip

Addis Ababa University
አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ



ASSESSMENT OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION PRACTICE
(The case study of Mekdim Ethiopia National Association Addis Ababa,
Ethiopia)

A Research project in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
Obtaining the Degree of Masters of Project Management

By: Guluma Berhanu

Advisor name: Dr. Adane Atara

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS
SCHOOL OF COMMERCE DEPARTMENT OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT

July 2023

Addis Abeba, Ethiopia

ASSESSMENT OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION PRACTICE

(The case study of Mekdim Ethiopia National Association Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)

A Research Project in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
Obtaining the Degree of Masters of Project Management

By: Guluma Berhanu

Advisor name: Dr. Adane Atara

July 2023

Addis Abeba, Ethiopia

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS
SCHOOL OF COMMERCE**

**BY
GULUMA BERHANU**

**A Research project in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Obtaining
the Degree of Masters of Project Management**

APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF EXAMINERS

_____	_____	_____
Advisor	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Internal Examiner	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
External Examiner	Signature	Date

Declaration

I hereby declare that this research paper is the result of my original work and that all the sources used have been duly acknowledged. The data, findings, and interpretations presented in this paper are based on my research and analysis, and I have followed ethical guidelines in conducting this study. I acknowledge that any external sources used in this paper have been appropriately cited and referenced, following the academic standards and procedures. Furthermore, I confirm this research paper has not been submitted for publication, presentation, or examination in any other intellectual or professional setting

By Guluma Berhanu

Signature _____

Date _____

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those who have supported me throughout the research process. First and foremost, I would like to thank my Advisor, Dr. Adane Atara, for providing invaluable guidance and feedback throughout the research process. Their expertise and support have been critical to the success of this project.

I would also like to thank the participants who generously gave their time to take part in this study. Without their willingness to participate, this research would not have been possible.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to my family and friends, who have been a constant source of support and encouragement throughout the research process. Their unwavering support and belief in me have been instrumental in helping me to complete this project.

Thank you all for your contributions and support.

Table of content

Acknowledgements	i
Table of content	ii
List of Table.....	iv
Acronyms/Abbreviations.....	v
ABSTRACT	vi
Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2. Statement of the Problem.....	2
1.3 Research Question	3
1.4 Objectives of the Study.....	3
1.4.1 General objectives	3
1.4.2 Specific Objectives	4
1.5 The significance of the study	4
1.6 Scope of the Study.....	4
Chapter Two: Literature review.....	7
2.1 General Overview of Monitoring and Evaluation.....	7
2.2 Monitoring and Evaluation Practices	8
2.3 The impact of Monitoring and Evaluation practices in Project management.....	9
2.4 The determinants of Monitoring and Evaluation practice in NGOs	10
2.5 The Challenges of Establishing M and E Systems in project implementation	12
2.6 Expected standards of excellence in M&E by CSOs	14
2.7 The implementation of the monitoring and evaluation systems in MENA	16
Chapter Three: Research Methodology.....	17
3.1 Research Design.....	17
3.2 Research Approach.....	17
3.3 Sampling Method and Sampling Size	17
3.4 Data Collection Method.....	18
3.5 Data Analysis	18
3.6 Ethical Considerations	18
3.7 Validity and Reliability.....	19

3.7.1 Reliability	19
3.7.2 Validity.....	19
CHAPTER: FOUR DISCUSSION AND RESULTS	20
4.1 Introduction.....	20
4.2 Respondents’ Biographic Information.....	20
4.2.1 Respondents’ Response Rate	20
4.3 M&E plan and System of the MENA.....	22
4.4 Designee and well communicated M and E framework of MENA	24
4.5 Systematic approach and Results based project M&E practice?	25
4.6 Best practice and knowledge management practice in MENA.....	25
4.7 How is M&E financed and budgeted? Do you think M&E activities are optimally budgeted?.....	27
4.8 What is your most used M&E method? How do you ensure the quality of data collection?	28
4.9 What do you recommend to cope up with the challenges of good M&E practice to improve the M&E system effectiveness in this project?.....	29
4.10 Do you think that the M&E unit is well capacitated and optimally utilized? Do you notice any lack of professionalism in M&E? Please brief this point.	30
4.11 stakeholder involvement	31
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION	33
5.1 Introduction.....	33
5.2 Summary of Findings	33
5.3 Conclusion	34
5.4 Recommendation.....	34
5.4.1 Recommendations of the study	34
5.4.2. Recommendations for Future Research	35
Reference.....	36
Appendices 1: Semi structured Interview Questions	38

List of Table

Table: 1 Respondent level of Education_____	20
Table 2: Respondent level of work experience _____	21
Table 3: level of work experience _____	21
Table 4: number of respondent who agreed with MENA M and E plan_____	22
Table 5: number of respondent who agreed with MENA M and E framework_____	24
Table 6: number of respondent who agreed with best practice and knowledge management____	25
Table 7: number of respondent who agreed with allocation of budget _____	27
Table 8: number of respondents who agreed with stakeholder engagement_____	31

Acronyms/Abbreviations

CSO.....**Civil society organization**

PMI.....**Project management index**

NGO.....**Non-governmental Organization**

M and E **Monitoring and evaluation**

MENA..... **Mekdim Ethiopia National Association**

UN..... **United Nation**

ABSTRACT

The study aimed to address the project monitoring and evaluation practices of the Mekdim Ethiopia National Association. The current practice had been assessed in light of the best project M&E practices, as acknowledged in much literature. The study used a qualitative descriptive study by using a census method in applying a semi-structured interview to the primary data and document review to the secondary data. The findings of this study revealed that local non-governmental organizations have not yet adopted a culture of learning and adaptation throughout the project, they have no systematic approaches or standards to evaluate M&E knowledge management in their project, and they have less engagement with stakeholders. The absence of a clear standard for stakeholder roles results in limited feedback and reduced accountability. This study generally demonstrates that local NGOs were ineffective at doing monitoring and evaluation, even if the desired outcomes of their initiatives were clearly outlined. This was primarily because there was no clear and uniform framework for monitoring and assessment. These results suggest that there is an urgent need to strengthen the capabilities of both local NGOs and relevant stakeholders in areas of monitoring and evaluation. The suggested strategy necessitates having a clear knowledge of the significance of M&E, a commitment to M&E for learning, and ensuring beneficiary involvement.

Key words: *M&E practice, challenges of M&E practice,*

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Monitoring and evaluation practice in a project provides managers, policy makers, donors with better means for learning from past experience, improving actual implementation and re-allocates resources if needed to better achieve the target population. Though monitoring and evaluation tends to be used as the same thing, monitoring and evaluation are two distinct sets of activities related but not identical. Monitoring plays a vital role in the project management cycle by actively observing the project's progress during the implementation stage. Its purpose is to ensure that inputs, activities, outputs, and external factors are aligned with the established plan.

International Fund for Agricultural Development- IFAD, 2008 sees “ monitoring and evaluation practices as part of design programmes as it ensures that there is logical reporting; the process that interconnects results and demonstration accountability, it quantifies efficiency and effectiveness, guarantees effective resource distribution, stimulates learning that is continuous along with enhancing better decision making.”

Monitoring and evaluation practices are essential components of project management, enabling project managers to stay informed, make informed decisions, and take corrective actions. By promoting transparency, accountability, learning, and adaptability, these practices contribute to project success, organizational effectiveness, and long-term sustainability. Through continuous monitoring and evaluation, projects can achieve their objectives, maximize impact, and deliver meaningful results for all stakeholders involved

Monitoring and Evaluation has a significant impact for project implementers to make evidence-based decision-making and to increase accountability among all the workers(**PMI, 2013**). It will also help to ensure sustainability of the project and to develop the culture of learning. Different partners used the practice to improve the stakeholder’s engagement toward the program.

Through taking the best experience of the different international organizations, LNGOs has been adopting the monitoring and evaluation system to monitor the program performance and the outcome toward the intended goal. The practice has helped the organization to achieve their

target and to cope up the challenges encountered during the project phase.(Wegayehu Monitoring and Evaluation Practice. (2021).

However, Different Local NGOs have been facing challenges due to poor attention by senior executive staff and with limitation of resources. Despite the problem, the LNGO has been showing interest to expand and give more emphasis to expand the practice.

This study seeks to explore current M&E practices in local NGOs, identify the challenges they face, and propose recommendations for improving M&E practice in these organizations. By doing so, this study aims to contribute to the development of more effective, efficient, and sustainable local development interventions that can better serve the needs of vulnerable communities.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

In Ethiopia, several NGOs have been gathering resources from foreign donors, the state sector, and local communities to carry out projects that enhance community life. However, the importance placed on monitoring and evaluation practices has not been appreciably high. This has had several negative effects on the project's performance.

According to the Project Management Institute (PMI) report 2015, M & E has made significant contributions to increase accountability and transparency among the coworkers and to achieve the project goal and organization for future lessons learned. It will also support the management to decide based on the evidence.

According to FAO (2006), Donors and supporting partners are usually pushed to allocate sufficient budgets which constitute 6-10% of the total project budget, which helps to increase the project effectiveness and efficiency and to measure the performance of the staff across the workstream.

The examination of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices in local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is a major area of concern, since these organizations play a crucial role in

delivering services and assistance to disadvantaged populations. It is challenging to pinpoint problem areas and create more efficient M&E systems since local NGOs do not routinely examine their M&E practices.

The assessment of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practice in local governmental organizations (LGOs) is a critical area of concern, as effective M&E is essential for ensuring that LGOs are delivering high-quality services to their communities. However, there is a lack of systematic assessment of M&E practice in LGOs, which makes it difficult to identify areas for improvement and to develop more effective M&E systems. Additionally, there are a number of challenges that LGOs face in implementing M&E, including limited resources, capacity constraints, and complex stakeholder relationships. Without a better understanding of these challenges and how to address them, it is difficult to develop more effective and sustainable M&E systems in LGOs.

Therefore, the research problem is to comprehensively assess the current state of M&E practice in Local NGOs, identify the challenges they face in implementing effective M&E, and propose recommendations for improving M&E practice in these organizations. This information can be used to develop more targeted interventions and capacity building programs that can help LGOs to improve their M&E practices and ultimately deliver better services to their communities.

1.3 Research Question

1. What are the current Monitoring and Evaluation practices in the case study of MENA?
2. What key factors contribute to effective Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) in MENA?
3. What major challenges do MENA encounter while monitoring and evaluating their projects?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1.4.1 General objectives

The general objective of the study is to assess the practices of project M&E in MENA, the main drivers of the practice, and to identify the challenges they faced while practicing M&E.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

Specific objectives of the study include the following points:

1. Assess how M&E practices of MENA relative to the project success.
2. Identify the determinants of M&E practices in MENA.
3. Identify the key challenges and opportunities of NGOs in the implementation of M&E practices.

1.5 The significance of the study

The significance of this proposal is to contribute to how the principles and practice of M and E lead to effective development. It will examine the existing practice of local non-governmental organizations monitoring and evaluation systems and the donor satisfaction using M&E as a tool. The limitation of the studies on monitoring and evaluation practices in LNGos has not yet given the chance to understand and learn from the challenge and opportunities of the current M and E project implementation.

This study will be important for a few reasons

- It will examine the existing practice of local civil society organization monitoring and evaluation system
- It will help other implementing CSOs to review their existing monitoring and evaluation practice
- It will also help the donors to review their working partners M & E practice and to collaborate and work on the challenges and opportunities.
- In addition, the study will make specific contributions to the domain of knowledge, policy and implementation of M&E with an aim to enhance CSOs accountability, transparency and sustainability.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The scope of the reassert is to assess the M and E practice of MENA while implementing the meal activities and the finding. At the end of the research, finding may not be generalized for all local nongovernmental organizations and civil society organizations who are currently implementing in Ethiopia.

1.7. Limitation of the Study

The limitations of the study due to huge time constraints are taking up two projects of the MENA, with a small sample size of few project personnel working on the project at M&E position. Unpublished internal reference materials will be used to triangulate the accuracy of those small sample interview responses..

1.8 Definition of Terms

Monitoring is the process of systematically collecting and analyzing data on the progress and performance of a program, policy, or project. The purpose of monitoring is to track progress towards achieving the objectives of the program, identify areas for improvement, and make adjustments to program implementation as needed.

Evaluation is the process of systematically assessing the effectiveness and impact of a program, policy, or project. The purpose of evaluation is to provide information on the extent to which the program has achieved its intended outcomes, the factors that have contributed to or hindered program effectiveness, and the lessons learned that can inform future program design and implementation.

Monitoring and evaluation are critical components of program management and can help organizations to improve their performance, accountability, and learning. By collecting and analyzing data on program performance and impact, organizations can make informed decisions about program design and implementation, allocate resources more effectively, and demonstrate their effectiveness and impact to stakeholders.

A monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework is a tool used to guide the systematic collection and analysis of data on program performance and impact. The purpose of an M&E framework is to provide a clear and structured approach to monitoring and evaluation activities, and to ensure that data is collected and analyzed in a consistent and systematic manner.

1.9. Organization of the study

The research has contained five main sections, The first one is introduction which describe the over of the research and significant/background of information about the research,the second chapter is a literature review which elaborate previous studies, research papers, and relevant

literature related to M&E practices , third one is methodology which describes the research design, data collection methods, and analytical approaches used in the study. fourth one is finding which presents the results and analysis of the study and the last one is conclusions,it summarizes the main findings of the study and interprets their implications, recommendations and suggestions for further study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 General Overview of Monitoring and Evaluation

Various literature sources present diverse interpretations of the concept of monitoring and evaluation (M&E). However, there is a general consensus among researchers that monitoring and evaluation are practices employed in project implementation.

According to Kariuki (2014), monitoring involves continuously assessing project activities within the context of implementation timelines and resource utilization”. A more comprehensive definition, according to the World Bank report from 2011 describes monitoring as an ongoing function that systematically collects data on specific indicators to inform management and key stakeholders about the progress, achievement of objectives, and utilization of allocated funds in a development intervention. When considering monitoring as a continuous task, these criteria become relevant.

After establishing the definition of monitoring, it is important to explore its typologies. The literature offers various conceptualizations of monitoring typologies, and not all forms are covered in this article. according to the UNICEF report from 2003 “distinguishes between two types: situation monitoring and performance monitoring. Performance monitoring tracks progress towards specific goals outlined in the implementation plan, while situation monitoring observes changes or the lack thereof in a given scenario or set of conditions.”

Kunwar and Nyandemo's work from 2004 indicate that “swiftly identifies problems to inform decision-makers and enable corrective action” .This indicates that,, evaluation involves a systematic and impartial examination of a project's effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, sustainability, and impact. It entails analyzing data and evidence to assess goal achievement and identify contributing factors.

2.2 Monitoring and Evaluation Practices

As per the findings of the PMI (2014) report “Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices are systematic and structured approaches used to track, assess, and analyze the progress, outcomes, and impacts of projects, programs, or interventions”. These practices involve gathering and analyzing data to gain insights into the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of initiatives and to inform decision-making and continuous improvement.

According to IFRC. (2011). Monitoring and evaluation guide “monitoring and evaluation practices are essential components of project management and development initiatives. Monitoring ensures the continuous tracking of progress and performance, while evaluation provides a comprehensive assessment of effectiveness and impact”. The main thing that we understand from both practices is evidence-based decision-making, learning, and continuous improvement, ultimately supporting the achievement of project goals and objectives.

Monitoring and evaluation practices resemble a detective's investigation into the effectiveness of a project. Monitoring acts as the detective's surveillance, collecting evidence and clues to uncover the progress and adherence to project plans. Evaluation plays the role of the investigator, analyzing the evidence, conducting interviews, and piecing together the puzzle to determine the project's impact and identify areas for improvement.

Goyder, J. (2009), “monitoring and evaluation practices enhance project sustainability. By assessing the long-term impact of projects, organizations can identify factors that contribute to sustainability and those that hinder it”. Therefore, what we understand from this is, Monitoring and evaluation help to ensure that projects are aligned with the needs and aspirations of the target beneficiaries. By monitoring project outcomes and evaluating their sustainability, organizations can make informed decisions about resource allocation, future investments, and project continuation.

2.3 The impact of Monitoring and Evaluation practices in Project management

Monitoring and evaluation practices play a crucial role in project management, contributing significantly to project success and overall organizational effectiveness. By systematically assessing project progress, identifying areas of improvement, and measuring outcomes, monitoring and evaluation provide valuable insights for informed decision-making and course correction.

According to Khan, A. M. (2013), “ monitoring and evaluation practices provide real-time information about the project's performance. Through regular data collection, tracking of key performance indicators, and progress reporting, project managers can stay informed about the project's status”. Therefore, This enables us to identify potential issues early on and take necessary corrective actions. By having access to up-to-date information, project managers can mitigate risks, address challenges, and make informed decisions to keep the project on track.

According to Ober, C. (2012) “monitoring and evaluation practices facilitate accountability and transparency. They ensure that project activities align with the set goals and objectives".What we understand from this is , monitoring allows project managers to ensure that resources are being utilized effectively and efficiently. By evaluating the project's outputs and outcomes, stakeholders can assess whether the project is delivering the expected results. This transparency builds trust among project team members, stakeholders, and beneficiaries, fostering a collaborative environment.

According to FAO, 2006 report “ monitoring and evaluation practices promote learning and knowledge sharing. By systematically analyzing project data and evaluating outcomes, project managers can identify successful strategies and best practices”. What we understand from this is, M and E knowledge can then be shared across projects and teams, enabling continuous improvement and enhancing future project performance. Lessons learned from monitoring and evaluation can also inform the development of future projects, leading to more effective planning and execution.

Project Management Institute (2008) “ monitoring and evaluation practices contribute to adaptive management. Projects often encounter unforeseen challenges or changing circumstances” therefore, We can understand that, by closely monitoring project activities and evaluating their impact, project managers can adapt their strategies and plans accordingly. This flexibility allows for quick adjustments to optimize project outcomes, minimize risks, and capitalize on emerging opportunities.

2.4 The determinants of Monitoring and Evaluation practice in NGOs

Patton, M. Q. (2011), “ leadership support is vital. Project managers and leaders need to understand the value of monitoring and evaluation and actively support its implementation”. What we have understood from this is ,Leadership has a great role to allocate sufficient resources, including time, personnel, and technology, to ensure that monitoring and evaluation activities can be carried out effectively. Leadership commitment sets the tone for the entire organization and reinforces the importance of monitoring and evaluation as a critical aspect of project management.

Chen (2010) states that. “ clear objectives and indicators are crucial. Monitoring and evaluation practices need to be aligned with the project's goals and objective”. These concepts will help us to understand. Having Clear and measurable indicators help us to track progress and assess the project's success. Well-defined objectives and indicators enable project teams to focus their monitoring and evaluation efforts on the areas that truly matter and provide meaningful insights for decision-making.

Chen (2010) states that. “ stakeholder engagement is essential. The involvement of relevant stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle is vital for effective monitoring and evaluation. Stakeholders bring diverse perspectives, expertise, and knowledge to the process” Their active participation ensures that the monitoring and evaluation activities capture a comprehensive view of the project's progress and impact. Engaging stakeholders fosters ownership, increases accountability, and facilitates the utilization of monitoring and evaluation findings.

According to UN Water. (2006) “data quality and availability are key determinants. Accurate and reliable data is the foundation of effective monitoring and evaluation. Project managers need to establish robust data collection mechanisms, ensuring that data is collected consistently, systematically, and in a timely manner” . These will ensure data quality by employing rigorous validation processes and addressing any data gaps or inconsistencies. Accessible and well-organized data allows for meaningful analysis and evaluation, enabling project managers to derive valuable insights.

UN Water. (2006) “ organizational culture plays a significant role. An organizational culture that values learning, accountability, and continuous improvement promotes the adoption of monitoring and evaluation practices”. When project teams and individuals perceive monitoring and evaluation as a constructive process rather than a mere compliance exercise, they are more likely to embrace it wholeheartedly. A supportive culture encourages knowledge sharing, open communication, and the application of monitoring and evaluation findings to enhance project performance.

According to PMI(2008) “capacity building is critical. Building the necessary skills and knowledge among project team members and stakeholders is essential for effective monitoring and evaluation”.Therefore, Training and capacity-building initiatives should be implemented to equip individuals with the competencies required to carry out monitoring and evaluation activities. This includes skills in data collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting. By investing in capacity building, organizations can strengthen their monitoring and evaluation practices and ensure their long-term sustainability.

In summary, the key determinant of monitoring and evaluation practices lies in the commitment and involvement of project stakeholders, particularly leadership support, clear objectives and indicators, stakeholder engagement, data quality and availability, organizational culture, and capacity building. When these factors are effectively addressed, monitoring and evaluation practices can thrive, providing valuable insights for project management, decision-making, and organizational improvement.

2.5 The Challenges of Establishing M and E Systems in project implementation

Establishing monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems in project implementation can present various challenges that organizations must overcome to ensure their effectiveness. These challenges can arise from both internal and external factors and require careful consideration and proactive measures.

PMI. (2015), “ One of the primary challenges is the lack of clarity and alignment regarding project objectives and indicators. It is crucial to clearly define the project's goals, objectives, and intended outcomes from the outset”. organizations usually often face difficulties in articulating these aspects and translating them into measurable indicators. Without clear objectives and indicators, monitoring and evaluation become challenging, hindering the ability to track progress and assess project performance accurately.

Ober, C. (2012) indicates that “Resource constraints pose another significant challenge. Establishing robust M&E systems requires adequate resources, including financial, human, and technological resources” However, organizations may face limitations in terms of budget, skilled personnel, and access to appropriate technology. Insufficient resources can impede data collection, analysis, and reporting, leading to incomplete or unreliable monitoring and evaluation results.

Humanitarian Global (HG) 2022 explores that “Data quality and availability can be a persistent challenge. Collecting accurate and reliable data is essential for effective M&E. However, organizations may encounter difficulties in ensuring data quality, particularly in terms of consistency, completeness, and timeliness”. Therefore, Insufficient data availability or gaps in data collection can limit the comprehensiveness and reliability of the monitoring and evaluation process, making it difficult to draw meaningful conclusions or make informed decisions.

PMI. (2015), stakeholder engagement is a challenge that organizations often face. Involving relevant stakeholders throughout the project implementation is crucial for effective monitoring and evaluation” However, engaging stakeholders and obtaining their active participation can be challenging. Lack of stakeholder buy-in, limited resources for stakeholder engagement, or inadequate communication and coordination efforts can hinder the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation, as valuable perspectives and insights may be missed.

Humanitarian Global (HG) 2022, “ Organizational culture and mindset can also present challenges. Establishing a culture of learning, accountability, and data-driven decision-making is essential for effective M&E” However, organizations may encounter resistance to change, reluctance to embrace M&E practices, or a culture that does not prioritize learning and improvement. Overcoming these cultural barriers requires a concerted effort to foster a supportive environment that values monitoring and evaluation as integral components of project implementation.

PMI. (2015) “sustainability of M&E systems can be a challenge. Organizations often struggle to maintain the continuity of monitoring and evaluation practices beyond the project's duration” Therefore, Limited institutionalization and integration of M&E within organizational processes can lead to M&E systems being abandoned once the project concludes. Ensuring the long-term sustainability of M&E requires embedding it within the organization's structure, processes, and culture, thereby enabling its ongoing use and benefit beyond individual projects.

Therefore, according to the above mentioned literature, establishing M&E systems in project implementation is not without its challenges. These challenges include the lack of clarity and alignment regarding project objectives and indicators, resource constraints, data quality and availability issues, limited stakeholder engagement, organizational culture and mindset, and sustainability concerns. Addressing these challenges requires proactive measures such as clear goal setting, resource allocation, capacity building,

stakeholder involvement, cultural transformation, and institutionalization of M&E practices. By addressing these challenges, organizations can enhance the effectiveness of their M&E systems, leading to improved project performance and outcomes.

2.6 Expected standards of excellence in M&E by CSOs

In monitoring and evaluation (M&E), there are expected standards of excellence that organizations strive to achieve. These standards reflect the principles and practices necessary for effective M&E implementation. While specific contexts may vary, certain key elements are commonly recognized as benchmarks for excellence in M&E.

IFRC. (2011) “clear and measurable objectives are an essential standard. M&E activities must be aligned with the project's goals and objectives”. These objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). Well-defined objectives provide a clear direction for M&E efforts, ensuring that monitoring and evaluation activities focus on the most critical aspects of the project.

According to PMI 2015, “high-quality data collection is crucial. Accurate and reliable data form the foundation of M&E. Organizations must establish robust data collection methods and processes, ensuring that data is collected consistently and systematically” This involves using appropriate data collection tools and techniques, training data collectors, and implementing quality assurance measures. High-quality data enables meaningful analysis and evaluation, leading to reliable findings and informed decision-making.

FAO, 2006, “rigorous analysis and interpretation of data are expected. M&E practitioners should possess the skills and expertise to analyze data effectively. They should employ appropriate statistical methods, data visualization techniques, and qualitative analysis approaches to derive insights from the collected data”. Rigorous analysis allows for a comprehensive understanding of project progress, outcomes, and

impact, enabling organizations to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement.

FAO, 2006, “stakeholder engagement is a key standard. Engaging relevant stakeholders throughout the M&E process is critical for its success. Stakeholders bring diverse perspectives, expertise, and knowledge that contribute to comprehensive and meaningful M&E outcomes”. By involving stakeholders from different levels and sectors, organizations ensure that M&E findings are well-informed and reflect the interests and priorities of all relevant parties.

IFRC. (2011) “ utilization of M&E findings. The ultimate purpose of M&E is to inform decision-making and drive positive change. Organizations are expected to utilize M&E findings to improve project performance, enhance outcomes, and make informed decisions” This involves disseminating findings to stakeholders, promoting learning and knowledge sharing, and using evidence-based insights to adjust project strategies and activities.

PMI (2015) “Transparency and accountability are also expected standards in M&E. Organizations should maintain transparency by sharing M&E processes, methods, and findings with stakeholders” This fosters trust, promotes accountability, and enables stakeholders to provide feedback and contribute to the evaluation process. Accountability entails taking responsibility for M&E results and using them to drive organizational learning and improvement.

In summary, the expected standards of excellence in M&E encompass clear and measurable objectives, high-quality data collection, rigorous analysis and interpretation, stakeholder engagement, utilization of findings, transparency, accountability, and a commitment to continuous learning and improvement. By upholding these standards, organizations can ensure the effectiveness and impact of their M&E efforts, leading to better project outcomes and informed decision-making.

2.7 The implementation of the monitoring and evaluation systems in MENA

According to the MENA 2020 report “Mekdim Ethiopia National Association of PLHIV and AIDS Orphans was established in 1996 by a group of 3 people living with the virus and 9 Aids orphans. The foundation of Mekdim was based on people that were unified by common experiences faced when encountering HIV/AIDS at a time of high stigma, ignorance and discrimination”

According to the MENA 2020 report “The founders at the beginning used to meet informally in each other’s homes or offices to provide mutual psychological and social support. Cohesion among these individuals was strengthened by the fact that they were either directly infected with HIV or implicitly affected by the epidemic”. Consequently, they were able to establish Mekdim (meaning pioneer), which is the first legally registered and presently one of the major PLHIV’s associations in Ethiopia. Currently the association has a total of over 10,000 members (26 % AIDS Orphans & 74% PLHIV). And it has been undertaking various HIV/AIDS Projects/programs in six different areas in the country.

The emphasis of monitoring and evaluation on the relevance, performance as well as success is connected to the goal of safeguarding projects and programs that are supported by MENA to ensure that such endeavors get sustainable outcomes will be beneficial to the stakeholders and the society at large. Both function linked to the achievement of this goal by supporting aspects such as decision-making, accountability, learning, along with capacity development.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The chapter presents the methodological approach, research design, data collection method selected for this research and explains why these particular methods have been chosen. Then, the sampling and data analysis method will be discussed.

3.1 Research Design

The current study used a qualitative exploratory study since its goal is to explore perspectives and generate rich information in the form of words instead of generating statistics or test hypotheses.

The study used a qualitative and a descriptive research design to gather and analyze information on Mekdim Ethiopia National Association's project M&E practices. The study used both primary and secondary data by using a qualitative research method. In order to better understand the procedures and important elements affecting the M&E practice, interviews with key informants and document reviews will be done.

3.2 Research Approach

The study is conducted by using a qualitative approach. This has been provided for researchers to ask open questions and gain insight about the M and E practice in CSOs. It was also flexible and adaptable to make changes.

3.3 Sampling Method and Sampling Size

In this research study, the sample size was taken by a census method which helps to eliminate sampling error and provides data on all the individuals in the population. In this study the focus respondents was the Staff of MENA and the projects Staff of MENA.

3.4 Data Collection Method

Both primary and secondary sources were conducted for data collection. Primary qualitative studies were taken by the use of semi-structured questionnaires/interviews and structured observation administered to the target population. For secondary data, reviewing the existing literature on the subject helped to answer the questions of the study. The data were collected by google form.

3.5 Data Analysis

Once the data has been collected, the researcher proceeds to analyze it. The quantitative outcomes are expressed as percentages and presented in a table that illustrates the distribution of percentages. Regarding the qualitative data, it is carefully evaluated and structured in a comprehensive manner to align with the specific requirements of the research. The field notes obtained from semi-structured interviews undergo a meticulous and methodical examination, concentrating on individual statements, with the goal of identifying consistent recurring themes that emerged throughout the research process.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations related to respondents were taken in the best possible manner. Research ethics were put under consideration to avoid any form of harm, suffering or violation. By making clear why, the research was conducted by providing an official invitation letter to MENA staff and the respondents identity will be protected.

3.7 Validity and Reliability

3.7.1 Reliability

In the context of the assessment of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practice in local governmental organizations, a combination of these reliability tests could be used to ensure the validity and reliability of the data collected. For example, internal consistency reliability could be used to assess the homogeneity of the M&E assessment tool items.

3.7.2 Validity

Validity is the applicability to which research findings can be realistic to the real world, beyond the controlled setting of the research. It is concerned with generalisability. Validity of research instruments has various sources of evidence as the requirement to build the case that the instrument measures accurately. This research developed the content with research experts, prepared unambiguous questions on the subject matter, and the instruments were comprehensive enough.

CHAPTER: FOUR DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines an analysis and a discussion of study results and findings.

4.2 Respondents' Biographic Information

The section of the questionnaires is two. The section A required indicate the personal information and the Section B indicates the information on Monitoring and evaluation practice

4.2.1 Respondents' Response Rate

The study recorded a response rate of 90%. The study enrolled 60 staff members of MENA out of whom 53 successfully responded to the study questionnaire.

4.2.2 Respondents' level of education

Among the respondents, more than 89% have bachelor's and above. The education level determines the respondents' ability to comprehend the survey questions. The study enjoyed high proportion responses from highly educated participants.

Table: 1 Respondent level of Education

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage
Masters	9	17%
Bachelor	38	72%
Diploma	6	11%

4.2.3 Respondent level of work Experience

Among the respondents, 89% of the respondents have more than 5 years of project experience and they understand the local context. This helped the study to get more insight and in-depth information.

Table 2: Respondent level of work experience

Work experience	Number of stuffs	Percentage
0-5 years	11	21%
5-10 years	27	51%
above 10	15	28%

4.2.3 Respondents' level of Job position

Among the respondents, 4% of them were in the M and E team and 49% of the respondents were from the project implementer at national and regional level. All the senior management teams (6) were included under the study to generate more insightful evidence and suggestions.

Table 3: level of work experience

Job position	Frequency	Role	Percentage
Country director	1	Senior Manager	2%
M and E stuffs	2	Manager	4%
Project manager	2	Manager	4%
Project Director	2	Manager	4%
Deputy Director	2	Manager	4%

Business Advisor	1	Project team	2%
Finance director	1	Manager	2%
Finance team	4	Project team	8%
Procurement	1	Project team	2%
Clinical advisor	2	Project team	4%
Training coordinator	1	Project team	2%
Project stuffs at national	8	Project team	15%
project stuffs at regional	26	Project team	49%

4.3 M&E plan and System of the MENA

Having an organized Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system has several implications and benefits for projects, programs, and organizations. It helps for decision making, to enhance accountability, to increase efficiency and effectiveness, sustainability and stakeholder engagement.(PMI. (2015).

Table 4: number of respondent who agreed with MENA M and E plan

Number of respondent	Agreed with MENA M and E plan	%
47	Yes	89%
6	No	11%

89% (47)of the respondents agreed that MENA has a M & E plan which begins by clearly defining the objectives and scope of M&E. The project's M&E is identified, along with its

function and need, in this section. However, it does serve to highlight the position of the stakeholder in the project, which enables project stakeholders to evaluate the degree to which project objectives are being attained, identify strengths and weaknesses, and make decisions for development and learning that are supported by the best available data.

The precise M&E tasks to be carried out during the course of the project lifetime are described in the plan. It provides a schedule for these tasks, detailing the dates of data gathering, analysis, reporting, and learning activities. This guarantees that M&E is included in the project's overall schedule and enables prompt input and correction.

89% (47) of the respondents agreed that the firm has a well-organized M&E system and 18% do not agree to it at all. A Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) strategy describes the systematic methodology and procedures for obtaining, processing, and utilizing data to track the advancement of a project and assess its results and effect. The respondents showed a clear understanding of the significance of a distinct M and E throughout our conversation. They said that the M and E plan serves as a manual for carefully gathering and analyzing data, monitoring developments, and evaluating the accomplishment and effect of the project or program. The M and E team, which is dependent on the interests of funders and stakeholders, has taken on the major responsibility for coordinating the M and E strategy.

11% of the respondents did not agree with the M and E plan of MENA. They don't have any information about the plan and they were not engaged in the planning process. But 2 of the M and E staff respondents indicate that, complete independent project M & E (Monitoring and Evaluation) plan is a crucial instrument for accurately evaluating the development, results, and impact of a particular project. Such a plan offers a well-organized framework for tracking and assessing the project's actions, outputs, and outcomes. It ensures that data is consistently gathered, examined, and applied to support decision-making, enhance project performance, and establish accountability.

4.4 Designee and well communicated M and E framework of MENA

A Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework is a structured and systematic approach that outlines the key components and processes involved in monitoring and evaluating a project, program, or organization. It provides a conceptual and methodological framework for collecting, analyzing, and utilizing data to assess progress, performance, and impact.

Table 5: number of respondent who agreed with MENA M and E framework

Number of respondent	Agreed with MENA M and E designed and well communicated	%
19	Yes (Well designed and communicated)	36%
28	Yes (Well designed but not communicated)	53%
6	No, (Not well designed and communicated)	11%

53% (28) respondents indicated that MENA have designed but not well-communicated project monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework which is consistent with the project's objective to make decision-making easier. However, there is a lack of transparency in this framework regarding the roles and responsibilities of the many parties .Six respondents who have been working at the site level don't have clear understanding about the M and E framework. They simply understand that it is a kind of checklist which helps for data collection.

There should be a clear and organized method for executing M&E activities in a project, nevertheless, in order to assert that an expressly intended but poorly communicated M&E framework exists. It makes certain that M&E activities are in line with project goals, encourages stakeholder participation, and allows for informed decision-making based on solid information and evidence.

4.5 Systematic approach and Results based project M&E practice?

Two of the respondents from the M and E team indicate that, Over the past two years, our organization implemented process-based approaches, which focused on monitoring and analyzing the internal processes and activities within the project. These approaches allowed us to track and evaluate the inputs, actions, and outputs of the project. The decision to use these methods was influenced by limited resources and a lack of commitment from organizational management to fully invest in comprehensive monitoring and evaluation practices(.United Nations Development Programme. (2002)) As a result, these methods were employed to assess the project's outcomes and impacts.

Three of the respondents from the project team were not happy with the approaches that have been currently implemented under the M and E. They consider that the current implementation doesn't monitor the project success and the impact of the project at the community level. The approaches do not give more context on assessing the project's contribution to the desired change and understanding its impact.

Six of the respondents from the senior management team mentioned that, recently we are on the pipeline to use the mixed approaches specifically by using the process based and result based approaches so as to provide a clear focus on outcomes and impact. These will improve the accountability and evidence-based decision making among the project staff and M and E team.

4.6 Best practice and knowledge management practice in MENA

Table 6: number of respondent who agreed with best practice and knowledge management

Number of respondent	Best practice tracking tool and Knowledge management	%
45	No, there is right tool /standard	85%
8	Yes (There is a tool but not well communicated.	15%

85% (45) respondents indicate that, there is no predefined set of criteria for tracking the best practice during the project implementation. But the team has rewarded the staff on an annual basis, based on their performance and the result that the team has provided. For example, the number of training provided and number of the data collected based on the indicators.

Eight of the respondents from the M&E team and senior management mentioned that there is no systematic approach or standard that helps to outline processes for capturing, documenting, disseminating, and utilizing M&E knowledge. It has been only shared for senior management and donors to indicate the project progress rather than for regular reflection, learning events, and feedback loops to bring continuous improvement.

The findings indicate that MENA faces several key challenges in capturing and leveraging the best practices in project experiences. Firstly, there is a need to document and emphasize the project's objectives and the extent to which they have been achieved. This involves capturing the specific outcomes and impacts resulting from the project's interventions. Secondly, it is crucial to document the innovative approaches or strategies employed in the project, as well as highlight the challenges faced and the methods used to overcome them. Lastly, effective engagement of stakeholders throughout the project should be documented, as their involvement is essential for scaling and implementing project initiatives.

To address these challenges, MENA should foster a culture of learning and adaptation throughout the project lifecycle. This involves regularly reviewing monitoring and evaluation (M&E) findings, engaging in reflection and dialogue, and using the insights gained to adapt project strategies and approaches for continuous improvement.

The findings also reveal a lack of clear standards for evaluating M&E knowledge management in MENA projects. It is important to establish evaluation criteria that encompass factors such as accessibility of information, utilization of knowledge, quality of documentation, and effectiveness of knowledge-sharing mechanisms. Furthermore, gathering stakeholder feedback on the effectiveness of M&E practices, conducting interviews and surveys to assess their perception of knowledge management practices and challenges faced, and soliciting suggestions for improvement are essential. Additionally, reviewing decision-making processes, project

adaptations based on M&E findings, and demonstrating evidence of knowledge utilization in organizational learning and improvement should be part of the evaluation process.

4.7 How is M&E financed and budgeted? Do you think M&E activities are optimally budgeted?

According to Project management ,there is no clear standard which estimates the M and E budget since it is dependent on the project scope. But different scholars agree that, M and E budget should constitute 5-10% of the total project budget.

According to Two of the respondents from the M and E team, the allocated budget constitutes only 3% of the total project budget, which significantly deviates from the expected budgeting structure. The recommended standard budget for M&E varies depending on factors such as organization size, program complexity, scope of M&E activities, and project-specific requirements. However, it is generally advised that organizations allocate a certain percentage of their program budget for M&E. While there is no fixed rule, the suggested range typically falls between 5% and 10% of the program budget.

Within this percentage range, the M&E budget can be allocated to different components, including personnel costs, training and capacity building, data collection tools, technology and software, travel and fieldwork, external consultants and services, reporting and dissemination, and monitoring and evaluation tools, as previously mentioned. However, the respondent noted that the M&E budget often gets reallocated to other departments, posing a significant challenge to their planned activities and compromising the quality of implementation.(PMI,2008)

Table 7: number of respondent who agreed with allocation of budget

Number of respondent	Adequately budgeted	%
46	No	87%
7	Yes	13%

87% of the respondents did not agree with the budgeting structure of the MENA, they indicate that there is no regular program specific M and E review and orientation in the M and E tool. The monitoring and evaluation team did not usually conducted a field level technical support in a regular basis and also the two Respondent from M and E team indicates, that the Monitoring and evaluation budget usually shifted to other departments and they encountered a significant challenge to proceed with their plan and compromising their quality of implementation.

Therefore, it's crucial for MENA to carefully consider the importance of M&E in ensuring program effectiveness, accountability, and learning. Allocating an appropriate budget for M&E enables the organization to collect quality data, conduct robust analysis, and effectively monitor and evaluate program outcomes. (According to PMI, 2008)

4.8 What is your most used M&E method? How do you ensure the quality of data collection?

Two respondents from the M&E team have reported that they have been utilizing document review as a method to assess program progress, activities, and outcomes. This approach involves analyzing existing performance reports, monthly reports, and relevant program documents. However, it is noted that the standard M&E framework implemented by different LNGOs employs a mixed methodology, which allows for evaluation based on the specific nature and approach of each project. Therefore, it is recommended that MENA adopts an approach aligned with the nature and requirements of the project.

To ensure data quality, MENA has implemented certain measures. These include providing training to data collectors on data collection techniques, research ethics, and proper tool usage to maintain consistency. Standardization of data collection tools and protocols is also implemented to ensure uniformity among data collectors. However, due to budget constraints, additional methods such as data quality validation and verification, conducting random spot checks, or verifying information with external stakeholders have not been utilized extensively. These methods can contribute to validating and ensuring data accuracy and reliability.

It is highly recommended that routine data quality assurance and data quality services are integrated into MENA's system. This entails implementing regular quality checks, including periodic reviews of collected data, to identify and address any errors or inconsistencies that may arise in the majority of MENA's projects.

4.9 What do you recommend to cope up with the challenges of good M&E practice to improve the M&E system effectiveness in this project?

All respondents (100%) suggested a few suggestions to cope up with the challenge and to improve the effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system in a project.

1. **Clear M&E Framework:** Develop a comprehensive M&E framework that precisely defines the project's objectives, indicators, data collection methods, and reporting mechanisms. This framework will serve as a roadmap for effectively implementing M&E activities.
2. **Allocation of Resources:** Ensure sufficient financial, human, and technological resources are allocated to support M&E activities. It is crucial to include a dedicated budget for M&E within the overall project budget, enabling investments in staff, training, data collection tools, technology, and reporting.
3. **Capacity Building:** Invest in capacity building for staff and stakeholders involved in M&E. Provide training and workshops to enhance their understanding of M&E concepts, data collection techniques, analysis, and reporting. Strengthening the skills and knowledge of the M&E team will significantly improve the quality of the M&E system.

From my observation, MENA needs some other key points:

1. **Utilization of Findings:** Actively use evaluation findings for evidence-based decision-making. Share results with project teams, management, and relevant stakeholders to inform program adjustments, policy changes, and learning. Encourage a culture of learning and adaptation based on M&E findings to continuously improve project effectiveness.

2. **Continuous Improvement:** Regularly review and assess the M&E system's effectiveness and efficiency. Identify areas for improvement, gather feedback from stakeholders, and make necessary adjustments to enhance the M&E process. Incorporate lessons learned into future projects and replicate successful M&E practices.
3. **External Support:** Seek external support and collaboration when needed. Engage with M&E experts, consultants, or organizations with expertise in the specific project domain. They can provide guidance, technical assistance, and help address challenges related to M&E.
4. **Regular Review and Adaptation:** Continuously review and adapt the M&E system based on feedback and changing project needs. Regularly assess the relevance and effectiveness of M&E activities and make necessary adjustments to ensure their alignment with project goals and emerging challenge

4.10 Do you think that the M&E unit is well capacitated and optimally utilized? Do you notice any lack of professionalism in M&E? Please brief this point.

From my observation, the organization has a dedicated M&E unit consisting of skilled professionals with expertise in monitoring and evaluation. The organization ensures that evaluation findings are actively utilized within the organization. They prepare comprehensive evaluation reports that highlight program achievements, challenges, and recommendations. These reports are shared with project teams, senior management, and board members to inform decision-making, improve program design, and enhance accountability.

The M&E unit infrequently engages stakeholders in the M&E process. It is not regular but they collaborate with program beneficiaries, community members, and partner organizations to gather input, conduct surveys, and collect qualitative data. Stakeholders are involved in data validation exercises and participate in sharing sessions to ensure transparency and accountability.

However, Project staff may lack the necessary training and expertise in M&E methodologies, data collection, analysis, and reporting. Insufficient knowledge and skills can lead to inaccurate data collection, flawed analysis, and ineffective reporting.

Data quality measurement such as data verification and validation processes can not be conducted on a regular basis ,these can lead to unreliable data. Without robust quality assurance mechanisms in place, the credibility and accuracy of M&E findings may be compromised.

4.11 stakeholder involvement

The goal of the study was to determine the degree and methods of stakeholder involvement in the project. Compared to other target M&E practice features, stakeholder involvement received the least amount of positive feedback. The results showed that stakeholder analysis, stakeholder input, and communication strategy designed to address information flow were used at a low

Table 8: number of respondents who agreed with stakeholder engagement.

Number of respondent	Strong stakeholder engagement	%
15	strongly disagree	28%
27	Disagree	51%
11	agree	21%
0	strongly	0

79% (47) of the respondents reported strongly disagreeing and disagree with the stakeholder involvement in monitoring and evaluation practice of MENA. Respondents further disagreed with participation of stakeholders that reflects community needs stimulating people's interest in the implementation of M & E as well as enabling stakeholders to influence product acceptance based on their needs. The findings show a lack of a structured system for stakeholder involvement in the project development cycle. Stakeholders are least involved in project monitoring and evaluation.

But 21% of the respondents think that they have infrequent engagement with a few stakeholders so as to evaluate the performance of the organization by taking a few key performance indicators. The engagement of stakeholders in the program life cycle has a great role to maximize the project effectiveness and to address the challenge and create a Cope-up mechanism.

4.12 Benefits of M&E practice in MENA

All of the respondents believe that M and E has a great impact on a project's success and it will also enable informed decision-making, promotes accountability, facilitates learning and adaptation, enhances transparency and communication, improves resource management, measures impact, and supports strategic planning. Overall, M&E helps organizations make better decisions, track progress, learn from experiences, communicate effectively, allocate resources wisely, demonstrate impact, and align strategies for success.(PMI. (2015).

All the respondents indicate that they want to utilize the maximum output of monitoring and evaluation activities.They need to adopt the best experience sharing among the project stuffs by developing the standard for best practice tracking and learning.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Introduction

There are three sections in this chapter. The first part of the report summarizes the main findings; the second part discusses the research's conclusions drawn from the findings; and the third portion deals with the recommendations based on the findings.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The respondents indicate that MENA has an M & E plan which begins by clearly defining the objectives and scope of M&E. It identifies the purpose of M&E within the project, explaining why it is necessary. But it does not illustrate the role of the stakeholder in the project. MENA have well designed but not well-communicated project monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework. Those who have been working at the site level don't have clear understanding about the M and E framework. MENA has been using a process-based approaches to evaluate the input, activities and output. The approaches do not give more context on assessing the project's contribution to the desired change and understanding its impact. MENA has been rewarding the stuffs based on the key performance indicators. there is no systematic approaches or standard to evaluate M&E knowledge management in their projects, these may include having a clear evaluation criteria which includes accessibility of information, utilization of knowledge, documentation quality, and effectiveness of knowledge-sharing mechanisms ,stakeholder feedback toward the effectiveness of M and E practice. MENA have a budget which constitutes 3% of the total project which is far away from the expected budgeting structure. The approach that has been implemented in MENA to ensure data quality so-far were, providing training to data collectors on data collection techniques, research ethics, and the proper use of tools helps maintain consistency. However, due to the budget constraints, they couldn't able to use different methods such as data quality validation and verification to cross-check data from multiple sources, conducting random spot checks, or verifying information with external stakeholders can help validate and ensure data accuracy and reliability. The findings show lack of a structured system for stakeholder involvement in project development cycle. Stakeholders are least involved in project monitoring and evaluation.

5.3 Conclusion

The research has been started to assess the monitoring and evaluation practice of local non-governmental organization.so as to address the main of the research, three main conclusions has been stated

First, Local Non-governmental organizations have not yet adopted a culture of learning and adaptation throughout the project.This will help the organization to improve the accessibility of information, utilization of knowledge, documentation quality, and effectiveness of knowledge-sharing.

Second, Local non-governmental organizations have no systematic approaches or standard to evaluate M&E knowledge management in their projects. This has impacted evidence-based decision making and accountability among different departments.

Third, Less engagement of stakeholders and absence of clear standard role of stakeholder results in limited feedback, reduced accountability, limited buy-in, and missed opportunities for collaboration. Without clear standards for measuring results, Local non-governmental organizations may struggle to assess the impact of their project.

Finally, Senior leadership engagement and improper allocation of budget has been a challenge in project monitoring and evaluation practice. The senior leaders have a key role in establishing a clear vision for M&E, allocating resources, establishing priorities, ensuring quality, using data for decision-making, and communicating results.

5.4 Recommendation

5.4.1 Recommendations of the study

- It will be good if there is a clear and structured approach for implementing M&E activities in a project. It ensures that M&E efforts are aligned with project objectives, facilitates collaboration among stakeholders, and enables informed decision-making based on reliable data and evidence.
- There is an explicitly designed and well-communicated M&E framework with a clear and structured approach for implementing M&E activities in a project to improve the stakeholder engagement and accountability.

- It will be good if MENA implement a mixed approach specifically by using the process based and result based approaches so as to provide a clear focus on outcomes and impact. These will improve the accountability and evidence-based decision making among the project stuffs and M and E team
- Better if MENA embraces a culture of learning and adaptation throughout the project. There should be a clear standard to evaluate M&E knowledge management in their projects, these may include having a clear evaluation criterion which includes accessibility of information, utilization of knowledge, documentation quality, and effectiveness of knowledge-sharing.
- It will be good if Mena has a proper Allocation of budget for M&E which enables the organization to collect quality data, conduct robust analysis, and effectively monitor and evaluate program outcomes.

5.4.2. Recommendations for Future Research

The research has focused in a single organization due to time and scope constraints. Further research would be required to assess the monitoring and evaluation practice and project success in local non-governmental organizations.

Reference

1. Bamberger, M., Rao, V., & Woolcock, M. (2010). Using mixed methods in monitoring and evaluation: experiences from international development. World Bank Publications.
2. United Nations Development Programme. (2011). Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results.
3. United Nations Development Programme. (2002). Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results
4. Patton, M. Q. (2011). Developmental Evaluation: Applying Complexity Concepts to Enhance Innovation and Use
5. Chen, H. T. (2010). Theory-driven evaluations. SAGE Publications.)
6. UN Water. (2006). Coping with water scarcity: Challenge of the twenty-first century. Available at: <https://www.unwater.org/publications/coping-with-water-scarcity-challenge-of-the-twenty-first-century/>
7. Simister, S. J. (2009). Monitoring and evaluation for small-scale enterprise development programs. *Small Enterprise Development*, 20(1), 60-71.
8. Ahsan, N., & Gunawan, L. A. (2010). Monitoring and evaluation of community development projects: A management approach. *Journal of US-China Public Administration*, 7(8), 43-50.
9. PMI. (2015). A guide to the project management body of knowledge (PMBOK guide) (5th ed.). Project Management Institute.
10. PMI. (2008). A guide to the project management body of knowledge (PMBOK guide) (4th ed.). Project Management Institute.
11. Kariuki, P. M. (2014). Monitoring and evaluation of projects in Kenya: An analysis of the practice in government ministries. *International Journal of Science and Research*, 3(7), 1553-1560.
12. IFRC. (2011). Monitoring and evaluation guide: Framework for programme design, monitoring and evaluation. International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

13. Lipsey, M. W., & Freeman, H. E. (1999). *Evaluation: A systematic approach*. Sage Publications.
14. Dyason, A. (2010). The use of monitoring and evaluation information systems in South Africa: Perceptions and experiences of government officials and external funders. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 33(3), 306-315
15. Goyder, J. (2009). *Participatory monitoring and evaluation: Learning from change*. Routledge.
16. Khan, A. M. (2013). Impact of monitoring and evaluation on organizational performance. *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management*, 1(9), 1-8.
17. Ober, C. (2012). Monitoring and evaluation in international development projects: A literature review. *European Journal of Development Research*, 24(1), 18-31.
18. FAO, 2006, Water monitoring, mapping existing global systems & initiatives. Prepared on the behalf of the UN-Water Task Force on Monitoring. Available online: http://www.fao.org/nr/water/docs/UNW_MONITORING_REPORT.pdf
19. Project Management Institute (2008) *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide®)* Newtown Square, PA: author
20. Key challenges faced by M&E professionals when implementing an M&E assessment ASSESSMENT By: Humanitarian Global (HG) March 7, 2022
21. Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.

Appendices 1: Semi structured Interview Questions



SEEK WISDOM, ELEVATE YOUR INTELLECT AND SERVE HUMANITY!

Addis Ababa University
አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ



Dear Participants, I organized a semi structured interview to assess the M and E practice of MENA.

Dear Participants, I organized a semi structured interview to assess the M and E practice of MENA. You are among those who can provide the topic with the most worthwhile contributions. Here, semi-structured interview questions are provided to help us learn about your real, insightful ideas. Accordingly, using the best of your knowledge and experience, please try to share with me your opinions on the current M&E practice in the project, the main obstacles preventing the effective implementation of M&E practice in the project, and the coping mechanisms for the effective implementation of M&E practices in the project under the bureau as a recommendation. Thank you very much for all!

+251928970672

The section of the questionnaires is two. The section A required indicate the personal information and the Section B indicates the information on Monitoring and evaluation practice

1 .Respondents' Response Rate

Total	
Male	
Female	

2. Respondents' level of education

Master	
Degree	
Diploma	

3. Respondents' level of experience

Year of Experience	
0-5	
5-10	
above 10	

4. Respondents' level of job position

List of Job position	

Semi-structured interview question

1. Does MENA have a separate plan and well-defined M and E structure?
2. Does MENA have a well informed and clear M and E framework?
3. Does the project identify the task and the expectation of M and E experts clearly?
4. Which specific implementation approach has been implemented by MENA?
5. Does MENA have a culture of tracking best practice, documentation, learning and knowledge management?
6. Does MENA allocate sufficient budget for M and E?What should have to be included?
7. What are your most used M&E method? How do you ensure the quality of data collection? Data quality assurance techniques?
8. What are the key factors that affect M&E practice effectiveness in the project? What key factors have to be considered for effective implementation of M&E system?
9. What do you suggest doing to overcome obstacles to excellent M&E practice and increase the project's M&E system's effectiveness?
10. Does the project engage stakeholders? How do you assess internal and external stakeholders' participation and contribution in project M&E practice?
11. What Are the Advantages of Having M&E Practice?
12. Any additional points you can mention?

THANK YOU!

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW

Key Information	
Research area:	Mekdim National Association
Researcher name:	GULUMA BERHANU
Interview mode:	Face to fact
Interview date:	May 9/ 2023
Start time:	10:10 AM
End time:	11:20 AM
1.Respondent Age and Sex /	45/M
2.Respondent Age and Sex	39/M
3.Respondent Age and Sex	34/M
Respondent organization:	MENA
Respondent Department :	M and E, Management team and Project implementation team consecutively lead
Informed consent obtained:	Yes

I am Guluma Berhanu, and my current research focuses on the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices at Mekdim International Ethiopia. The aim of my research is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the existing M&E implementation and identify areas for improvement. Based on my findings, I will provide recommendations that can help enhance the effectiveness of the M&E practices at Mekdim International Ethiopia.

Your participation in the interview is completely voluntary, and you may stop the interview at any time. If you agree to be interviewed, we will make written notes of your responses, which will not be discussed or shared with any programme staff. Your name will not appear in connection to any information you give us.

This interview should take between 30 and 60 minutes. Are you willing to participate?

Introductions

Please begin by introducing yourselves briefly.

Semi-structured interview question

1. Does MENA have a separate plan and well-defined M and E structure?

Respondent 1: has confirmed that there is a separate plan specifically dedicated to the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities at their organization. This plan has been created by the M&E team and has been approved by the management committee.

Respondent 2: has also confirmed that their organization has a well-defined plan for M&E activities. The plan outlines specific monitoring activities for their project and has been drafted by the M&E team.

Respondent-3: has stated that their organization has a distinct and well-defined plan for overall M&E activities.

2. Does MENA have a well informed and clear M and E framework?

Respondent 1: Our organization has a well-defined monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework in place. However, there is a knowledge gap within the team with regards to understanding the framework and the various components of M&E.

Respondent 2: The team is well-informed about the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework, which is clear and easy to understand. The team is encouraged to ask any questions they may have, and the respondent is committed to providing appropriate responses.

Respondent 3: MENA has developed a project monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework that aligns with the project's objectives, aiming to facilitate decision-making. However, the framework has not been adequately communicated, leading to a lack of transparency regarding the roles and responsibilities of the various parties involved.

Respondent 1: A few projector workers at the site level have a limited understanding of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework. They view it as a checklist that aids in data collection. However, it is essential to establish a clear and organized approach for carrying out

M&E activities in a project. This is crucial to verify the existence of an M&E framework that may have been intended but not effectively communicated.

3. Does the project identify the task and the expectation of M and E experts clearly?

Respondent 1: MENA has appointed a dedicated monitoring and evaluation (M&E) expert and technical expert, which has helped in clearly defining the tasks and expectations for implementing the project.

Respondent 2: MENA has two monitoring and evaluation (M&E) experts who are leading the M&E efforts of the project. These experts are highly experienced, and the project has provided them with specific tasks and activities for the M&E team to carry out.

Respondent 3: MENA has a team of experts with extensive experience in leading various projects, who are providing close support to the M&E team. This expertise is enabling the project to maximize their potential and provide valuable contributions to the M&E efforts.

4. Which specific implementation approach has been implemented by MENA?

Respondent 1: In the last two years, our organization has implemented process-based approaches that concentrate on monitoring and analyzing the internal processes and activities of the project. By adopting these approaches, we have been able to effectively track and evaluate the project's inputs, actions, and outputs.

Respondent 2: The project team expressed discontentment with the current monitoring and evaluation (M&E) approaches being implemented, as they do not effectively track the project's success and impact at the community level. The team feels that the current approaches do not provide sufficient context for assessing the project's contribution to the desired change and understanding its impact.

Respondent 3: The project team expressed concerns regarding the current monitoring and evaluation (M&E) approaches used, as they do not effectively measure the project's success and impact on the community level. However, the project team is currently exploring the use of mixed approaches, specifically combining process-based and result-based approaches. This approach will provide a clear focus on outcomes and impact, which will improve the accountability and evidence-based decision making among the project staff and M&E team.

5. Does MENA have a culture of tracking best practice, documentation, learning and knowledge management?

Respondent 1: Currently, there are no predetermined criteria for tracking best practices during project implementation. However, the team provides rewards to the staff on an annual basis, based on their performance and the results achieved. For instance, the number of trainings provided and the amount of data collected based on the indicators are used as metrics for evaluation

Respondent 2:

The current monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system lacks a systematic approach or standard for capturing, documenting, disseminating and utilizing M&E knowledge. Currently, M&E reports are only shared with senior management and donors to indicate project progress, rather than for regular reflection, learning events, and feedback loops aimed at bringing continuous improvement. As a result, there is a need to create a knowledge management system that outlines processes for capturing, documenting, and utilizing M&E knowledge, which will facilitate regular reflection and learning events to improve the project's overall performance.

Respondent 3: MENA projects lack clear standards for evaluating knowledge management in monitoring and evaluation (M&E). It is crucial to establish evaluation criteria that consider factors such as the accessibility of information, the utilization of knowledge, the quality of documentation, and the effectiveness of knowledge-sharing mechanisms. This will ensure that

the knowledge management system is effective, efficient, and contributes to the overall success of the project.

6. Does MENA allocate a sufficient budget for M and E? What should have to be included?

Respondent 1: The M&E budget allocated for the project is only 3% of the total project budget, which is significantly lower than the expected budgeting structure. The standard budget for M&E varies depending on factors such as the size of the organization, program complexity, scope of M&E activities, and project-specific requirements.

Respondent 2: MENA has been allocating budgets for each project based on its scope. However, the budget allocation has been prone to shifting to other departments, and some of the budget has been exhausted due to delayed financial release from the finance team. This has created challenges at the grassroots level, affecting the effective implementation of the project.

Respondent 3: MENA has allocated a budget for the team based on management decisions. However, due to improper usage, budget limitations have been significantly observed. This has restricted the M&E team's ability to provide support to project implementers at the grassroots level, compromising the quality of project implementation.

7. What is your most used M&E method? How do you ensure the quality of data collection? Data quality assurance techniques?

Respondent 1: The organization has been using document review as a method to assess program progress, activities, and outcomes. This approach involves analyzing existing performance reports, monthly reports, and other relevant program documents. However, it is worth noting that the standard M&E framework implemented by different LNGOs uses a mixed methodology. This approach enables evaluation based on the specific nature and approach of each project, allowing for more tailored and effective assessments.

Respondent 2: MENA has implemented several measures to ensure the quality and consistency of data collection. These include providing training to data collectors on data collection techniques, research ethics, and proper tool usage. Standardization of data collection tools and protocols has also been implemented to ensure uniformity among data collectors. However, due to budget constraints, additional methods such as data quality validation and verification, conducting random spot checks, or verifying information with external stakeholders have not been extensively utilized. These methods can contribute to validating and ensuring data accuracy and reliability, and their limited utilization poses a challenge to effective monitoring and evaluation of the project.

Respondent 3: MENA has taken several steps to maintain the quality and consistency of data collection. These steps include providing training to data collectors on data collection techniques, research ethics, and proper tool usage, as well as standardizing data collection tools and protocols to ensure uniformity among data collectors. However, limited budget has hindered the extensive utilization of additional methods such as data quality validation and verification, random spot checks, or verifying information with external stakeholders. These methods are crucial in validating and ensuring data accuracy and reliability, and their limited utilization poses a challenge to effective monitoring and evaluation of the project.

**8. What are the key factors that affect M&E practice effectiveness in the project?
What key factors have to be considered for effective implementation of an M & E system?**

Respondent 1: To tackle the challenges and enhance the effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system in a project, the following actions can be taken: Develop a clear M&E Framework: A comprehensive M&E framework should be developed that precisely defines the project's objectives, indicators, data collection methods, and reporting mechanisms. This framework will serve as a roadmap for effectively implementing M&E and enable the project to track and evaluate its progress more accurately.

Respondent 2:

To address the challenges and improve the effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system in a project, the following actions can be taken: **Allocate Sufficient Resources:** Ensure that adequate financial, human, and technological resources are allocated to support M&E activities. It is crucial to include a dedicated budget for M&E within the overall project budget, enabling investments in staff, training, data collection tools, technology, and reporting. This will enable the M&E team to carry out their responsibilities effectively and efficiently, thereby contributing to the project's overall success.

Respondent 3:

To address the challenges and improve the effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system in a project, the following actions can be taken:

Capacity Building: Invest in building the capacity of staff and stakeholders involved in M&E. Provide training and workshops to enhance their understanding of M&E concepts, data collection techniques, analysis, and reporting. Strengthening the skills and knowledge of the M&E team will significantly improve the quality of the M&E system and enable them to carry out their responsibilities more effectively.

Engage Stakeholders: Engage stakeholders in the M&E process by involving them in the development of the M&E framework, data collection, and reporting. This will ensure that the M&E system is tailored to the project's needs and that stakeholders have a sense of ownership and commitment to the project's success.

Utilize Mixed Methodologies: Utilize a mixed methodology approach to M&E that combines both process-based and result-based approaches. This approach provides a clear focus on outcomes and impact, which improves the accountability and evidence-based decision making among the project staff and M&E team.

9. What do you suggest doing to overcome obstacles to excellent M&E practice and increase the project's M&E system's effectiveness?

Respondent 1: The organization has a dedicated M&E unit comprising proficient professionals with expertise in monitoring and evaluation. The organization ensures that the evaluation findings are actively utilized by preparing comprehensive evaluation reports that highlight the program's achievements, challenges, and recommendations. These reports are shared with project teams, senior management, and board members to inform decision-making, improve program design, and enhance accountability. The M&E team's skilled professionals ensure that the evaluation findings are effectively communicated and utilized within the organization, contributing to continuous improvement and enhanced program effectiveness.

Respondent 2: Although the M&E unit infrequently engages stakeholders in the M&E process, they collaborate with program beneficiaries, community members, and partner organizations to gather input, conduct surveys, and collect qualitative data. Stakeholders are also involved in data validation exercises and participate in sharing sessions, ensuring transparency and accountability. These engagement efforts enable stakeholders to provide valuable input and feedback, contributing to a more comprehensive and accurate evaluation of the program.

Respondent 3:

In Mena, evaluation findings are actively utilized within the organization through the preparation of comprehensive evaluation reports that highlight program achievements, challenges, and recommendations. These reports are shared with project teams, senior management, and board members to inform decision-making, improve program design, and enhance accountability.

10. Does the project engage stakeholders? How do you assess internal and external stakeholders' participation and contribution in project M&E practice?

Respondent 1: Stakeholder involvement in MENA is minimal, particularly in relation to the monitoring and evaluation practice of MENA. Respondents expressed disagreement with the participation of stakeholders, as it does not reflect community needs and fails to stimulate people's interest in the implementation of M&E. Furthermore, the lack of stakeholder involvement also hinders their ability to influence product acceptance based on their needs, which is crucial for effective program implementation.

Respondent 2: MENA has had infrequent engagement with only a limited number of stakeholders to evaluate the performance of the organization based on a few key performance indicators. However, engaging stakeholders in the program life cycle plays a critical role in maximizing project effectiveness and creating a coping mechanism to address challenges. By involving a broader range of stakeholders, the organization can gain diverse perspectives and insights that can enhance the quality and relevance of the program.

Respondent 3: The infrequent engagement of both internal and external stakeholders in MENA has hindered the performance of the organization. By not involving a broader range of stakeholders, the organization may miss out on valuable insights and perspectives, which can lead to a limited understanding of the program's impact and effectiveness. This lack of engagement may also result in a lack of ownership and commitment among stakeholders, negatively impacting the program's sustainability and success.

11. What Are the Advantages of Having M&E Practice?

Respondent 1: Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plays a crucial role in determining a project's success. It enables informed decision-making, promotes accountability, facilitates learning and adaptation, enhances transparency and communication, improves resource management, measures the project's impact, and supports strategic planning. By implementing a robust M&E system, the organization can continually track and evaluate the program's progress, identify strengths and weaknesses, and make adjustments to maximize impact and effectiveness. M&E

also facilitates communication among stakeholders, ensuring that all parties are informed and engaged throughout the program's life cycle.

Respondent 2: Mena need to make the most of monitoring and evaluation activities, it is essential to adopt the best practices for sharing experiences among project staff. This can be achieved by developing and implementing standards for tracking and learning from best practices. By doing so, the organization can ensure that the valuable insights gained from M&E are effectively shared and utilized by project staff to improve program effectiveness and impact. This approach promotes continuous learning and adaptation, enabling the organization to maximize the benefits of M&E and achieve its goals more effectively.

Respondent 3: Our organization believes that it is crucial to maximize the impact of M&E activities to enhance program effectiveness. To achieve this goal, we need to conduct internal research activities to identify the current implementation's strengths and weaknesses. This approach will enable us to gain a comprehensive understanding of the program's performance and identify areas that require improvement. By doing so, we can enhance the quality and relevance of M&E activities and ensure that they contribute to the program's success.

12. Any additional points you can mention?