Food Security and Nutrition Network

Knowledge Management & Monitoring and Evaluation Joint Task Force Meeting

November 12, 2015 I 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM (EST)

Attendees Online

- Wadud AKM Abdul
- Meghan Bolden
- Ashleigh Mullinax
- Kristi Pearson
- Jayachandran Vasudevan
- Antonia Wolf
- Tom Spangler
- Patricia Rasoahantarivelo
- Vidya Sriram
- Jose Thekkiniath
- John Nicholson
- Cocou Muriel Dorian MONTCHO

Attendees in Room

- Zachary Baquet
- Chloe Bass
- Sujata Bose
- Aaron Buchsbaum
- Imee Cambronero
- Cheryl Fries
- Karine Garnier
- Ann Hendrix-Jenkins
- Emily Janoch
- Nestor Mogollon
- Marta Perez
- La Rue Seims
- Erin Shea
- Jenny Coneff
- Amailya Durairej

Notes

Small Group Work Part 1

Members imagined an organization where monitoring and evaluation and knowledge management were completely uncoordinated and dysfunctional. Small groups described what this organization would look like.

Group 1 (in Room)

1. Development of different tools for reporting, but no coordination between groups (using two sets of tools)
2. Separate teams working in silos
3. Not having defined boundaries between M&E and KM no defined responsibility
4. Inaccurate use of data
5. Separate cycles or mandates for projects
6. Do not know what it means to have a KM strategy or value it
7. Redundant work
8. M&E and KM planning not done together. KM is seen as reactive and M&E as proactive. It is clear that M&E needs to be involved in project but KM is not brought in generally, and is not seen as a necessity

Group 2 (in Room)

1. Lack of coordination leads to results flow and understanding gaps between the field and HQ.
2. Not knowing what KM is leads to KM becoming everything and is pulled in too many directions. Lack of clearly defined role leads to KM getting pulled in the Coms direction or data management and tool formation.
3. Unable to see or understand knowledge at the field level.
4. Lack of Database plans and strategies
5. No field KM so all knowledge is locked up in a laptop and un used

Group 3 (in Room)

1. No local empowerment. What does it mean for KM to be everyone's job? No accountability at HQ and the in the field.
2. Rote collection of data with no analysis. No next steps or basis for decisions Ex: gender disaggregation workshop where data was reported but purpose/ meaning of the data was unclear.
3. Systems are not compatible. Different software and indicators so collaboration is hampered between M&E and KM
4. Systems not designed for non M&E professional
5. M&E focused just on audit and storage purposes, the bare minimum
6. Lack of connection between the two lead to no information sharing
7. If there are M&E and KM goals management is not designed for keeping people accountable to the goals.

Group 4 (Online)

John N:

- One challenge: inaccurate formal messaging
- Really great learning (gathered from M&E activities) is not recognized/applied on the project
- No evidence-based messaging

Yemisi: Unresponsive org; unable to provide accurate and timely info on impact

Kristi: Not catching issues with implementation without strong M&E/KM connection

Jose: Unable to report to donors/stakeholders in a timely manner

Wadud: Affects both short and long term outputs/outcomes

Ashleigh: You don't understand your audience and you don't know what they need as their needs continue to evolve

Jose: it is better to have a project learning agenda with learning questions at the design stage, and have a knowledge management and data use plan

Small Group Work Part 2

The scenario was flipped around. Members imagined an organization that has a highly coordinated and highly functional synergy between knowledge management and M&E. Describe what this organization would look like.

Group 1 (in Room)

1. M&E and KM are co-located in the same unit, sitting nearby, and working on the same project, similar reporting structure
2. Clear job descriptions
3. Resources/ funding that work for both
4. Working on the same systems so there is more sharing and collaboration
5. Not competing forces but collaborating forces because both disciplines have something to bring.
6. Have a common learning agenda in place for both

Group 2 (in Room)

1. Staff have easy access to info to allow them to meet project objectives
2. Actively articulating what is common between KM and M&E so that they can see the connections more clearly
3. Leadership, need a champion to engage with M&E and KM
4. A Leadership continuum. At one end leadership is not engaged or aware of M&E and KM, at the center leadership is aware and highlighting positives, and at the other end leadership is actively working with KM and M&E.

Group 3 (in Room)

1. Everyone in the org is valuing and agreeing on roles of KM and M&E all the way up to leadership
2. Enough people. Period.
3. Prioritization on small number of harmonizing systems, such as a few universal indicators (not 500!)

4. Better IT platforms, dash boards, databases, mobile, that are searchable and visible
5. All systems are focused for max impact
6. Staff have easy access to information

Group 4 (Online)

Jose:

-   It is better to have a project learning agenda with learning questions at the design stage, and have a knowledge management and data use plan
-   Frequently use project data for planning for more evidence-based decision making
-   More coordination between M&E and KM staff

John:

-   Coordination early and often (allows for communication with others)
-   KM contributes to the development of indicators
-   Using the data in different ways to show results and inform decisions

Patricia: Learn more about mistakes and use information to do better work

Jay:

-   Knowledge formulated and shared is based on evidence and is of higher quality
-   Project team members are more open and confident about the work they do

Ashleigh: Flexibility in indicators, results frameworks, etc. based on data that comes in

Wadud:

-   Contributes directly to a meaningful program to improve quality and inform management decisions
-   Helps with "selling" the product
-   Allows for 360 outputs and increases accountability

Plenary Discussion Following Small Group Work

Key issues for dysfunction, KM is reactive and M&E proactive, why is that?

-   M&E is often planned into projects at the beginning, while KM is seen as optional
-   People know they need to report to donors so M&E is seen as essential while KM is forgotten
-   KM is not as clearly defined as M&E so KM is seen as magic! Not written into the budget. KM is supposed to be the intersection better projects but orgs funding doesn't work that way. Funding is project oriented.
-   It's the organizational structure that perpetuates this

- Meghan Bolden: KM is not necessarily program specific in funding, but I'm not sure that it has to be just like the speaker is saying
- Jose: one way of addressing that issue of project vs cross-cutting is to have project level learning agenda that pulled to an organizational or sectoral learning agenda
- Wadud: I think, both can cook better good food if work together. In my project, there is good integration between the two. Thanks for bringing this on the table.
- John: M&E is now a requirement for many projects so it usually planned and budgeted for. KM not so much. Also, KM covers a lot of ground and evolves with the LOP so while there are some things that can be done to be proactive on the KM front, some of the value is being reactive to what is happening on the project
- Need leadership to engage in results and the connection between the two roles.

Prioritization of Key Issues

What can we work on to integrate M&E and KM together? What are other organizations doing? What would you like the Task Force to explore?

Participants ranked which of the areas identified during small group work was most <u>urgent</u> and <u>important</u> for their organization to address. The topics chosen might be looked at more closely during a future M&E and KM joint task force meeting.

1. KM is not well known clear definition is key
2. Need leadership to engage
3. Have common learning agenda and input from both
4. local empowerment
5. Systems created for max impact

Online participants answered a poll question for this activity. The top ranking answers are below.

What areas are the most urgent and important for your organization to address?

1. Clear designations of Roles
2. Increased collaboration and planning together
3. More accessible and more searchable databases/ technology staff have easy access
4. Systems oriented for maximum impact/ feeding back to the field

General Comments

Just having a database is not enough if they don't use it. Technology and the people need to be connected

We need to think of funding in terms of the people around to implement the project to facilitate interactions. Don't spend the money on databases and tools because they are pointless without the people. Need defines roles because otherwise efforts are diluted.

Jose: All staff - the issue is not only creating access, but also common interest to accessing data for further analysis in addition to generating project reports. Staff capacity to data analysis to be enhanced

Cocou Muriel Dorian MONTCHO: I will think open data institute is trying to do something like that.

Ashleigh: I don't think there should be a difference between the two for what it's worth.

Jose: data include both routine monitoring data and periodic outcome monitoring data coming from surveys, including qualitative data, reports of studies, research etc.

Jose: I think one of the key difference of understanding is between quantitative data v/s information coming from studies, research, evaluations, success stories etc.

We can't define it we need to translate it to leadership and outside they tend to focus on systems and info extracted form systems

How do you define KM?

NASA: knowledge management is getting the right information to the right people at the right time, and helping people create knowledge and act upon information in ways that will measurably improve performance.

The task force could create one to disseminate or adopt one for all NGOs in common. Otherwise it will mean everything and nothing.

We need a strategy for how M&E and KM can work together.

Graphic of the definition of M&E and KM and how they overlap.