ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Assessment on Practice and Challenges of Monitoring and Evaluation in Local NGOs: A Case Study of Network of Ethiopian Women's Associations (NEWA)

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ADDIS ABABA ETHIOPIA

ASSESSMENT ON PRACTICE AND CHALLENGES OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION IN LOCAL NGOs: A CASE STUDY OF NETWORK OF ETHIOPIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS (NEWA)

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APPROVED BY BOARD OF EXAMINERS

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Internal Examiner ____________________	____________________ **Signature**

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis entitled "**Assessment on Practice And Challenges Of Monitoring and Evaluation In Local NGOs: A Case Study of Network of Ethiopian Women's Association (NEWA)**" is my original work, prepared under the guidance of the research advisor. All sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged. I further confirm that the thesis has not been submitted either in part or in full to any other higher learning institution to earn any degree.

MEKDELAWIT TESFAYE ______________________________

Name Signature

St. Mary's University **December 2020**

Addis Ababa

ENDORSEMENT

This is to certify that this project work, "**Assessment on Practice And Challenges Of Monitoring and Evaluation In Local NGOs: A Case Study of Network of Ethiopian Women's Associations (NEWA)**" undertaken by Mekdelawit Tesfaye for the partial fulfillment of Masters of Art in Project Management [MBA in PM] at St. Mary University, is an original work and not submitted earlier for any degree either at this University or any other University.

Research Advisor

______________________ ____________________

Maru Shete (PhD) Date

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

NEWA – Network of Ethiopian Women's Association

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

M&E – Monitoring & Evaluation

ODA – Official Development Assistance

OECD – Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

SPSS – Statistical Package for Social Science

UNAIDS – United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS

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ABSTRACT

At present, NGOs are playing a prominent role in the development sector by filling gaps in the developing world face that the government fails and/ or needs support. The study emphasizes the assessment of practice and challenges of monitoring and evaluation in local NGO's: as a case study of Network of Ethiopian Women's Associations (NEWA). The purpose of this research is to assess this practice and the challenges that NEWA is facing while implementing M&E. The target population of this research is 38 employees of NEWA operating in development and advocacy projects and 22 employees were selected by purposive sampling. A questioner survey was distributed to all these sampled employees and 21 respondents filled in and returned the questioner properly. This research employs a descriptive research design for the acquisition of quantitative data. The data is analyzed using SPSS v. 17 and interpreted in percentage, and frequency and were presented in the graph to enhance the data presented. The findings of this study revealed that: relevant M&E staff working in NEWA had received the necessary training in monitoring and evaluation either formally or through in-service training, have a written M&E plan that is easily adjustable. On the contrary, the research revealed insufficient baseline data, shortage of expertise, and lack of sufficient funding especially for M&E as challenges that are facing M&E implementation. Furthermore, this study showed developing an M&E plan continuously, increased the role of management participation, and computerizing the M&E system contribute to mitigating the existing challenges. In general, this study shows that although NEWA has good M&E practice, the company also faces numerous challenges when implementing M&E. Finally, there is a need to further support, facilitate and improve the M&E implementation with a computerized system and developing an easily adaptable and continuous written M&E plan, and increasing the role of top & middle management participation are presented to remedy the challenges of M&E.

KEYWORDS: *Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), M&E Framework, Non-governmental Organization (NGO), Network of Ethiopian Women's Association (NEWA)*

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The conceptualization of project Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) has evolved and has mirrored the paradigm shifts that have occurred in the management of projects (Nyonje R. O. Ndunge K. D. & Mulwa, 2012). In the 1950s, M&E practice was dominated by a strong emphasis on prudent utilization of resources, reflecting the social scientific trend of the era (Rodgers & Williams, 2006). The focus of M&E then sought to concentrate on lived experiences, and give voice to as many stakeholders in a consensus-shaping evaluation process (Schwandt, 2006).

Though, many organizations view M&E as a donor requirement rather than a management tool for reviewing progress and identifying and correcting problems in planning or implementation of projects (Shapiro, 2001); (Alcock, 2009); (Armstrong, 2013). Donors are certainly entitled to know whether their money is properly spent but the primary use of M&E should be for the organization or project itself to see how it is performing and to learn how to do it better. (Naidoo, 2011) notes that effective project monitoring and evaluation enhances the basis for evidence-based project management decisions. M&E itself as a management function consists of four key activities: M&E Planning, M&E Training, Baseline surveys, and Information systems (Ogula, 2002).

With the advent of globalization, organizations all over the world are grappling with internal and external demands and pressures for continuous improvements in project management to enhance performance and stay competitive (Kusek J. Z. and Rist, 2004). These demands come from a variety of sources including donors, governments, the private sector, civil society, and the media. Whether it calls for greater accountability and transparency in exchange for foreign aid or real results, organizations must be increasingly responsive to stakeholders' demand to demonstrate tangible results (Khan, 2001).

As a consequence of this, many organizations are becoming increasingly cautious of factors that determine project performance and the need to manage projects accurately. According to (Kusek J. Z. and Rist, 2004), one of the most powerful tools that influence the performance of a project, program, or policy is Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). This is echoed by (Shapiro, 2001) that monitoring and evaluation enable one to assess the quality and impact of a project, against project plans and work plans. (Wysocki, 2003) crowns it all by saying " If you don't care about how well you are doing or about what impact you are having, why bother to implement a project at all? You can only tell how well you are doing by monitoring performance (Wysocki, 2003).

This study deliberately used the term M&E, as opposed to just monitoring and evaluation. This statement is about the unity between these elements, which whilst distinct at one level, are necessary for a holistic understanding. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) definition of M&E is useful to consider, given their widespread use.

Ethiopia has been one of the major recipients of international aid in recent times. According to OECD-DAC statistics, net Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Ethiopia amounted to the US $3.58 billion in 2014‘, making it the 1st largest recipient among 10 aid receiving developing countries. This is the official aid channeled through bilateral and multilateral relationships with international donors and agencies. In addition to this, there is a substantial amount of money remitted through unofficial channels through NGOs, which is commonly referred to as channel Three (OECD, 2002).

Following the previously enacted federal charities and societies proclamation 621/2009, an important premise of allowing development partners to channel development assistance through NGOs/CSOs is the organizations' ability to manage funds efficiently and effectively and to deliver and document results. As a result, to meet these expectations, the proclamation demands these organizations to systems for monitoring and evaluation.

The previous legislation on Charities and Societies, Proclamation No. 621/2009 promulgated on February 13, 2009, has introduced challenges to most of the NGOs operating in the country and thus, having apparent potential in affecting civil society organizations in Ethiopia. It hence appears significant for the organization to examine its programs and working methods given the proclamation and identify the implications thereof to make appropriate decisions and devise well-calculated ways to aptly cope within the current legal framework.

The Network of Ethiopian Women's Associations (NEWA) is a not-for-profit, non-partisan, and non-governmental organization established in 2003. NEWA's vision is to see an Ethiopian society where gender equality is realized. NEWA aims to enhance the contribution of its member organizations through collaboration and coordination of their efforts towards the pursuit of the common goal, that is, economic, social, political, and legal empowerment of women in Ethiopia. NEWA has 27 member organizations and associations working on women and children and harmonized their effort into an integrated and a collective one and synergy to realize their common aspirations for gender equality. NEWA has managed to reach women in almost all over the country including Addis Ababa, Afar, Benshangul-Gmuz, Dire Dawa, SNNP, Tigrai, Somali, and the Oromia Regional States which gives the network better national representation. NEWA has been selected as a case study because it is among local organizations practicing monitoring and evaluation in the implementation of its projects aimed at implanting different women empowerment projects all over the regional states of Ethiopia. It has institutionalized monitoring and evaluation of its projects by having a Monitoring and Evaluation Unit. NEWA seeks to demonstrate the influence of M&E on project performance. It is hoped that evidence generated in this study can stimulate organizations to practice M&E for the right reasons and still for others to start practicing and consequently enhance project performance. Further, currently active and closed out projects were selected for this study.

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In many organizations, project monitoring and evaluation is an activity seen as a donor requirement rather than a management tool (Babbie E. & Mouton, 2006). For this reason, organizations especially NGOs, implement project M&E just to cope with demands and pressures from funding agencies rather than as a measure to contribute to project performance (Kusek J. Z. and Rist, 2004). Very few organizations have faith in M&E partly because its influence on project performance is not well understood despite many studies having been done ((Kusek J. Z. and Rist, 2004); (Nyonje R. O. Ndunge K. D. & Mulwa, 2012)).

There is inadequate information on how the key activities of M&E: M&E planning, M&E training, baseline survey, and information systems are being applied in local NGOs. It is a frequently expressed concern that the information provided by monitoring and evaluation neither influence decision-making during project implementation nor planning of ongoing project development and new initiatives.

What this gap represents is often the absence of mechanisms for learning in the practice of M&E systems including M&E tools & techniques. Even when learning mechanisms exist, they are often of a lower priority than accountability mechanisms, so the gap may remain and important opportunities for learning from experience and using this learning are missed (Britton, 2009).

A further challenge is ensuring that the NGO has the necessary competence to analyze and make use of the information that emerges from its monitoring and evaluation systems (Britton, 2009). Besides, the scarcity of M&E data has affected NGOs' ability to critically meet the objective of a project as the collection analysis and dissemination of data is an important part in each phase of project management (Gorgens M. & Kusek, 2010). This has led to the development of inferior monitoring and evaluation systems that do not meet internal and donor requirements.

According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) 2018 annual forum, major donors' aids to developing countries fell by nearly 5% in 2017 thus breaking a long upward trend since 1997 due to the global recession. It is predicted that continuing tight budgets in OECD countries will put pressure on aid levels over the coming years. Due to this fall in international funds, international donors are all demanding more formal accountability requirements to ensure that their funds are being used to benefit society and meet population needs (Andrew P. Rebecca H. & Georgina, 2009). According to the World Bank (2010), having M&E policies provides an environment in which aid is highly effective and produces very high results. (Leeue, 2010) emphasized that M&E is seen as a critical component of more effective aid and the need for it has accelerated to the extent that it has been described as a growth industry and a public good.

Therefore, it is important to assess what the existing practice and challenges look like in NEWA and also the possible managing mechanisms that are being applied by NEWA to ensure its transparency and accountability that in turn enhance its all project performance.

1.3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study had the following general and specific objectives:

1.3.1. General Objective

The general objective of the study was to assess the monitoring and evaluation practice and challenges of local NGOs in the case of the Network of Ethiopian Women's Associations (NEWA).

1.3.2. Specific Objective

Specific objectives of the study include:

1. To assess the theoretical knowledge status of NEWA employees regarding monitoring and evaluation
2. To assess the M&E tools & techniques implemented in NEWA
3. To assess the monitoring and evaluation practice of NEWA
4. To identify challenges local NGOs such as NEWA faces in the process of monitoring and evaluating their projects
5. To assess how NEWA is handling the challenges related to M&E

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided the study:

- What is the theoretical knowledge status of NEWA regarding M&E?
- What M&E tools & techniques that are applied in NEWA?
- What does the current M&E practice look like in NEWA?
- What are the challenges in executing M&E in NEWA?
- What are the rectifying mechanisms applied by NEWA to address challenges related to M&E, if any?

1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

As the demand for transparency and accountability in project management increases, most organizations are thinking of project monitoring and evaluation as a way of coping with the demand. There is more to M&E, however. Monitoring and evaluation can be an effective way of enhancing project performance but very few organizations have faith in it.

This research is important to institutions like local NGOs, international organizations, and more especially institutions with questionable project performance and those intending to start practicing M&E to enhance project performance. With this study, it is hoped organizations shall begin to monitor and evaluate projects with the sole aim of improving project performance and not necessarily as an obligation to the funder. This would be as a consequence of evidence that this study will bring to the fore on how M&E influences project performance. The study also aims at providing empirical literature to project management students as a step for further research that will add to the body of knowledge of M&E. Likewise; this study can find its importance among researchers in M&E as it will offer an opportunity to compare M&E in local NGOs such as NEWA who are working in women empowerment projects.

1.6. SCOPE & LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted to assess M&E practice and its challenges as a case study in NEWA. M&E was defined by its activities: M&E planning, M&E training, and baseline surveys. The network of Ethiopian Women's Associations (NEWA) is selected for this study because it is consistently practicing monitoring and evaluation in implementation of its projects and restructuring itself according to the revised new Civil Society Organization proclamation number 1113/2019 and starting new different projects.

Further, This study identifying the practical challenges of M&E that tackles the present M&E practice. Besides, the remedy mechanisms are also assessed. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was not be possible to conduct a focus group discussion to collect data. Likewise, The data collection method employed in this study was a questionnaire.

1.7. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This research consists of five chapters. Chapter one is the introduction where the background of the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, limitations of the study, assumptions of the study, and definitions of significant terms are discussed.

It is then followed by chapter two, which presents a literature review that includes the evolution of monitoring and evaluation, types of monitoring and evaluations, monitoring and evaluation in project performance, the influence of monitoring and evaluation activities on project performance, theoretical framework, conceptual framework, knowledge gaps and summary of reviewed literature.

In chapter three, the research methodology is presented: It comprises the introduction, research design, target population, sample size and sampling procedures, research instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis techniques, operational definitions of the variables, and ethical considerations.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the related literatures on the study to have an insight into the research topic and briefly expose the readers to some of the major areas of the subject matter under consideration. The chapter is presented under the following sections:

2.1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this study is guided by the theory of change and the realistic evaluation theory. The theory of change, first published by Carol Weiss in 1995, is defined quite simply and elegantly as a theory of how and why an initiative works. It focuses not just on generating knowledge about whether a project is effective, but also on explaining how and what methods it uses to be effective. The theory of change provides a model of how a project is supposed to work. In other words, it provides a road map of where the project is trying to reach. Monitoring and evaluation tests and refines the road map while communications help in reaching the destination by helping to bring about change. Further, the theory of change provides the basis for arguing that the intervention is making a difference (Msila V. & Setlhako, 2013). This theory suggests that by understanding, what the project is trying to achieve, how and why, project staff and evaluators will be able to monitor and measure the desired results and compare them against the original theory of change (Alcock, 2009).

This theory however falls short since project success is much more complex (Briceño, 2010). It is important to understand success beyond just knowing "what works". Experience has shown that blindly copying or scaling an intervention hardly ever works (Mackay, 2007). An important task for monitoring and evaluation is to gather enough knowledge and understanding to predict – with some degree of confidence – how a project and set of activities might work in a different situation, or how it needs to be adjusted to get similar or better results, hence influencing project performance (Jones P. J. & Evans, 2011).

On the other hand, the realistic evaluation theory, first published by Pawson in 1997, provides a model centered on finding out what outcomes are produced from project interventions, how they are produced, and what is significant about the varying conditions in which the interventions take place (Pawson R. & Tilley, 2004). Realistic evaluation deals with 'what works for whom in what circumstances and in what respects, and how?' (Pawson & Tilley, 2004). The model allows the evaluator to understand what aspects of intervention make it effective or ineffective and what contextual factors are needed to replicate the intervention in other areas (Cohen L. Manion L. & Morrison, 2008). The realistic evaluation seeks to find the contextual conditions that make interventions effective therefore developing lessons about how they produce outcomes (Fukuda-Parr, Lopes, & Malik, 2002).

2.1.1. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring can be defined as a continuing function that aims primarily to provide the management and main stakeholders of an ongoing intervention with early indications of progress, or lack thereof, in the achievement of results. An ongoing intervention might be a project, program, or other kinds of support to an outcome. (UNDP, 2009)

Monitoring is the day-to-day management task of collecting and reviewing information that reveals how an operation is proceeding and what aspects of it, if any, need correcting. Monitoring is a continuing function that uses the systematic collection of data on specified indicators to inform management and the main stakeholders of an ongoing International Federation or national society operation of the extent of progress and achievement of results in the use of allocated funds. (IFRC, 2002)

Reporting is an integral part of monitoring. Monitoring information is

- Compiled in standard and ad hoc reports;
- Shared with implementing partners, donors, and beneficiaries
- Used to conclude evaluations

Conducting good monitoring

The credibility of findings and assessments depends to a large extent on how monitoring and evaluation are conducted. Good principles (also called – minimum standards) for monitoring are

i) focused on results and follow-up. It looks for – what is going well (and – what is not progressing) in terms of progress towards intended results. It then records this in reports, makes recommendations, and follows-up with decisions and action.
ii) depends to a large measure on good design. If a project is poorly designed or based on faulty assumptions, even the best monitoring is unlikely to ensure its success. Particularly important is the design of a realistic results chain of the outcome, outputs, and activities. Offices should avoid using monitoring for correcting recurring problems that need permanent solutions.
iii) requires regular visits by staff who focus on results and follow-up to verify and validate progress. Besides, the program manager must organize visits and/or bilateral meetings dedicated to assessing progress, looking at the big picture, and analyzing problem areas. The program manager ensures continuous documentation of the achievements and challenges as they occur and does not wait until the last moment to try to remember what happened.
iv) Assess the relevance, performance, lessons learned and success of projects also enhances monitoring. The organization should ask critical questions about the continued relevance of the support to the activity and strives to judge performance and success – or lack thereof – based on empirical evidence. The findings are used for decision-making on programming and support.

Monitoring also benefits from the use of participatory monitoring mechanisms to ensure commitment, ownership, follow-up, and feedback on performance. This is indispensable for outcome monitoring where progress cannot be assessed without some knowledge of what partners are doing. Participatory mechanisms include outcome groups, stakeholder meetings, steering committees, and focus group interviews.

Monitoring does more than look at what projects deliver. Its scope includes assessing the progress of projects, programs, partnerships, and soft assistance about outcomes as well as providing managers with information that will be used as a basis for making decisions and taking action. (UNDP,2002)

Evaluation is the systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed operation, program or policy, its design, implementation, and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfillment of objectives, as well as efficiency, effectiveness, Impact (overall Goal) and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons into management decision-making. (IFRC, 2002).

Monitoring and evaluation serve several purposes. In the absence of effective monitoring and evaluation, it would be difficult to know whether the intended results are being achieved as planned, what corrective action may be needed to ensure delivery of the intended results, and whether initiatives are making positive contributions towards human development. Monitoring, as well as evaluation, provides opportunities at regular predetermined points to validate the logic of a program, its activities, and its implementation and to make adjustments as needed. Good planning and designs alone do not ensure results. Progress towards achieving results needs to be monitored. Equally, no amount of good monitoring alone will correct poor program designs, plans, and results. Information from monitoring needs to be used to encourage improvements or reinforce plans. Information from systematic monitoring also provides critical input to evaluation. It is very difficult to evaluate a program that is not well designed and that does not systematically monitor its progress. (UNDP, 2009).

2.1.2. Evolution of Monitoring and Evaluation

The philosophical orientation and conceptualization of M&E have evolved. This has mirrored the paradigm shifts that have occurred in the management of projects, with M&E practice in the early 1950s being dominated by a strong emphasis on prudent utilization of resources, reflecting the social scientific trend of the era (Rodgers & Williams, 2006). The emphasis on monitoring and evaluation of projects mirrored the period of discontent around project management in the late 1950s when project management was formally recognized as a distinct discipline arising from the management discipline (Cleland D. I. & Ireland, 2007). The focus on M&E sought to concentrate on lived experiences, and give voice to as many stakeholders as possible, which was a secondary goal of a consensus-shaping evaluation process before (Schwandt & Burgon, 2006).

At present, it is important to try to resolve the question often asked about whether M&E can be categorized as a field, an approach, or a discipline. It is the very particular manner in which M&E has evolved that has resulted in Scriven (2010) choosing to refer to the field as "trans-disciplinary", a concept that is used more in recent times to describe M&E as opposed to the term discipline or field. An important conceptual problem, similar to how to classify M&E, is "what is M&E?" The literature reviewed indicates that there is no single, uncontested answer as to what M&E is, which may, in turn, be attributed to the fact that there is no consensus around its purpose (Khan 2001). The purpose question thus influences the "what is?" question. The purpose ranges from promoting accountability to transparency to organizational learning and depending on the particular purpose, the approach would vary (Binnendijk,1989). There would also be different permutations to the above, which in turn would depend on the context and subject matter. It is for this reason that M&E can at times be a nebulous concept. The diversity can be seen in terms of methods used and the subject matter considered including the types of M&E (Jones, 2011).

2.1.3. Types of Monitoring and Evaluation

Studies reviewed about classifications of M&E by different scholars show striking similarities. Based on the area of focus, there are two types of M&E, Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation (RBM) and Implementation-Based Monitoring (IBM). According to Kusek & Rist (2004), RBM is designed to provide feedback on the actual outcomes and goals of projects. This is in tandem with Parks et al (2012) who adds that RBM is normally done in conjunction with strategic partners and involves systemic reporting on progress toward outcomes. RBM, in this way, helps in knowing if results are being met or indeed will be met as the project progresses (Naidoo, 2011).

On the other hand, Implementation-Based Monitoring and Evaluation (IBM) focuses on inputs, project activities, and outputs and promotes joint learning of stakeholders at various levels and catalysis commitment to taking corrective actions where necessary (Kusek J. Z. and Rist, 2004). This point again underscores the role M&E plays on project performance. Thus, it can be concluded that the current practice in project monitoring and evaluation revolves around RBM and IMB in as far as the area of focus is concerned.

Regarding evaluations, Nyonje, Ndunge, & Mulwa (2012) in their book "Monitoring and Evaluation of Projects and Programs", distinguish types from modes of M&E and point out that there four types of evaluations:

i) **Ex-ante evaluation (Start-up evaluation):** A form of an evaluation conducted before the startup or implementation of a project/program. It is carried out to determine the needs and potentials of the target group and its environment, and to assess the feasibility, potential effects, and impacts of the proposed program/project. At a later stage, the effects and impacts of the program/ project can be compared with this baseline data (EMI, 2014).

ii) **Mid-term evaluation:** This type of evaluation takes place while the implementation of the planned project is in on-progress. Such evaluations are conducted relatively early in the midway of the project life and are usually external assessments. What distinguishes it from terminal and ex-post evaluations is that correction to the current project still can be made based on findings and recommendations (EMI, 2014).

iii) **Terminal/Summative evaluation:** It is conducted when the funding for the intervention or the whole project activity comes to an end. But this may not mean that the services and inputs being supplied by the program/project terminate. In the terminal evaluation, in addition to the existing records, documents, and outputs, an inquiry should be made for secondary data that are relevant for comparison. Recommendations from the terminal evaluation are primarily directed to improve the planning and design of future projects.

iv) **Ex-post /Impact evaluation:** It is designed as in-depth studies of the sustainable impact of a program/project that has been already executed. It is carried some time (in most cases 3 - 5 years) after the program/project activity has been terminated to determine its impact on the target group and the local area. However, it is rarely done due to a lack of willingness to fund from the financers of the program/project.

Blank (1993) adds that summative evaluation is a type of project evaluation that collects information about outcomes and related processes, strategies, and activities that have led to them.

2.1.4. Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

2.1.4.1. Laying the Foundation for M&E Framework

Before one dive into M&E, key questions, approaches, and indicators, it is useful to have the following three things in place in your research project:

I. A good theory of change (ToC)
II. Identified knowledge roles and functions
III. Clear M&E purposes/framework

These first two aspects are essential parts of the project strategy and provide an understanding of, and a plan for, where, why, and how research is expected to contribute. Clear M&E purposes make sure there is a shared understanding of what and how M&E will be used. Having all these things in place will support the design of a coherent and fit-for-purpose M&E framework. (Pasanen and Shaxson, 2016).

I. A theory of change

A well-thought-out and regularly revisited ToC (also known as a program theory‘) can be a very useful tool and provides the backbone‘ of your intervention and M&E structure. If you aim to influence policy, it is essential to think through how you expect change to happen. A ToC will also guide your choice of key evaluation questions, which are expected to address critical points in the ToC. This will in turn make sure that your indicators are set up to measure all relevant steps and processes, and not only to address one level, such as outputs. A strong ToC also helps review processes – whether these are mid-term reviews or end-of-project/program evaluations – and allows you to put any unanticipated or unintended outcomes (if they arise) in context. (Pasanen and Shaxson, 2016).

A theory of change defines the pieces and steps necessary to bring about a given long-term goal. It describes the types of interventions (whether a single program or a comprehensive community initiative) that bring about the results hoped for. A theory of change includes the assumptions (often supported by research) that stakeholders use to explain the process of change.

A theory of change:

- demonstrates the pathway of how to get from here to there (i.e. what is needed for goals to be achieved)
- requires underlying assumptions to be detailed out in a way that they can be tested and measured
- puts the emphasis first on what the organization wants to achieve rather than on what the organization is doing. (http://theoryofchange.org)

II. Identified knowledge roles and functions

Identifying knowledge roles and functions of project personnel and partners is an important part of strategic planning and this makes it an important component of monitoring. The process of engaging with policymakers is not a simple one: different roles need to be played to ensure the information is available, understandable, and that it is actively used to inform policy debates. Clarifying who should play each role and what they should do makes it easier to monitor the contributions each stakeholder makes to the aim of the project (Pasanen and Shaxson, 2016).

III. A Clear M&E Purpose/Framework

Thinking through and agreeing on the purposes, or the uses, of an M&E system, will help develop a common understanding of why it is being done. Is it for accountability to the funder? Will it support the decision-making or inform the next phase of the project? Or is it mainly meant for wider, external learning? Thinking through the purpose of the M&E system can be a way to build relationships between partners and other key stakeholders (Pasanen and Shaxson, 2016).

Agreed among the key stakeholders at the end of the planning stage, is essential to carry out monitoring and evaluation systematically. This framework serves as a plan for monitoring and evaluation, and should clarify:

- What is to be monitored and evaluated?
- The activities needed to monitor and evaluate?
- Who is responsible for monitoring and evaluating activities?
- When monitoring and evaluation activities are planned (timing)?

- How monitoring and evaluation are carried out (methods)?
- What resources are required and where they are committed

Also, relevant risks and assumptions in carrying out planned monitoring and evaluation activities should be seriously considered, anticipated, and included in the M&E framework. (UNAIDS, 2012)

2.1.4.2. Types of Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks

Though there is no ideal framework and different frameworks are used for different situations, three of the most common are conceptual frameworks, results frameworks, and logical frameworks/logic models. (Frankel and Gage, 2007)

1. Conceptual framework

Conceptual frameworks are diagrams that identify and illustrate relationships among relevant organizational, individual, and other factors that may influence a program and the achievement of goals and objectives. They help determine which factors will influence the program and outline how each of these factors (underlying, cultural, economic socio-political, etc.) might relate to and affect the outcomes. They do not form the basis for monitoring and evaluation activities but can help explain program results. (Frankel and Gage, 2007)

2. Results Frameworks

Results frameworks sometimes called strategic frameworks illustrate the direct relationships between the intermediate results of activities to the overall objectives and goals. They show the causal relationship between program objectives and outline how each of the intermediate results/ outputs and outcomes relates to and facilitates the achievement of each objective, and how objectives relate to each other and the ultimate goal. Results frameworks do form the basis for monitoring and evaluation activities at the objective level. (Frankel and Gage, 2007)

3. Logical Frameworks

Logical frameworks or logic models provide a linear, logical interpretation of the relationship between inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts concerning objectives and goals. They show the causal relationship between inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact vis-à-vis the goals and objectives. Logical frameworks outline the specific inputs needed to carry out the activities/processes to produce specific outputs which will result in specific outcomes and impacts. Logical frameworks do form the basis for monitoring and evaluation activities for all stages of the program.

Logic models are valuable tools for:

- **Program Planning and Development:** The logic model structure helps think through your program strategy to help clarify where the program is and where the program should be.
- **Program Management:** Because it "connects the dots" between resources, activities, and outcomes, a logic model can be the basis for developing a more detailed management plan. Using data collection and an evaluation plan, the logic model helps track and monitor operations to better manage results. It can serve as the foundation for creating budgets and work plans.
- **Communication.** A well-built logic model is a powerful communications tool. It can show stakeholders at a glance what a program is doing (activities) and what it is achieving (outcomes), emphasizing the link between the two.

Logical frameworks are presented as diagrams connecting program inputs to processes, outputs, outcomes, and impact as they relate to a specific problem or situation. Logic models show what resources the program will need to accomplish its goals; what the program will do; and what it hopes to achieve, emphasizing links between these aspects.

A series of – if-then relationships connect the components of the logic model: if resources are available to the program, then program activities can be implemented; if program activities are implemented successfully, then certain outputs and outcomes can be expected. The logical framework does not try to account for all of the factors that may influence a program‘s operation and results like a conceptual framework. Instead, the logic framework focuses on the program‘s inputs, activities, and results. This narrow focus assists program managers and monitoring and evaluation planners as they clarify the direct relationships among elements of particular interest within a specific program. (Adapted from Gage and Dunn, 2009)

2.1.5. Code of Conduct and Regulatory Framework for NGOs In Ethiopia

A clear indicator of a more sophisticated carriage on the part of the NGO community in Ethiopia is provided by the adoption of the Code of conduct for NGOs at the culmination of a collaborative effort on the part of diverse leaders of the sector. The code is meant as a proactive statement of principles by the sector and serves as a symbol that it is capable of self-regulation, monitoring, and evaluation.

The code of conduct for NGOs in Ethiopia was formally adopted in March 1999, when the overwhelming majority of NGOs operating in the country swore to uphold its principles and its formation is considered one of the major achievements for the sector since the onset of the contemporary era for NGOs in 1991. On January 6, 2009, the Charities and Societies.

Proclamation No. 621/2009 of Ethiopia was enacted and defines two categories of formal CSOs in Ethiopia: Charities and Societies. (Chasa,2014) Charities are institutions established exclusively for charitable purposes and provide a public benefit. Societies, on the other hand, are associations or persons organized on a non-profit making and voluntary basis for the promotion of the rights and interests of their members and to undertake other similar lawful purposes as well as to coordinate with institutions of similar objectives. Charities and Societies are given one of three legal designations, Ethiopian Charities or Societies, Ethiopian Resident Charities or Societies or Foreign Charities, based on where the organization was established, its source of income, the composition of membership, and membership residential status (Chasa, 2014).

Ethiopian Charities or Societies are institutions formed under the laws of Ethiopia, whose members are all Ethiopians, generate income from Ethiopia, and are wholly controlled by Ethiopians. These organizations may not use foreign funds to cover more than 10% of their operational expenses. Similar institutions that receive more than 10% of their resources from foreign sources or whose members include Ethiopian residents are designated Ethiopian Resident Charities or Societies.

The provisions of the Proclamation apply to charities or Societies that operate in more than one regional state or Societies whose members are from more than one regional state; foreign Charities and Ethiopian Resident Charities and Societies even if they operate only in one regional state; and, charities or Societies operating in the City Administration of Addis Ababa or Dire-Dawa. (Chasa, 2014).

2.1.6. Challenges Of NGOs

The Ethiopian civil society, especially the NGOs sector has been engulfed with various external and internal problems for a long time. The challenges may be categorized into two broad parts; external and internal. This thesis will look at the challenges of the NGOs' monitoring and evaluation.

2.1.6.1. Internal Challenges

1. **Human Capacity**

The M&E system cannot function without skilled people who effectively execute the M&E tasks for which they are responsible. Therefore, understanding the skills needed and the capacity of people involved in the M&E system (undertaking human capacity assessments) and addressing capacity gaps (through structured capacity development programs) is at the heart of the M&E system (Gorgens & Kusek, 2010). In its" framework for a functional M&E system", UNAIDS (2012) notes that not only is it necessary to have dedicated and adequate numbers of M&E staff, but it is also essential for this staff to have the right skills for the work. Moreover, M&E human capacity building requires a wide range of activities, including formal training, in-service training, mentorship, coaching, and internships. Lastly, M&E capacity building should focus not only on the technical aspects of M&E but also address skills in leadership, financial management, facilitation, supervision, advocacy, and communication.

Building an adequate supply of human resource capacity is critical for the sustainability of the M&E system and generally is an ongoing issue. Furthermore, it needs to be recognized that – growing evaluators require far more technically oriented M&E training and development than can usually be obtained with one or two workshops. (Acevedo et al., 2010). Monitoring and evaluation carried out by untrained and inexperienced people are bound to be time consuming, costly and the results generated could be impractical and irrelevant. Therefore, this will impact the success of projects (Nabris, 2002). In the assessment of CSOs in the Pacific, UNDP (2019) discusses some of the challenges of organizational development as having inadequate monitoring and evaluation systems. Additionally, the lack of capabilities and opportunities to train staff in technical skills in this area is a factor to be considered.

Staff need to be trained not only on collecting descriptive information about a program, product, or any other entity but also on using something called – values to determine what information and to draw explicitly evaluation inferences from the data, that is inferences that say something about the quality, value or importance of something (Davidson, 2004).

Players in the field of project management like project and program managers, M and E officers, project staff, and external evaluators will require specialized training not just in project management and M and E; but specifically in areas like Participatory monitoring and evaluation and results-based monitoring and evaluation (Murunga, 2011).

Furthermore, taking on the M&E work of too many individual projects overextends limited M&E capacity and leads to rapid burnout of M&E staff whereby high burnout and turnover rates make recruitment of skilled M&E staff difficult and limits the organizational expertise available to support M&E development.

2. **Data Quality**

The source of performance data is important to the credibility of reported results hence, it is important to incorporate data from a variety of sources to validate findings. Furthermore, while primary data are collected directly by the M&E system for M&E purposes, secondary data are those collected by other organizations for purposes different from M&E (Gebremedhin et al., 2010). In the design of an M&E system, the objective is to collect indicator data from various sources, including the target population for monitoring project progress (Barton, 1997). Moreover, developing key indicators to monitor outcomes enables managers to assess the degree to which intended or promised outcomes are being achieved (Kusek & Rist, 2004).

Frequent data collection means more data points; more data points enable managers to track trends and understand intervention dynamics hence the more often measurements are taken, the less guesswork there will be regarding what happened between specific measurement intervals. But, the more time that passes between measurements, the greater the chances that events and changes in the system might happen that may be missed (Gebremedhin et al., 2010). (Guijt, 1999) concurs that to be useful, information needs to be collected at optimal moments and with a certain frequency. Moreover, unless negotiated indicators are genuinely understood by all involved and everyone‘s timetable is consulted, optimal moments for collection and analysis will be difficult to identify.

According to Cornielje, Velema, and Finkenflugel (2008), only when the monitoring system is owned by the user's system is it likely to generate valid and reliable information. However, all too often the very same users may be overwhelmed by the amount of daily work which in their view is seen as more important than collecting data, and subsequently, the system may become corrupted. A system of data collection should be self-organizing and evolving as it gathers information from the environment where the staff would then generate the information in the course of their daily activities (Innes & Booher, 1999: 415).

3. **Loose M&E planning**

Local nongovernmental organizations often cut out M&E during the planning process because donors were less likely to take an interest in and commit to M&E activities. Failure to plan M&E activities at the beginning of a project may result in a loss of data that staff cannot make up for at a later stage.

4. **Insufficient stakeholders' involvement**

Neglecting pertinent stakeholders in monitoring and evaluations could lead to a low degree of ownership of findings and reduces the likelihood that project implementers will incorporate findings in decision-making processes. It also can lead to a lack of collaboration, or even the development of an adversarial relationship, among beneficiaries, Monitoring, and Evaluation experts, the government, donors, stakeholders, and implementers (USAIDS, 2012).

5. **Infrequent Monitoring and Evaluation**

Local NGOs are expected to regularly conduct monitoring and evaluations focused on inputs, progress, outputs, and changes, but due to lack of expertise and budget rarely engage in such activities as per the requirement by donors and Governments. NGOs need to monitor physical progress at least quarterly and financial progress monthly.

6. **Insufficient budget for M&E**

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are means to multiple ends. Measuring government and non-governmental organization's activities, constructing and tracking performance indicators across sectors, and over time, evaluating programs requires huge budget allocation. To achieve their intended objective local nongovernmental organizations need to allocate adequate budget for M&E, but donors contrary to this while appraising and approving local nongovernmental budgets cut out the monitoring and evaluation component of the budget (TECS, 2013). Therefore, local nongovernmental organizations are forced either to quit their services or produce fake monitoring and evaluation reports.

2.1.6.2. External Challenges

There are various external challenges that NGOs face in Ethiopia today.

1) **Government attitude**

Strong, vibrant, and independent institutions have been considered by the present government as a threat and categorized as part of the opposition and working to undermine its power bases (Desalegn et. al, 2008).

2) **Bureaucracy**

Lengthy and bureaucratic requirements for registration, demanding reporting requirements, and continued lack of transparency on the part of government executive bodies exacerbate the ever-volatile Government-NGO relations (GTZ, 2010).

3) Participation

Major decisions that concern the civil society themselves are passed at regional and federal levels without the participation of civil society representatives. A good case in point is that officials in the ministry of justice responsible for drafting new laws that govern NGOs operations have been unwilling to involve the NGOs sector in the preparatory efforts (GTZ, 2010).

It is possible to mention more similar challenges in addition to the aforementioned cases. However, what has been mentioned so far can indicate how hostile is the working environment for NGOs operations in particular and civil society engagement in general. What is important to mention here is that the external constraints are the major bottlenecks that remain the most difficult to overcome at present, and have been responsible for restricting wider involvement of civil society in the country (CRDA, 2006)

2.2. EMPIRICAL STUDIES

Several studies have been conducted on the assessment on practice & challenges of M&E. (Gindaba, 2017) undertook a study to the assessment of current project monitoring and evaluation practices of development projects the case of Addis Ababa bureau of finance and economic development and established that participation of the beneficiaries and other stakeholders in monitoring and evaluation process was non-participatory whilst it was practiced in an unplanned manner and irregularly in some cases.

(Banteyirga, 2018) undertook a study to the assessment of practice and challenges of monitoring and evaluation: the case of local NGOs executing health projects and concluded that NGOs have competent staff (other than the M&E department) that can properly handle given monitoring and evaluation task while they do not have computerized M&E system. Moreover, the researcher agrees with (Gindaba, 2017) about stalk holder participation. Further, (Banteyirga, 2018) concluded that lack of sufficient funding, stringent legal framework/policy issue, insufficient baseline data lack of expertise, lack of expertise, and not being friendly with M&E tools are some of the challenges of M&E.

2.3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Conceptual framework helps to cast the problem statement of the research. A description of this framework contributes to a research in at least two ways

1) identifies research variables, and
2) clarifies relationships among the variables.

Linked to the problem statement, the conceptual framework "sets the stage" for presentation of the specific research question that drives the investigation being reported. Finally, Figure 2.1 shows the M&E Framework that helped for developing a questionnaire.

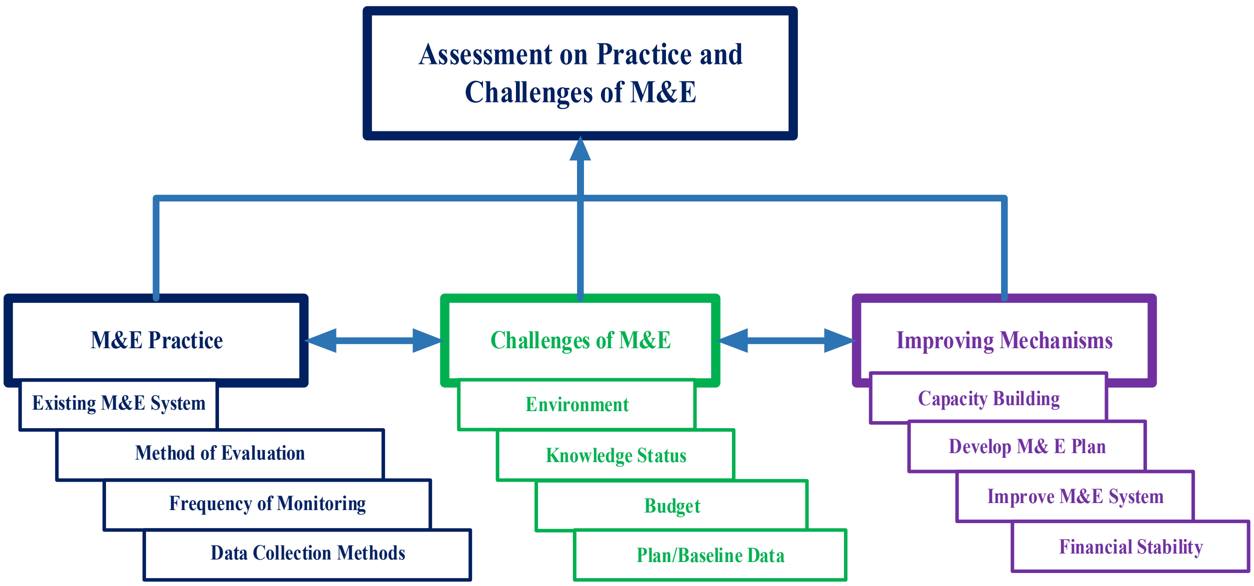

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

2.4. SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEWED

This chapter has presented a review of literature, which has shown among others, the evolution of M&E, and illustrated that given its ability to address the progress of projects, it has a wider application on project performance. Under the section on types of M&E, this chapter shows that M&E serves several purposes, and uses different tools & techniques for attaining its goal of improving project performance. The section presenting challenges of NGOs detailed what M&E suffers different challenges that may arise from internal or external environment.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines how the study is conducted. It focuses on the research design, location, target population, sampling technique, data source, collection tools and techniques, and data analysis that are used in this study.

According to Brynard and Hanekom (1997) research methodology, or methods of collecting data, necessitates a reflection on the planning, structuring, and execution of the research to comply with the demands of truth, objectivity, and validity. Hence, research methodology focuses on the process of research and the decisions which the researcher has to take to execute the research project.

This study complies with the above compound definition and the principles of research for the deduction of reliable, valid, and objective findings. The research method applied in this study falls within the framework of quantitative research.

3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

Any researcher can use diverse strategies in his/her research and/or more than one design at a time that means different research designs may be employed both at a time, one or two at a time for a single research program. Therefore, this thesis research employed a descriptive method. Descriptive design was used to describe the analysis of the collected data since one of the aims of this research is to find out the practice & challenges of M&E in NEWA.

The research methodology outlines the approach that was used to collect data from respondents such as questionnaires. The data collection method was used as the basis for interpretation and explanation of the study.

Through the questionnaire survey, information related to practices & challenges of M&E is collected. 'Descriptive research' involves the examination of population samples.

Applying a case study strategy could be the most appropriate method in this research for different reasons. One of the major reasons to select this approach is to avoid a major bias in the research. This was done through the careful selection of key informants within the organization. The selected key informants were drawn in the ambit of the study because either their main work is M&E or they had significant involvement in M&E activities of programs. The study thus considered only those who had a good understanding and knowledge of M&E practice and excludes others who had no involvement in the M&E planning, implementation, and decision making. The researcher also used a case study intending to obtain an in-depth understanding of the case as seen through a particular company being studied.

This research undertakes exploration and assessment of the M&E framework of NEWA. It can therefore be seen as 'evaluation research' which according to Brynard & Hanekom, (1997) refers to a judgment of the merit or worth of developmental programs, policy analysis, products, and organizations.

The quantitative methods were used to generate numerical data, which is statistically manipulated to meet required objectives through descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages).

3.2. TARGET POPULATION

Population refers to the entire group of people; events or organizations that a researcher wants to study. The population of this research is employees of NEWA who participate directly in M&E planning, training & implementation in NEWA, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The sample population is 38 employee that is working in planning, implementing monitoring, and evaluating using a defined M&E system who have a first degree and above and has worked directly in these developmental projects. The population size is therefore finite.

3.3. SAMPLING STRATEGY

This is the process of selecting a sufficient number of elements from a population (Raval, 2009). It also refers to the techniques and procedures to be applied in selecting a sample.

Purposive or criterion-based sampling was applied in this study which is a non-probability method of sampling (Burns, 2000). It involved a non-random selection of "information-rich cases" (Patton, 1999) according to the presence of specific criteria defined by the researcher.

Therefore, participants who were best suited to the objectives of this study were selected. Informants were drawn from the organization based on relevance to the study. Within the organization, key informants were required to be knowledgeable and at least having the work experience in monitoring and evaluating tasks NEWA.

Regarding the sampling size, the researcher prepared a list of` 2 (two) Program Managers, 16 (Sixteen) Program Officers who lead four projects and 4 (Four) M&E expert according to the above-mentioned criteria. All of them were contacted to gain their initial approval.

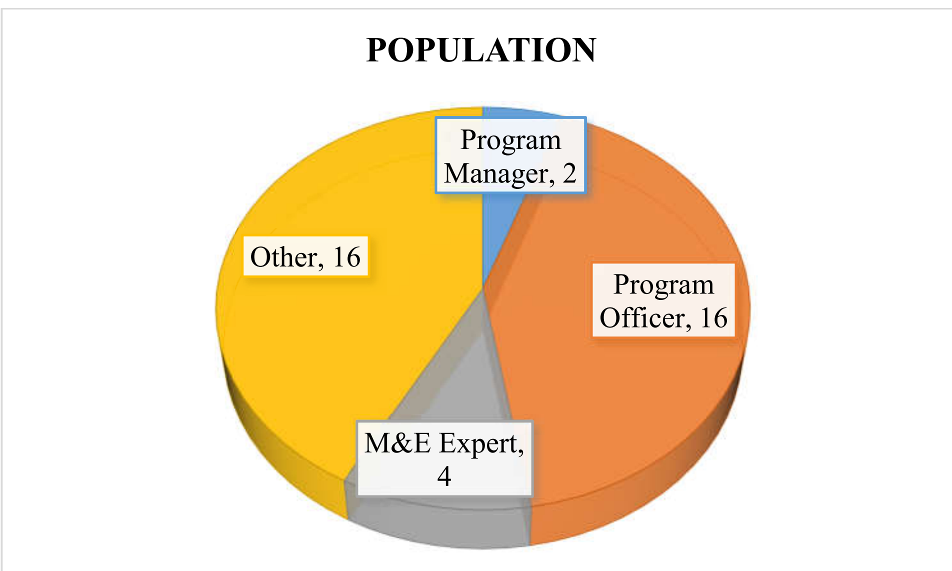

Figure 3.1: Population of the research (Source: Human Resource)

3.4. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

A questionnaire was used to collect information on the M&E systems being used by the NGOs. Primary data was collected through the administration of written questionnaires to the program managers, project managers, or M&E experts from the company.

To collect data, the survey questioner technique was used to distribute the questionnaire for all 22 staff. The researcher prepared a list of themes and key questions to be covered in the questioners based on prior literature on M&E. The questionnaire focused on the challenges and practices of M&E in the selected NGOs. The questionnaire contains both closed and open-ended questions, which allowed the collection of qualitative and quantitative data. The questionnaires were designed simply for the respondents to be able to understand the questions. The questionnaires were distributed in person.

3.5. DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

This is the process of collecting, modeling, and transforming data to highlight useful information, suggesting conclusions, and supporting decision making (Sharma, 2005). Structural coding and thematic analysis will be used for data reduction.

Quantitative data were processed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The responses were filtered & edited before analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze data leading to the identification of technical information. The findings of the data were presented in tables and charts.

3.6. METHODS OF VERIFICATION

To ensure the reliability of the research, the research objectives were stated in a precise and concise manner. The validity of the data collection tool was done through consultations with M&E specialist and department of the local capacity development program. This established any built-in errors in the measurement of the questionnaire. The researcher did a pilot test with 5 (five) staff to check on the validity & reliability of the questionnaire. The staffs who were part of the pilot test were not part of the main study.

3.7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Ethics are norms or standards of behavior that guide the moral choices about our behavior and our relationship with others. Research ethics was put into consideration when developing and administering data collection tools and techniques, to avoid any form of harm, suffering, or violation. This was done through obtaining consent before the research and ensuring the confidentiality of data. Besides, to avoid any conflict of interest the researcher acquired the needed authorization from the chief of party of the local capacity development project.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an analysis of data collected from the survey data analyzed and interpreted in line with the study objectives. The findings are presented in the form of tables, graphs, and charts showing frequencies and percentages.

This part of the study deals with presenting, analyzing, and interpreting the data gathered from questioners. The raw data was coded, evaluated, and tabulated to depict the results of assessing practice & challenges of M&E in NEWA.

4.1. RESPONSE RATE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Since the general characteristics of the respondents are very important to get insights into the overall study, the researcher starts by seeing the demographic nature of the respondents. It is believed in many existing works of literature that demographic variables like educational level, Job position, and experience do have an impact on project M&E performance.

4.1.1. Demography of Respondents

In all, twenty-two (22) questionnaires were administered to the employee of NEWA, and Twenty-one (21) were completed and returned to the researcher. These findings were carefully analyzed and the responses well-presented using statistical tools to give it a pictorial view of practice & challenges of M&E in NEWA.

Education is principal in enabling the respondents to conceptualize issues related to M&E practices & challenges. It was established from the study that more than 2/3 of the respondents have a bachelor's degree and the remaining have post-graduate degrees.

Table 4.1 shows that the majority of respondents working in NEWA have bachelor's degree qualifications. This implies that they are capable of conceptualizing and responding authoritatively on issues and practices of monitoring & evaluation. Thus, the profile of the respondents working in NEWA is summarized by the following table.

Table 4.1:Sample Demographics

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Educational Qualification	Diploma	-	-
	Bachelor's Degree(BA/B.Sc.)	16	76.2%
	Master's Degree(MA/M.Sc.)	5	23.8%
	Doctorate Degree(Ph.D.)	-	-
Profession	Program Manager	2	9.5%
	Program Officer	15	71.4%
	M&E Expert	4	19.0%
Gender	Female	16	76.2%
	Male	5	23.8%

Source: Survey Data, 2020

Table 4.1 and figure 4.1 shows the educational background of the respondents in the study area. Accordingly, 76.2% of the respondents were degree holders and 23.8% obtained their second degree. This indicates that the respondents were highly educated and were highly capable of understanding the M&E concepts that help to know the practice & challenges in the selected organization.

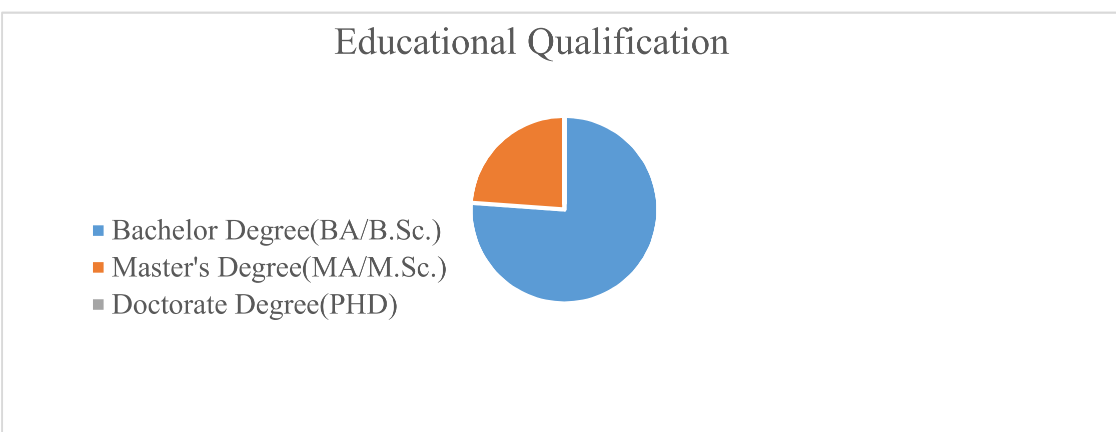

Figure 4.1: Education Qualification (Source: Survey data, 2020)

Besides, Table 4.1 and Figure 4.2 shows the professional diversity of the respondents. 9.5% of the respondents were program managers while 71.4% were program officers and 19% were M&E experts. As the central problem of this research was to find out the practice & challenges of M&E, the respondents were professionals who closely participated in program/project management.

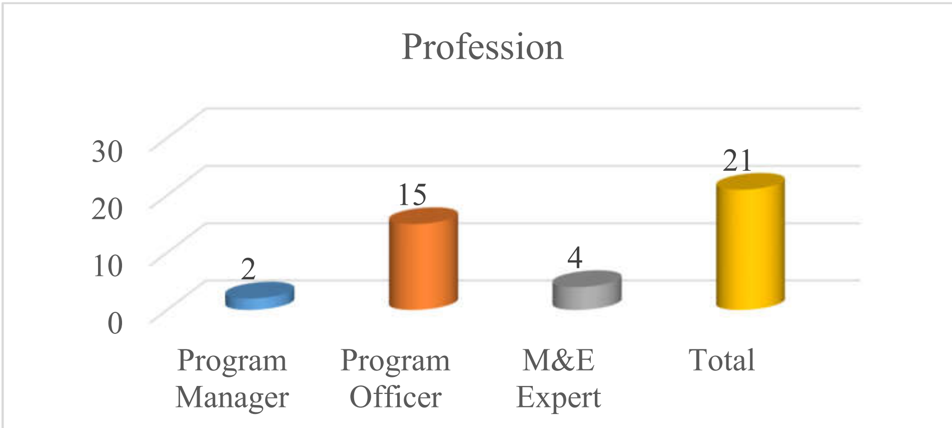

Figure 4.2: Profession of respondents (Source: Survey data, 2020)

Finally, three-quarters of the respondents were female gender as shown in Figure 4.3. NEWA is the network of Ethiopian women's associations. As such it obvious that most of the workers are female to understand closely & solve the socio-economic problems of women in Ethiopia.

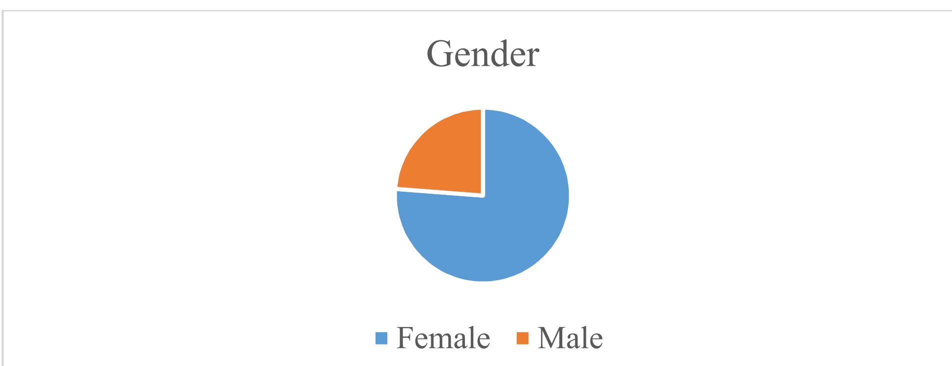

Figure 4.3: Gender of respondents (Source: Survey data, 2020)

4.1.2. Employees knowledge status regarding M&E

This section describes the respondent's knowledge status regarding the monitoring and evaluation phase of program/project management.

Table 4.2: Work Experience

Experience	Less than 2 years	4	19.0%
	2-5 years	9	42.9%
	6-9 years	6	28.6%
	10 years & above	2	9.5%

(Source: Survey data, 2020)

From the questionnaire about human resource capacity on monitoring & evaluation which was prepared to determine the professional years of monitoring and evaluation experience, the researcher got the raw data as depicted in Table 4.2 and Figure 4.4.

The table above shows that the majority (42.9%) of the respondents had 2-5 years of professional monitoring and evaluation experience. Also, more than a quarter (28.6%) of the respondents had 6(six) to 9(nine) years of experience. Further, 19% and 9.5% of the respondents had less than

2 (two) years of professional monitoring and evaluation experience. The remaining 9.5% of the respondent had senior-level status with over 10years of monitoring and evaluation experience. This indicates that the majority of the respondents are classified under senior practitioners and/or middle-level management positions. The meaning is that the respondents are not naïve to M&E practice and are capable of describing the practice & challenges of M&E in the organization.

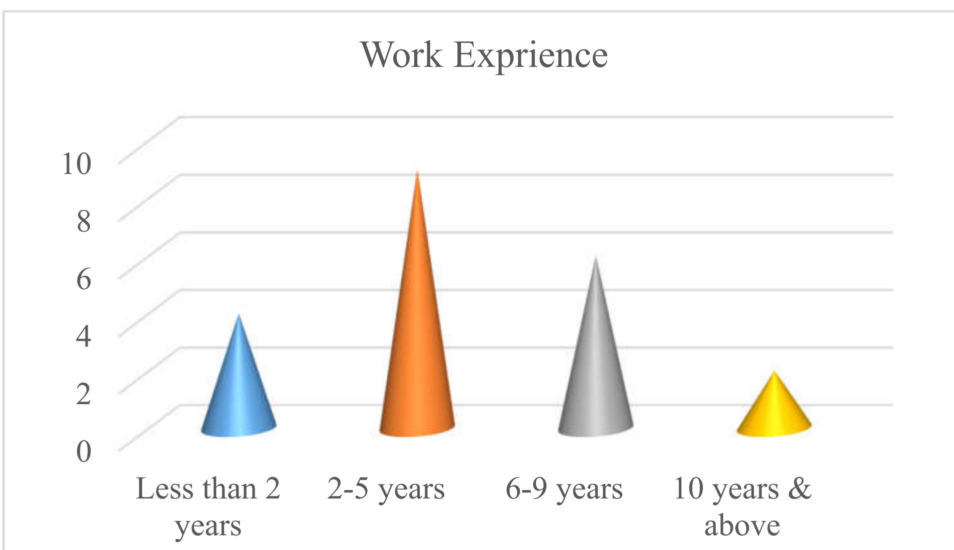

Figure 4.4: Work Experience of Respondent (Source: Survey data, 2020)

The next question was about monitoring & evaluating training taken/given to NEWA employees and the result is tabulated in table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Relevance of training received by the employee (result)

M&E Trainings Received	The relevance of training received to enhance M&E Knowledge					
	Very Important	Important	Moderately	Slightly Important	Not Important	Subtotal
Formal Training Only	2	1	-	-	-	3
In-service Training Only	4	1	-	-	-	5
Formal & In-service Training	12	1	-	-	-	13
None	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	18	3	-	-	-	21

(Source: Survey data, 2020)

Table 4.3 shows that the majority of the respondents thirteen (13) received a combination of formal & in-service training. Of the thirteen respondents, twelve (12) of them stated that the training was very important in enhancing their monitoring and evaluation knowledge while one of them labeled the training as important.

The second type of monitoring and evolution training that is taken by respondents was in-service training with five (5) respondents. Of these five respondents, four (4) ranked the training as very important while one respondent ranked it as important. The table further shows that three (3) of the respondents had received formal training only. Of these three respondents, two (2)

ranked the training as very important while the remaining one ranked it as moderately important. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that all of the respondents had received training on monitoring and evaluation through formal, in-service, or both forms of training and as a result, this has enabled them to enhance their monitoring and evaluation knowledge.

The next question was intended to find out the competence of other relevant staff members in handling monitoring and evaluation tasks. The findings are presented in figure 4.5.

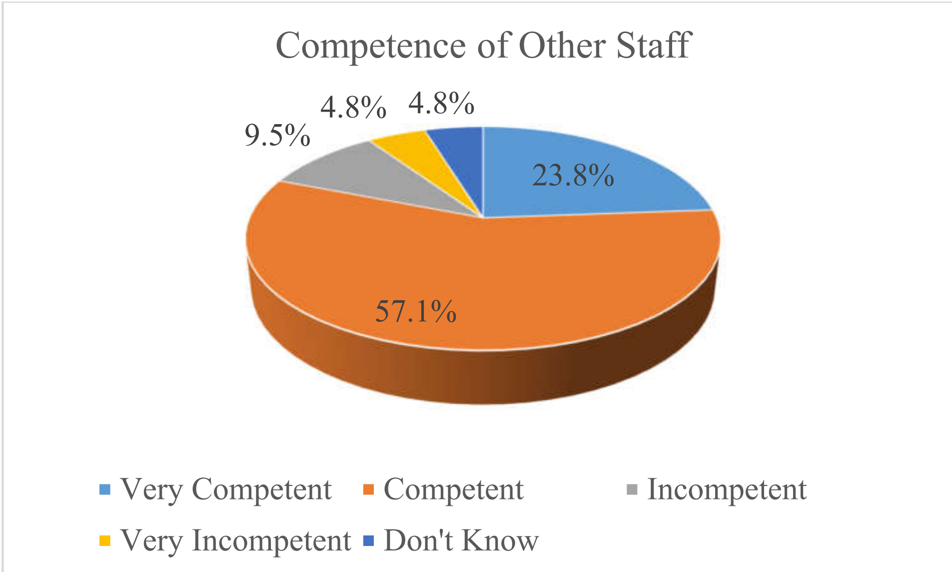

Figure 4.5: Competence of other staff (Source: Survey data, 2020)

Figure 4.5 shows that the majority of the respondents (57.1%) ranked the competency of other relevant staff as competent while 23.8% ranked them as very competent. This indicates that more than three-quarters of the respondents believed that there is other capable and competent staff that can properly handle a given monitoring and evaluation task.

On the contrary, 14.3% of the respondents rate the competency of other relevant staff members as incompetent while 4.8% said they don‘t know the competency level of other staff members. The implication is that majority knows that other supporting staff have a positive attitude towards M&E but in-service training should be given to further enhance the remaining (19%) workers.

The final two questions on professional capacity assessment on M&E was about whether there was a system that assists staff in analyzing, capturing, and managing data which in turn will help build the knowledge of the M&E staff. The result was that almost all indicated that there is a system that assists staff to capture, analyze, and manage data in NEWA.

4.2. CURRENT MONITORING & EVALUATION PRACTICE

In this section, the respondents were probed for the existing monitoring and evaluation practice. The first question sought to determine which stakeholders were involved in monitoring and evaluation practices. Figure 4.6 shows the findings.

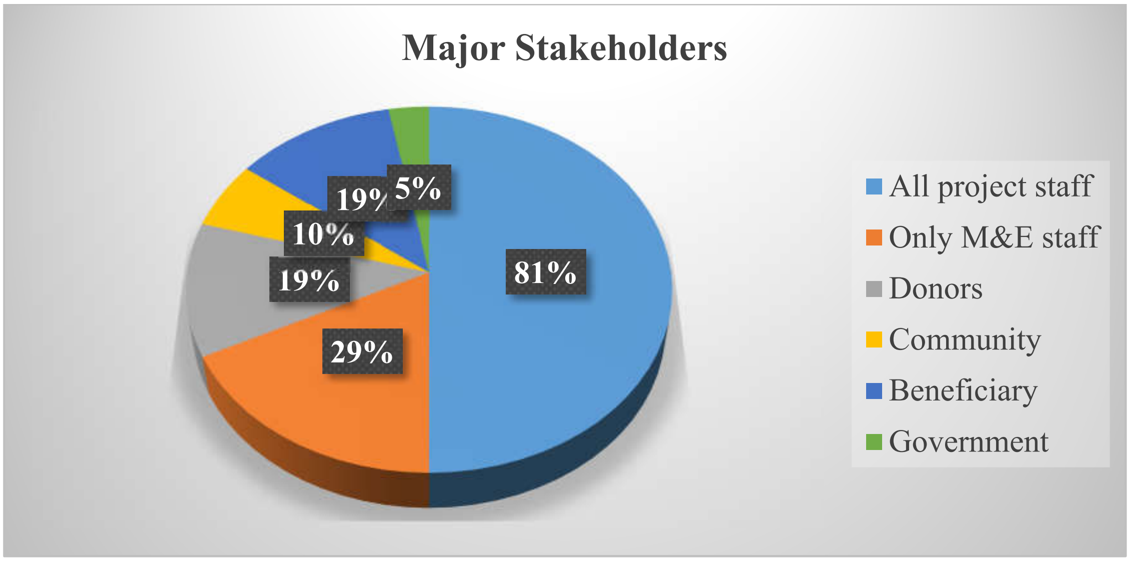

Figure 4.6: Major Stakeholders involved in M&E (Source: Survey data)

As shown in figure 4.6 all project staff were involved in about 81% of monitoring and evaluation practices of projects executed by NEWA, followed by the only monitoring and evaluation staff (29%). 19% reported that donors were involved as they were the ones who finance projects, and they were there to track the use of their resources. Moreover, Figure 4.6 shows that an equal number of respondents reported that the major stakeholder involved in the monitoring and evaluation of projects were beneficiaries, and community each with a 10% respondent rate while the government was involved 5%.

This shows that projects executed by respondents did not fully demonstrate strong downward accountability to the beneficiaries, government, and community as a result this might also deter the sustainability of project results. Moreover, Neglecting relevant stakeholders in M&E could lead to a low degree of ownership of findings and reduces the likelihood that project implementers will incorporate findings in decision-making processes.

The next inquiry was whether NEWA used computerized monitoring and evaluation system. The finding is presented in table 4.4.

The table below indicates that most of the respondents (62%) replied they use a questionnaire M&E data collection method while one fifth(19%) respondents replied NEWA uses focus group discussion method of data collection.

Table 4.4: Computerized M&E system (result)

Computerized M&E System	Yes	19	90.5%
	No	2	9.5%
	Total	21	100.0%

(Source: Survey data, 2020)

The table above indicates that most of the respondents (90.5%) replied that they use a computerized monitoring and evaluation system while a minority (9.1%) of the respondents do not have a computerized monitoring and evaluation system. This indicates that the information obtained is likely to be accurate and timely.

The fifth question sought to determine the most common method of M&E data collection. Figure 4.7 shows the finding as follow:

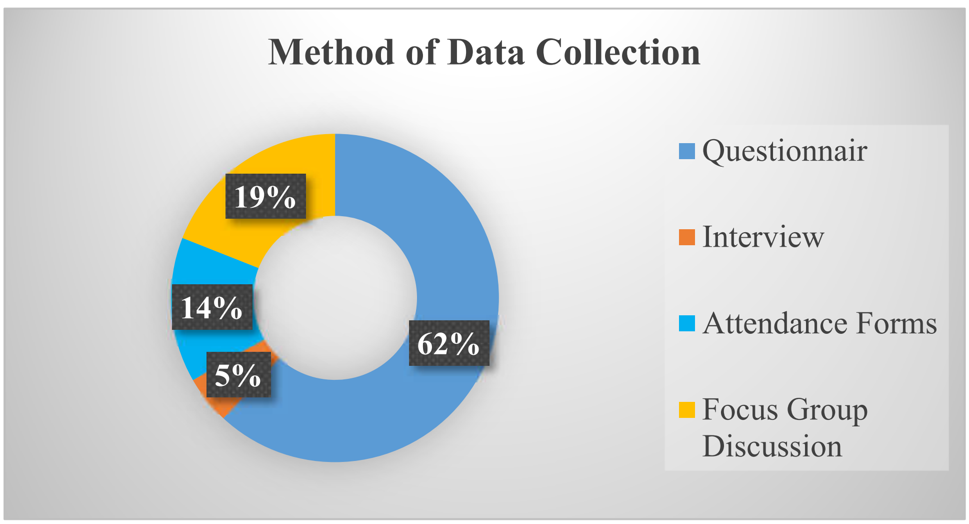

Figure 4.7: Method of M&E Data Collection (Source: Survey data, 2020)

The questionnaire method is very handy in assessing and determining the views, perceptions, and knowledge of stakeholders about the project. Besides, A Focus group discussion method is a qualitative data collecting method that enables the project managers to have an in-depth understanding of the issues about the implementation of their projects.

The third most used method of data collection with a percentage of 14% is attendance forms whereas the least respondents selected interviews. This implies the collected data is in written format and hence, indicates that the information obtained is most likely to be accurate.

The next question was sought to determine whether NEWA has a written M&E plan that guides project execution. The finding showed that most of the respondents (89%) reacted there is a written M&E plan for all projects that guide project execution. This implies the M&E Plan serves as reference documents that contain targets, a detailed definition of each project indicators, the methods and frequency of data collection, as well as who is responsible for collecting the data. It will also provide details on how data will be analyzed and the evaluations required to complement monitoring data.

The following questionnaire was about the rating adaptability of these M&E plans. The finding is presented in table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Rating of Adaptability of the M&E Plan (result)

The adaptability of the M&E Plan	Very Ease	6	28.6%
	Ease	12	57.1%
	Difficult	3	14.3%
	Very Difficult	-	0.0%

(Source: Survey data, 2020)

The table above indicates that a little more than half of the respondents (57.1%) replied that this M&E plan is easy to adapt while around a quarter of respondents (28.6%) replied NEWA M&E plan is very easy to apply. The remaining respondents said these M&E plans are difficult to implement.

This implies that staff is less likely to face challenges since there is a written procedure to implement an M&E plan that can be easily applicable.

The next inquiry sought to determine the type of monitoring & evaluation framework that is used by NEWA. Figure 4.8 shows the findings.

The majority (62%) of the respondent replied NEWA uses the logical framework as a planning, monitoring, and evaluation tool. The second most used tool with 19% of respondents was the results framework. Figure 4.8 further shows that an equal number of the respondent(10%) use the theory of change and outcome mapping as a planning, monitoring, and evaluation tool.

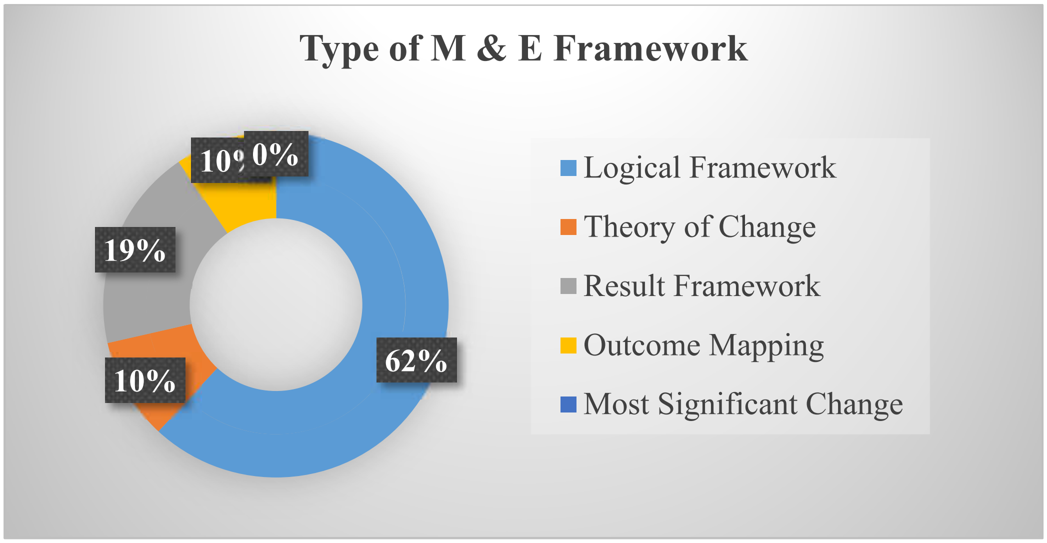

Figure 4.8: Types of M & E Framework (Source: Survey data, 2020)

The next inquiry was to determine how often NEWA monitors their projects. The result is presented in figure 4.9.

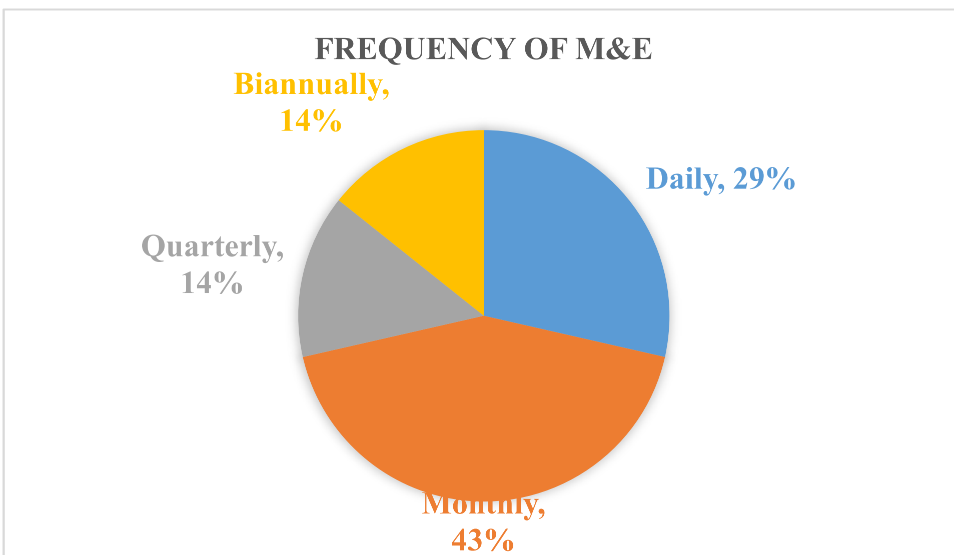

Figure 4.9: Frequency of M&E Monitoring (Source: Survey data, 2020)

Figure 4.9 shows that 43% of respondents used to assess their monitoring and evaluation activities every month while 29% of respondents replied monitoring activities were carried out daily. The findings also indicate that around a quarter(14%) of the respondents were conducting monitoring and evaluation activities quarterly and bi-annually. None of the respondents reported that they never monitored their activities.

Failure to carry out proper and continuous monitoring implies that the respondent was unable to identify the progress of the projects they implement that in turn could lead to failure of the overall development objective of the programs.

The last two questions were sought to identify the form of evaluation and the type of evaluations conducted in NEWA. Figures 4.10 & 4.11 shows the findings.

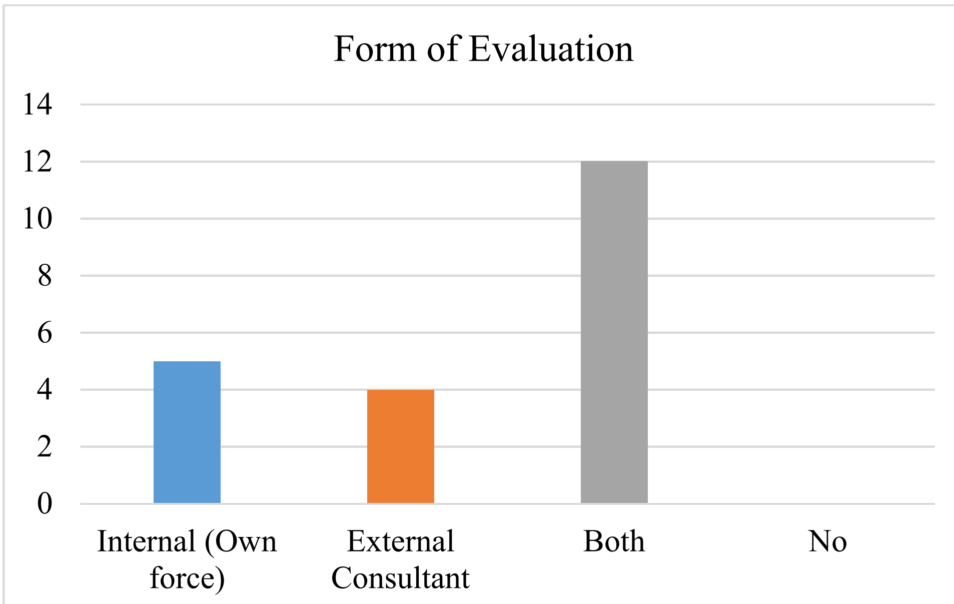

Figure 4.10: Form of Evaluation (Source: Survey data, 2020)

A little more than half (57%) of the respondents replied that NEWA uses both internal and external consultants. Around a quarter (24%) of respondents replied that the company uses internal evaluation while 19% of the respondents said that the organization uses an external consultant to evaluate the performance of their projects.

Figure 4.11 shows that the majority (57%) of the respondents replied that the organization uses mid-term evaluation while 33% said NEWA applies terminal/summative evaluation. The remaining respondents split even in Ex-ante evaluation (Start-up evaluation) and Ex-post /Impact evaluation. This implies that programs/projects were not being evaluated at the start of the projects which has a great impact on the smooth accomplishment of these programs.

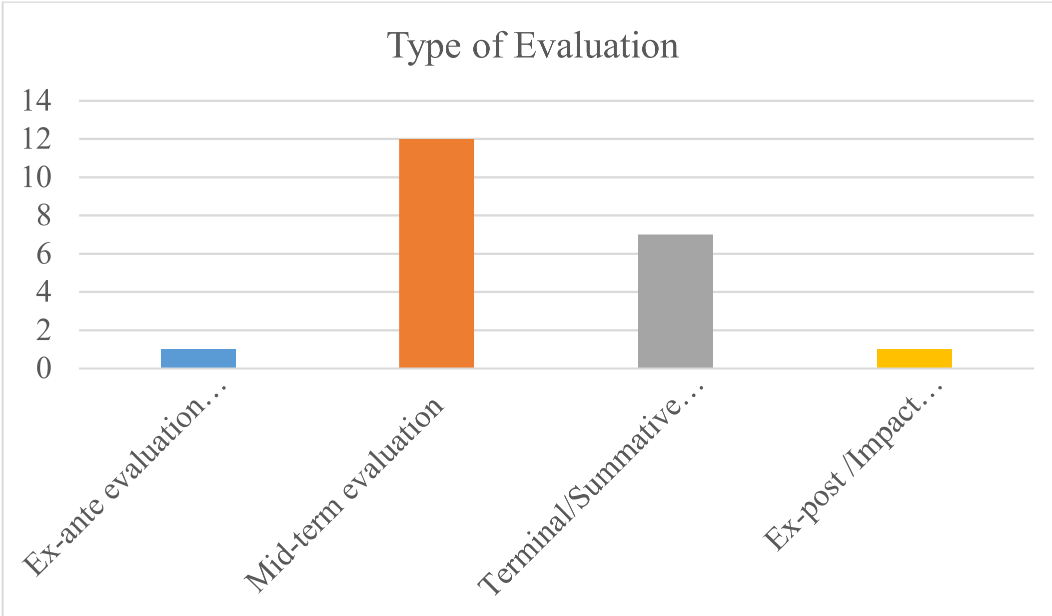

Figure 4.11: Types of Evaluation (Source: Survey data, 2020)

M&E Planning Process

The study sought the level of application and practice of the planning process. The practice of funds allocation, establishing M & E plans, utilizing those plans, and control mechanism assessed.

NEWA projects reported varied planning process practices and experiences as per the results and findings of the study shown in table 4.6. A cumulative (71%) of respondents agreed to the fact that the project allocates funds for monitoring and evaluation at its initial stages of planning.

A near similar percentage of respondents (75%) were arguably in agreement that project plans contained M & E plans. Staffs had less awareness of how the planning process was helping to estimate the costs of required resources for M & E. majority (73%) of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the idea that the planning process helps to estimate the cost of the required resource for M&E.

A similar characteristic observed among respondents on whether NEWA projects were able to develop a control mechanism to keep the project on track or use the planning process to support decision making during project implementation. A paltry 37% of respondents were in agreement as 63% either disagreed or not sure of the former while 38% were in agreement with the latter. The table below has a summary of the results and findings of various attributes of the planning process for NEWA projects.

Table 4.6: Planning Process and M&E (result)

Description	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
Planning Process					
At the project initial stage, the project allocates funds for M&E	2%	8%	19%	42%	29%
The project plans contain the M&E planning process	0%	13%	12%	49%	26%
The planning process helps to estimate the cost of the required resource for M&E	41%	32%	16%	9%	2%
The project can develop a control mechanism to keep the project on track	13%	31%	19%	25%	12%
The planning process supports decision making during project implementation	15%	28%	19%	23%	15%

(Source: Survey data, 2020)

Technical Expertise

The technical expertise M & E practices with a high approval rating in the NEWA project was staff training (88%) and attracting skilled personnel (91%) while project skills needs assessment at (29%) had a lesser approval rating. All respondents in one way or the other were agreeable that technical skills are a huge determinant of how best monitoring and evaluation are analyzed. This finding is in affirmation with the findings of (Vanessa, 2011) who found that technical capacity and expertise of the staff in conducting evaluations seemingly influences M&E process. Training gives employees the knowledge of the principles, methodology, and tools applied in M&E. It improves the organization performance of M&E activities.

Project training needs analysis carried out to acquire the right skills to manage the M and E activities. (Vanessa, 2011) recognized the value along with the participation of organizations' human resources in decision making, and their motivation in the implementation of decisions, possibly influence M & E practice. The table below has a summary of the results and findings of various attributes of technical expertise for NEWA projects.

Table 4.7: Technical Expertise with M&E Practices (results)

Technical Expertise					
Project staff are trained to equip them with the technical expertise necessary to carry out M&E	-	11%	2%	76%	12%
The project identifies skilled personnel to carry out the M&E functions	-	5%	6%	81%	10%
In project training, need analysis is done to ensure the right skills are acquired to manage the M&E activities.	15%	19%	39%	13%	16%

(Source: Survey data, 2020)

Stakeholder Involvement

The study sought to establish the level and approaches of stakeholder involvement in the project. Stakeholder involvement reported the least approval compared to other targets M & E practice attributes. The findings revealed a low-level application of stakeholder analysis, stakeholder feedback, and communication strategy developed to address the flow of information. A small percentage of respondents 23%, 15%, and 28% respectively confirmed involvement with the largest percentage of respondents reporting to strongly disagree, disagree, or of moderate extends of involvement.

Stakeholder involvement is essential in project management as some stakeholders have high stakes in the project while others have significant influence over the project. It also enhances the success of M&E activities by promoting negotiation of outcomes that different stakeholders expect from the project. Stakeholders' participation in M&E also facilitates the assessment of project from multiple perspectives.

Respondents further disagreed with the participation of stakeholders that reflect 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.

Table 4.8: Stakeholder Involvement (result)

Stakeholder Involvement					
Stakeholder analysis is done to ensure all the stakeholders are involved in project monitoring	22%	39%	17%	15%	7%
Stakeholders feedback is well captured and analyzed for implementation	27%	49%	9%	15%	-
Communication strategy is developed to address the flow of information	19%	38%	15%	21%	7%
Participation of stakeholders reflects the community needs and stimulate people's interest in the implementation of M&E.	29%	41%	11%	13%	6%
It enables stakeholders to influence product acceptance based on their needs.	23%	37%	14%	23%	3%

(Source: Survey data, 2020)

The last six questions sought to further investigate the practice of M&E in NEWA are analyzed & presented in table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Additional Issues on Practices of M&E (result)

Description	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The choice of indicator in setting up monitoring and evaluation systems influence their performance	62%	29%	4.5%	4.5%	-
My knowledge of impacts, outcome, outputs, and inputs influence the performance of monitoring and evaluation systems	71%	24%	5%	-	-
I experience challenges when applying the M&E system	19%	62%	10%	10%	-
The role of management towards the implementation of the M&E system is excellent	19%	62%	14%	5%	-
NEWA use inputs from M&E findings for various decision making	39%	43%	10%	8%	-
Management involvement enhances the credibility of the evaluation process and ensures increased acceptance of the M&E findings	76%	19%	5%	-	-

(Source: Survey data, 2020)

The result presented in Table 4.9 shows that 62% of the respondent strongly agreed that the choice of indicators in setting up monitoring and evaluation systems influence their performance while 29% agree. However, the remaining 9% percent of respondents split even by disagreeing with the idea and not sure about the influence of indicators on M&E performance.

This indicates that the design of monitoring and evaluation systems should include the right indicators as indicators provide critical information on the performance of projects.

The question about whether employee knowledge on impacts, outcome, outputs, and inputs influence performance of monitoring and evaluation systems, Majority of the respondents 95% (71%+ 24%) agreed that their knowledge of impacts, outcome, outputs, and inputs influence performance of monitoring and evaluation systems while only 5% said I am not sure.

This indicates that the respondents know that they need to understand various components of the planning and M&E tools use.

The following question was about the degree of experience they face challenges when applying M&E systems. The majority of the respondents (62%) agreed that they experience challenges when applying the M&E system and tool while 19% strongly agreed to the idea. This result indicates that respondents have difficulty measuring their M&E work using the designed M&E tool.

The next question was sought to determine the ratings of the role of management towards the implementation of the M&E system and the majority (62%) of the respondents indicated that there is an adequate role of management in the organization's monitoring and evaluation. Furthermore, the table shows that almost one fifth (19%) of the respondents rate the role of management as very adequate.

With over 81% (62%+19%) level of adequacy, it indicates that there is a good practice of engaging the top & middle level management in the monitoring and evaluation practice of the local nongovernmental organizations. The result further indicated that 14% and 5% of the respondents rate the role of management involvement towards the implementation of the monitoring and evaluation system as inadequate (disagree) and do not know.

The next question for M&E practice was whether the company uses inputs from M&E findings for various decision making. 43% agreed that they always utilize monitoring and evaluation findings as input for decision making while 39% responded they strongly agreed about using the findings.

The result further shows that 10% reported that they don't know whether the organization uses M&E findings as input for decision making while the remaining 8% reported that they disagree. This indicates that the majority of respondents refer to monitoring and evaluation findings for various decisions making as an indicating means that inputs from M&E are valuable.

Furthermore, three-quarters of the respondents (76%) strongly agreed that management involvement enhances the credibility of the evaluation process and ensures increased acceptance of M&E findings while a quarter (19%) responded they agreed about using the findings and the remaining were indifferent.

4.3. CHALLENGES IN EXECUTING MONITORING & EVALUATION

This section outlines the findings from the respondents by identifying the challenges the company & its employees face in the process of monitoring and evaluating their projects.

The first question was outlined to identify the degree of barrier employee & NEWA faces while implementing M&E. the findings is presented in table 4.10.

Table 4.10:Assessment of Degrees of M&E Barriers (result)

Description/ Barriers	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1) Absence of policy/legal framework	57.1%	28.6%	9.5%	4.8%	-
2) Lack of expertise	-	9.9%	8.1%	35%	47%
3) Insufficient baseline data	-	4.8%	9.5%	61.9%	23.8%
4) Lack of fund for M&E activities	-	4.8%	14.3%	61.9%	19.0%
5) Inability to use M&E tools	19.5%	55%	16%	9.5%	-

(Source: Survey data, 2020)

The result presented in Table 4.10 shows that the majority of the respondents (57.1%) replied that they strongly disagree with the absence of policy/legal framework as a barrier while a little more than a quarter of the respondents (28.6%) disagree. However, 4.8% of respondents agreed that a Policy/legal framework is a barrier while the remaining 9.5% were not sure whether the absence of a policy/legal framework was a barrier. This implies that there is a policy/legal framework that helps to picture ahead how to perform M&E.

The next issue was the degree of lack of expertise influence on M&E practices. 47% of the respondents strongly agreed while 35% agreed with the statement that lack of expertise is one of the challenges for M&E implementation. However, 8.1% replied they were not sure while the remaining 9.9% disagreed that lack of expertise is a barrier for M&E implementation.

This indicates that adequate M&E experts have to be allocated since this is being a barrier for proper implementation of M&E in projects & programs.

The table further shows that around a quarter (23.8%) of the respondents agreed while the majority (61.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that insufficient baseline data is one of the challenges for M&E implementation. However, 4.8% percent of respondents disagreed that insufficient baseline data is a barrier while the remaining 9.5% were not sure whether insufficient baseline data was a barrier.

This finding agrees with the Ethiopia IFAD Country Programme Evaluation found that project appraisal documents made limited provision for systematic baseline and subsequent beneficiaries surveys (IFAD,, 2008).

Furthermore, the above table shows that around one-fifth (19%) of the respondents agreed while the majority (61.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that lack of funds for M&E activities is one of the challenges for M&E implementation. However, 4.8% percent of respondents disagreed that insufficient baseline data is a barrier while the remaining 14.3% were not sure whether the lack of funds for M&E activities was a barrier.

Likewise, the above table shows that around one-fifth (19.5%) of the respondents disagreed while the majority (55%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement that employee inability to use M&E tools is the challenge for M&E implementation. However, 9.5% percent of respondents agreed that unfriendly M&E tools are a barrier while the remaining 16% were not sure whether the lack of funds for M&E activities was a barrier.

The next question was sought to determine the opinion of respondents on monitoring and evaluation reporting requirements of different donors. The figure below illustrates the findings.

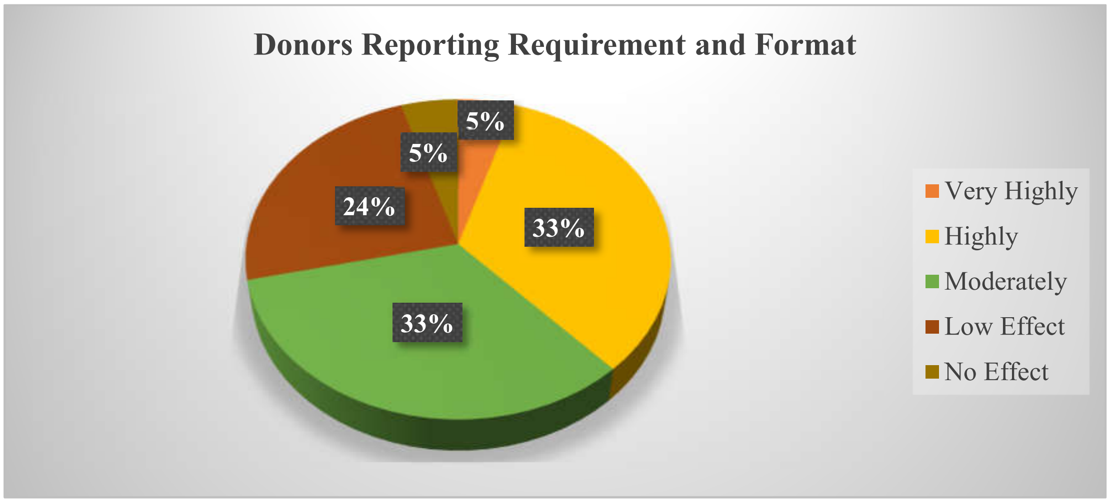

Figure 4.12: Donor's Reporting Requirement & Format (Source: Survey data, 2020)

The above figure shows that around one-third of (33%) of the respondents indicated that the donor's reporting requirement and format had a moderate effect on the implementation of their M&E plan. While around a little more than one third [38% (5% + 33%)] indicated that donors requirement format has a very high or high negative effect on their M&E implementation. On the contrary, around a quarter (24%) replied it has a low effect while the remaining 5% of the respondents indicate that donor's requirement does not affect their M&E implementation.

Therefore, this high tendency of requiring different reports for the same work by different donors could create an excessive burden on the organization to conform to these different requirements.

The last question for this section address issue related to what the overall trend looks like over the past 5 years regarding the challenges in conducting M&E. For this inquiry, the figure below shows the findings:

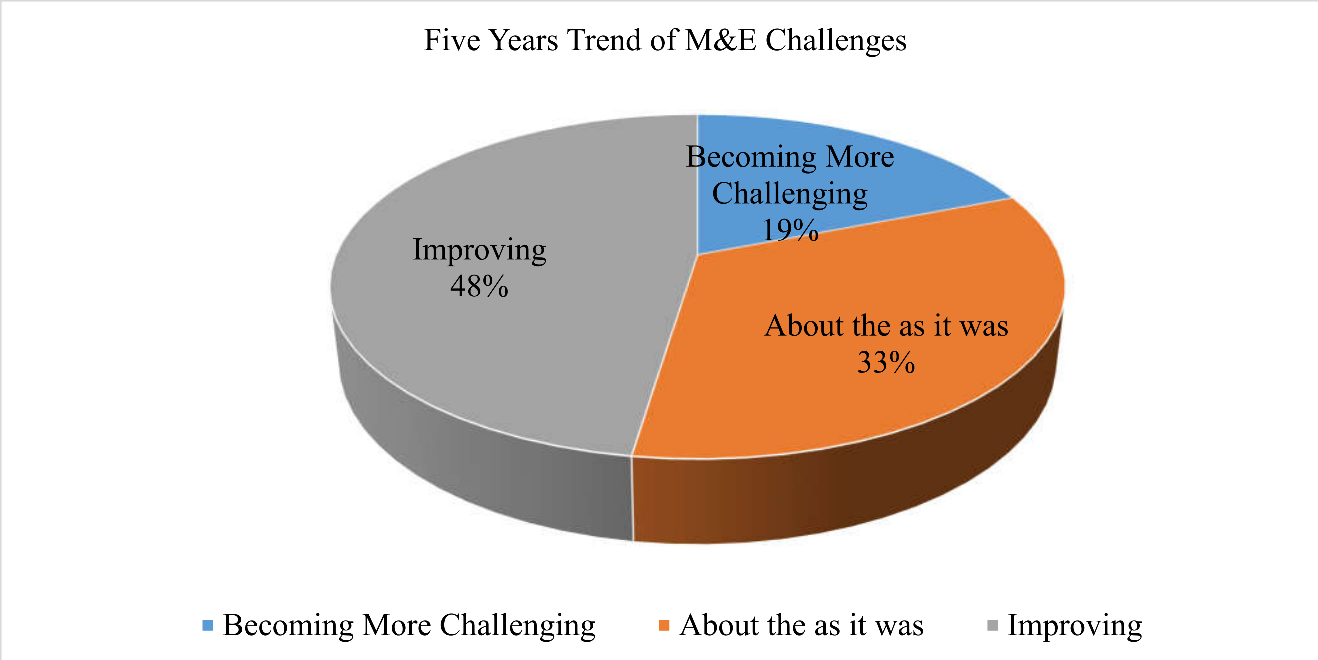

Figure 4.13: Five Years Trend of M&E Challenges (Source: Survey data, 2020)

The foreshown figure shows that (47.6%) respondents indicated that the existing challenges in conducting M&E compared to the past 5 years is improving while one third (33.3%) of the respondents indicated that the challenges are about the same as it was. Furthermore, the figure shows 19% of the respondents confirmed that it is becoming more challenging compared to the past 5 years. This finding indicates that most respondents believe M&E challenges are decreasing through time and thus it can be argued that there is a promising future for M&E.

4.4. REMEDYING MECHANISM

This section of the finding aims to identify the handling mechanisms used by NEWA to address challenges related to M&E.

The first question sought to determine the opinion of respondents on coping methods used by the organization to curb challenges related to monitoring and evaluation. The table below shows the finding as follow:

Table 4.11: Remedying Mechanism in M&E Practicing (result)

Description	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
i. Allotting more budget for M&E helps to cope with M&E challenges	23.8%	57.1%	9.5%	9.5%	-
ii. Limit M&E activities helps to cope with M&E challenges	4.8%	28.6%	33.3%	33.3%	-
iii. Adopt a participatory approach for M&E helps to cope with M&E challenges	28.6%	61.9%	4.8%	4.8%	-
iv. Building staff capacity contributes to positively enhance NEWA's M&E system	42.9%	42.9%	14.3%	-	-
v. Minimizing the burden of data collection and reporting contributes to positively enhance NEWA's M&E system	4.8%	33.3%	33.3%	28.6%	-
vi. Developing an M&E plan continuously contributes to positively enhance NEWA's M&E system	52.4%	42.9%	4.8%	-	-
vii. Computerizing M&E system contributes to positively enhance NEWA's M&E system	57.1%	38.1%	4.8%	-	-
viii. Increased role of management contributes to positively enhance NEWA's M&E system	61.9%	33.3%	4.8%	-	-

(Sources: Survey data, 2020)

The result presented in Table 4.11 shows that the majority of the respondent (57.1%) replied that they agree with allotting more budget for M&E helps to cope with M&E challenges while around a quarter of the respondents (23.8%) strongly agree. However, 9.5% of respondents disagreed while the remaining 9.5% were not sure whether allotting more budget for M&E helps to cope with M&E challenges.

The next issue was about the rating of limiting M&E activities helps to cope with M&E challenges. In this regard, one-third of the respondents (33.3%) showed disagreement while one-third replied they are not sure whether limiting M&E activities helps to cope with M&E challenges. However, 28.9% agreed that reducing M&E activities helps to cope with M&E challenges.

Further, the table shows the majority(61.9%) of the respondents agreed while a little more than a quarter(28.6%) of the respondents strongly agreed that adopting a participatory approach for M&E

helps to cope with M&E challenges. The remaining respondents split even in disagreement & being not sure of the impact of adopting a participatory approach for M&E to resolve M&E challenges.

Furthermore, the majority of the respondents [85.8%(42.9%+42.9%)] agreed that building staff capacity contributes to positively enhance NEWA's M&E system while 14.3% were not sure.

Additionally, the table shows one-third of the respondents (33.3%) agreed while one-third replied they are not sure whether minimizing the burden of data collection and reporting contributes to positively enhance the organization's M&E system. However, 28.6% disagreed by replying that minimizing the burden of data collection and reporting does help to cope with M&E challenges.

The next concept was about whether developing an M&E plan continuously contributes to positively enhance the organization's M&E system. Table 4.11 shows that around half (52.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed and 42.9% respondents agreed that developing a continuous plan contributes to improving the company's M&E system while 4.8% replied not sure.

The next question was sought to determine if computerizing the M&E system contributes to positively enhance NEWA's M&E system. Majority (57.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed and 38.1% of respondents agreed that computerizing the M&E system contributes to improving the company's M&E system while 4.8% replied not sure.

The last row in the above table shows the majority (61.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed and one-third (33.3%) of the respondents agreed that increasing the role of management contributes to positively enhance the organization's M&E system while 4.8% replied not sure.

From these findings, the copping mechanism can be listed as allocating more budget, improving personnel capacity, clearly describing the baseline, computerizing the M&E system, and increasing participation of stakeholders.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the main findings and interpretations given in chapter four. A lot of findings emerged from the study following the presentation and analysis of data. Therefore, a summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations is based on the objectives of this study as well as the recommendations of the researcher.

5.1. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

As outlined in chapter one, the primary aim of this thesis is to examine the practice and challenges of monitoring and evaluation as a case study of NEWA executed projects. The research objectives were used to guide the collection of required data from the respondents.

Based on the objectives of the research stated, the following summaries were made about the findings:

- Relevant M&E staff working in NEWA had received the necessary training in
- monitoring and evaluation either formally or through in-service training besides having
- several years of experience working with monitoring and evaluation systems. Additionally,
- these M&E staff indicated that the training they received played an important role in
- enhancing their M&E knowledge.
- The findings also showed that the company had competent staff (other than the M&E department) that can properly handle a given monitoring and evaluation task.

5.1.1. Current Monitoring and Evaluation Practice

The findings show that NEWA did not engage much the relevant stakeholders such as beneficiaries, government, donors, and community in their M&E activities. This result contradicts the assertion that projects belong to all beneficiaries and did not fully demonstrate strong downward accountability to the beneficiaries, government, and community.

Further, the result showed that the company has a computerized M&E system in place. This indicates that the information obtained is likely to be accurate and timely. This contradicts the finding (Banteyirga, 2018) which deducted that most local NGOs did not have a computerized M&E system.

Besides, the result also identified that questionnaire was the most used M&E data collection method. The questionnaire method is very handy in assessing and determining the views, perceptions, and knowledge of stakeholders about the project.

The findings of this study support the idea that NEWA has a written M&E plan that guides program/project execution. Also, the result showed that the adaptability of this M&E plan is easily adaptable.

NEWA uses a logical framework and result framework as a planning, monitoring, and evaluation tool. The logical framework being the most popular as a monitoring and evaluation tool relied on throughout the stages of the project life cycle. Besides, it was found that the choice of indicators in setting up monitoring and evaluation systems influence the performance of the tool.

Also, it was found that NEWA had a good practice of monitoring their activities monthly and daily. Moreover, it had the experience of conducting internal and external evaluations. Furthermore, It was founded that NEWA refers to previous monitoring and evaluation findings for various decision making a teaching experience to reduce errors & improve project performance.

5.1.2. Challenges in Executing Monitoring & Evaluation

The research identified that the main challenges in executing monitoring & evaluation in NEWA are: insufficient baseline data, lack of expertise, and lack of sufficient funding not necessary in that order. It was clear that each of these challenges had a huge effect on their M&E practice.

Further, it was found that the donor's reporting requirement and format had a moderate effect on the implementation of their M&E plan. Furthermore, respondents indicated that the existing challenges in conducting M&E compared to the past 5 years is improving very gradually.

5.1.3. Remedying Mechanism

It was found that NEWA chooses to develop an M&E plan continuously, increased role of management participation and computerizing M&E system contributes as the prior method of coping with the existing M&E challenges to positively enhance NEWA's M&E system.

It was also found that other coping mechanisms such as: adopting a participatory approach, building staff capacity, and allocating more budget were used as a means of coping to positively enhance M&E implementation.

5.2. CONCLUSION

This research studied the practice and the challenges of local nongovernmental organizations by taking NEWA as a case study. Accordingly, a questionnaire survey was used to obtain information related to practice & challenges of M&E and resolving these challenges.

Accordingly, The main objective of this research was to examine the practice and the challenges of local nongovernmental organizations by taking NEWA as a case study while monitoring and evaluating their executed projects. Based on the collected and analyzed data, the following stated key research conclusions can be concluded.

Firstly, Human capacity development on M&E knowledge, use of up-to-date M&E tools, and utilization of monitoring and evaluation technology (information system) are mandatory to enhance the successful implementation of project monitoring and evaluation. Project Monitoring and evaluation, in all project phases, is a critical process as a means of determining whether or not development assistance programs are achieving their planned targets in particular and bringing sustainable socio-economic development.

Secondly, Relevant staff had a handful of years of monitoring and evaluation experience, formal & continuous in-service training, utilized monitoring and evaluation information adequately, and carried out regular data collection from various sources. Furthermore, the commitment of top & middle management in monitoring and evaluation was very good. However, The company doesn't fully demonstrate strong stakeholder relations to the beneficiaries, government, and community as a result this could prevent the sustainability of project results.

Activities such as training and/or attending workshops in M&E, technical assistance in M&E, collaborative evaluation, M&E mentorship, and coaching programs, and seeking membership to M&E communities of practice are the instrumentations to perform good project monitoring & evaluation.

Thirdly, Some projects did not implement effective monitoring and evaluation due to various obstacles such as insufficient baseline data before the start of the project, shortage of professionals, and lack of sufficient funding specifically for M&E. These challenges may result in serious consequences for projects and programs.

In the project planning phase – setting clear objectives, conducting baseline survey, selecting enough & capable M&E experts, setting compatible data collection tools that are in line with policy/legal frameworks are the core concepts that lead to the successful implementation of project M&E in the particular and successful completion of the project in general.

Finally, NEWA can reduce and mitigate the challenges related to monitoring and evaluation through developing an M&E plan continuously, increasing the role of top & middle management participation, and computerizing the M&E system. Furthermore, it can be concluded that adopting a participatory approach, building staff capacity, and allocating more budget might be used as a means of coping to positively enhance M&E implementation in projects & programs.

5.3. RECOMMENDATION

This paper presents a practical approach for assessing the practice and challenges of M&E in NEWA to have better performance of the M&E system. Based on the research findings, the following recommendations should be put into practice by NEWA for better M&E practice and further improve the performance of projects.

Since the formal & informal training provided by the organization played a significant role in reinforcing M&E skills, NEWA needs to continue improving its professional capacity through the provision of continuous formal and in-service training.

The results of this research also showed that there is less involvement of beneficiaries, government, and community in the monitoring and evaluation activities of executed projects. To improve meeting the objective of these projects, all relevant stakeholders should be welcomed & participated more in M&E activities.

Furthermore, the research revealed insufficient baseline data before the start of the project, shortage of professionals, and lack of sufficient funding specifically for M&E as critical challenges of M&E practice. Hence, there is a need to further support, facilitate and improve the M&E implementation with a computerized system and developing an easily adaptable and continuous written M&E plan, and increasing the role of top & middle management participation to remedy the impact of these challenges.

5.3.1. Directions for Further Research

This study investigated the practice & challenges of M&E in local NGOs as a case study in NEWA. From the study, it is clear that there is much scope for further research in the following areas:

- The study is concentrated on a particular organization and projects/programs that reside in and around Addis Ababa. Hence, the impact of geographical variation & other local NGOs' M&E practices should be investigated.
- The paper is a case study on NEWA's projects and mostly the beneficiaries are women & children. To have a good understanding of local NGO's M&E practice, this study should be repeated in more NGOs.
- Further research would be required to determine the actual impact of appropriate implementation of M&E tools & techniques on the performance of executing different projects accomplished by local NGOs.

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APPENDICES

St. MARY'S UNIVERSITY

PROJECT MANAGEMENT GRADUATE PROGRAM

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SURVEY

TITLE: "Challenges and Practice of Monitoring and Evaluation in Project Performance at Network of Ethiopian Women's Association (NEWA)"

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

SECTION I: Introduction

Dear Respondent,

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect information on "Challenges and Practice of Monitoring and Evaluation in Project Performance at Network of Ethiopian Women's Association (NEWA)". The information collected through this questionnaire will be confidential and used for academic purposes only. Kindly take a moment to answer all the questions as accurately as possible.

SECTION II: General Information

a) Gender:
   1. Male ( )
   2. Female ( )

b) Age: ________ years

c) Give your Level of Education
   1) Certificate ( )
   2) Diploma ( )
   3) Degree ( )
   4) Masters and above ( )

d) What is your current position in the organization?
   1. Executive Director ( )
   2. Monitoring & Evaluation Officer ( )
   3. Program manager ( )
   4. Project Officer ( )
   5. Field Officer ( )
   6. Program Officer ( )
   7. Other ( ) Specify………..

SECTION III: Human Resource Capacity on Monitoring and Evaluation

1) Do you have any monitoring and evaluation experience?
   a. Yes b. No
2) If yes, how many years of monitoring and evaluation experience?
   ______________years

3) What monitoring and evaluation training do you possess?
   a. Formal training only
   b. In-service training only
   c. Formal and in-service
   d. None
   e. Other (specify): ________________________________
4) How would you rate the importance of the training in enhancing your M&E knowledge?
   a. Very Important
   b. Important
   c. Moderately Important
   d. Slightly Important
   e. Not Important
5) What is the competence of other relevant staff members who handle M&E tasks?
   a. Very competent
   b. Competent
   c. Incompetent
   d. Very incompetent
   e. Don't know
6) Is there a system that assists staff in collecting data?
   a. Yes b. No
   c. If no, why?_________________________________
7) Is there a system that assists staff in managing and analyzing data?
   a. Yes b. No
   c. If no, why?_________________________________

A. **Current Monitoring & Evaluation Practice**

1) Was there an M&E unit for the project?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Don't know
2) If yes, are you part of the M&E unit of the project?[do you participate directly in M&E?]
   a. Yes
   b. No
3) Who are the major stakeholders involved in the M&E of your projects? (Possible to circle more than one)
   a. All project staff
   b. Only M&E staff
   c. Donors
   d. Community
   e. Beneficiary
   f. Government
   g. Other________
4) Does NEWA use a computerized M&E system?
   a. Yes
   b. No
5) What is the most common method of M&E data collection?
   a. Questionnaire
   b. Interviews
   c. Attendance forms
   d. Focus group discussion
   e. Other: ____________
6) Does NEWA have a written M&E plan that guides project execution?
   a. Yes, for all projects
   b. Yes, for some projects
   c. No
7) How would you rate the adaptability of this M&E plan?
   a. Very easy
   b. Easy
   c. Difficult
   d. Very difficult
8) If your answer is no to Q. 6, what is the reason behind it?
   a. Lack of budget
   b. It is irrelevant
   c. Lack of expertise
   d. Other, specify: ____________
9) Which of the following M&E framework does NEWA use? (possible to circle more than one)
   a. Logical framework
   b. Theory of change
   c. Result framework
   d. Outcome mapping
   e. Most significant change
   f. Others, specify:_________

10) How often does NEWA monitor its activities? (possible to circle more than one)

a. Daily
b. Monthly
c. Quarterly
d. Bi-annually
e. Never

11) What form of evaluations does NEWA have?

a. Internal (own force)
b. External consultant
c. Both
d. None

12) Which of the following type of evaluations do you carry out on projects executed by NEWA?

a. Ex-ante evaluation (Start-up evaluation)
b. Mid-term evaluation
c. Terminal/Summative evaluation
d. Ex-post /Impact evaluation
e. None

13) Please tick below the appropriate column to indicate your degree of agreement.

Table 12: Practice of M&E

Description	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
Planning Process					
At the project initial stage, the project allocates funds for M&E					
The project plans contain the M&E planning process					
The planning process helps to estimate the cost of the required resource for M&E					
The project can develop a control mechanism to keep the project on track					
The planning process supports decision making during project implementation					
Technical Expertise					
Project staff are trained to equip them with the technical expertise necessary to carry out M&E					
The project identifies skilled personnel to carry out the M&E functions					
In project training, need analysis is done to ensure the right skills are acquired to manage the M&E activities.					
Stakeholder Involvement					
Stakeholder analysis is done to ensure all the stakeholders are involved in project monitoring					
Stakeholders feedback is well captured and analyzed for implementation					
Communication strategy is developed to address the flow of information					
Participation of stakeholders reflects the community needs and stimulate people's interest in the implementation of M&E.					
It enables stakeholders to influence product acceptance based on their needs.					

14) Please tick below the appropriate column to indicate your degree of agreement.

Table 13: Practice of M&E (Continued)

Description	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The choice of indicator in setting up M&E systems influence their performance					
My knowledge of impacts, outcome, outputs, and inputs influence the performance of M&E systems					
I experience challenges when applying the M&E system					
The role of management towards the implementation of the M&E system is excellent					
NEWA use inputs from M&E findings for various decision making					
Management involvement enhances the credibility of the evaluation process and ensures increased acceptance of the findings					

B. **Challenges in Executing Monitoring & Evaluation**

1. Please tick below the appropriate column in the table below to indicate your degree of the barrier.

Table 14: Challenges of M&E

Description/ Barriers	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1) Absence of clear policy/legal framework					
2) Lack of expertise					
3) Insufficient baseline data					
4) Lack of fund for M&E activities					
5) Inability to use M&E tools					

2. To what extent do the donor's reporting requirement and format negatively affect the implementation of M&E?
   a. Very highly
   b. Highly
   c. Moderately
   d. Low Effect
   e. Neutral/No Effect

3. Over all, the existing challenges in conducting M&E compared to the past 5 years is:
   a. Becoming more challenging
   b. Improving
   c. About the same as it was

C. **Remedying Mechanism**

1. Please tick below the appropriate column in the table below.

Table 15: Remedying Mechanism in M&E Practicing

Description		Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
i.	Allotting more budget for M&E helps to cope with M&E challenges					
ii.	Limit M&E activities help to cope with M&E challenges					
iii.	Adopt a participatory approach for M&E helps to cope with M&E challenges					
iv.	Building staff capacity contributes to positively enhance NEWA's M&E system					
v.	Minimizing the burden of data collection and reporting contributes to positively enhance NEWA's M&E system					
vi.	Developing an M&E plan continuously contributes to positively enhance NEWA's M&E system					
vii.	Computerizing the M&E system contributes to positively enhance NEWA's M&E system					
viii.	The increased role of management contributes to positively enhance NEWA's M&E system					

2. What recommendation/suggestion would you give that could improve M&E practice and remedy the challenges?

____

____

Thank you very much for sparing your time and for the valuable information you have given me.

Thank You So Much!