

***MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF CORHA-BASED NGOS IMPLEMENTING
SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH PROJECTS IN ADDIS ABABA:
PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES***

BY

Tewodros Birhanu

Abstract

Projects of organization mostly failed to attain their objectives because of inadequate and weak monitoring and evaluation (M & E) practices. Conducting project M & E requires well qualified staff with sound knowledge and expertise in the area. Besides, this organization needs to have good infrastructure for conducting it, as project M & E is so critical to the success of the project. There are many reasons why a project fails and understanding them will give us insights on how to avoid future failure. The following research questions were raised and addressed in this paper. How effectively has been the M & E process done on RH/FP projects implemented by CORHA-based NAGOS? What are the challenges they have faced in M & E of their projects? How organizations are collecting, organizing, analyzing and interpreting data generating from the projects? What are the major factors that affect M & E of the project? In line with this, the study used both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Primary data were also collected through interviews using interview guide/protocol and structured questionnaires from selected CORHA member NGOS as well as from CORHA. From data analysis, summary of findings conclusion and recommendation were made. Findings suggest that there exist problems related to lack of expertise, in adequate management information system (MIS) and lack of baseline data. Based on these findings, solutions were recommended to concerned stakeholders.

Introduction

Background of the Study

The need for project monitoring and evaluation is important to analyze the progress of the project towards achieving its goals and objectives, to determine whether or not the resources provided by the donors are being efficiently and effectively used to change the life of the target community, whether or not the projects are within schedule and also to determine any problems that may be hampering the implementation. Determination of efficient management of resources is a factor of project monitoring and there is also a need to determine whether or not the set objectives were achieved and the extent of achievement of these objectives. Monitoring and evaluation is also important to capture any lessons learned from the implementation of the projects to aid another future projects and programming (Mark, 2007, p.14).

Plans are essential but they are not set in concrete (totally fixed). If they are not working, or if the circumstances change, then plans need to change, too. Monitoring and evaluation are both tools which help organizations to check if projects are progressing as per the plans and to see whether project objectives are able to be met or not, with the current performance of the organizations. They give the required information to the management so that it can make decisions about the project or organization, about changes that are necessary in strategy or plans. Doing something wrong is not a crime, but failing to learn from past mistakes because of failure of not monitoring and evaluating is much worse (Shapiro, 2004, p.5).

Consortium of Reproductive Health Association (CORHA) began as a loose affiliation of the few Ethiopian and international NGOs that were then offering integrated services in maternal and child health promotion, family planning and other reproductive health (MCH/FP/RH) services in the country. However, subsequent to the launching of Ethiopia's National Population Policy in April 1993, many of the then NGOs operating in the country had realized that they were now mandated to assist in meeting the national objective of addressing and closing the gaps in high population growths by integrating RH/FB into their ongoing community- based development and/or other initiative. They thus formed CORHA (formerly known as COFAP) in July 1993. However, it was in 1995 the seven founding members (FGAE, EECMY, MSIE, NACID, GSFCS, EGT, and SCF- USA) ratified and signed consortium's memorandum of association.

CORHA's vision is to see vibrant, dynamic, and proactive member of the civil society with broad-based membership and center of excellence in coordination, capacity building and advocacy in reproductive health and rights in Ethiopia. CORHA's mission is a member driven umbrella organization of NGOs committed to the provision of comprehensive, integrated, sustainable RH information services and rights in Ethiopia. Its ultimate goal is improving the overall RH status and quality of life for all the people, thereby contributing to national development; CORHA strives for equity and empowerment of communities and members through effective partnership and participatory processes in reproductive health and rights in Ethiopia (CORHA, 2010, p. 1).

CORHA is currently implementing four projects the first one is enhancing gender gap through advocacy in Ethiopia. The second one is on enhancing coordination, networking and advocacy

role of CORHA projects to integrate RH and HIV/AIDS for better outcome. The last one is Project on HIV/AIDS, RH and environmental protection.

Membership in CORHA was, and remains, open to all NGOs, Ethiopian and international organizations, working on FP and RH issues. The only requirement is that members must fulfill all the requirements and criteria set by CORHA. Currently, CORHA has a total of 101 member organizations which are implementing Reproductive Health and Family Planning Projects. To this end, the student researcher tries to assess the project monitoring and evaluation practices and challenges of the CORHA-Based NGOs which have been implementing Sexual and Reproductive Health Projects in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Statement of the Problem

Organization's projects mostly failed to attain their goals and objectives because of inadequate and weak monitoring and evaluation practices. Conducting project monitoring and evaluation requires well qualified staff with sound knowledge and expertise in the area. Besides, this organization needs to have good infrastructure for conducting M & E, as project monitoring and evaluation is so critical to the success of the project. There are many reasons why a project fails, and understanding them will give us insights into how to avoid future failures (Martin et al, 2001:1).

A lot of donors' resources are provided to NGOs in Ethiopia to implement Sexual and Reproductive Health Projects. Not only does best practice require that projects are monitored for control but also project stakeholders require transparency, accountability for resource use and impact, good project performance and organizational learning (to benefit future projects).

Despite the huge amount of resources provided to the NGOs to implement Sexual and Reproductive Health Projects and the fact that these projects play a significant role in the fight against poverty in the community, it is highly significant to assess clearly how monitoring and evaluation have been done on those projects which have been implemented by NGOs. The preliminary research reviewed by the student researcher shows that problems have occurred due to lack of expertise, inadequate management information system, lack of well designed monitoring and evaluation indicators and lack of baseline data on those projects.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the main challenges on project monitoring and evaluation practices of CORHA-based NGOs and to forward possible solutions by raising the following core questions:

Research Questions

This study attempted to raise and address the following questions:

- How are the CORHA-based NGOs implementing the M & E of the Sexual and RH Projects in Addis Ababa?
- How those organizations are collecting, organizing, analyzing and interpreting data generating from the projects?
- How effectively are the monitoring and evaluation processes done on RH/FP projects which have been implemented by CORHA-based NGOs?
- What are the challenges faced by CORHA-based NGOs which are practicing monitoring and the evaluation their projects?
- What are the major factors that have been affecting the practice of monitoring and evaluation of those projects?

Objectives of the study

The general objective of the study was to investigate project monitoring and evaluation practices and challenges encountered by CORHA-based NGOs which have been implementing the Sexual and Reproductive Health Projects in the country. The study also has the following specific objectives:

- To assess the practice of M & E of the Sexual and RH Projects by the CORHA-based NGOs through collecting, organizing, analyzing and interpreting data generating from the projects;
- To determine the level of effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluation processes conducted on RH/FP projects which have been implemented by CORHA-based NGOs;
- To identify challenges faced by CORHA-based NGOs while practising monitoring and evaluation their projects; and
- To identify major factors affecting the practice of monitoring and evaluation of those projects.

Significance of the Study

This research is significant because the findings of the study contribute to professionals' endeavours in monitoring and evaluation of development projects/programs, to development policy makers. The study also serves as empirical inputs for the improvement of the existing problems related to M & E of the CORHA-based NGOs in particular and as reference to other development interventions at different levels in general. It may further serve as reference for other interested researcher who wants to engage in similar topic in different contexts and/or development projects/programs. It will be important for development practitioners in that this gives research-based informed knowledge and skills for M & E of development projects. In addition, the empirical findings may serve as a stepping stone for further studies on similar topic in different context or on different subjects in any parts of the country.

Limitations of the Study

Although the student researcher had planned ahead of time to overcome any risks and problems in attempting the research undertaking, some constraints which emanated from various sources occurred. These constraints may limit the findings of the study in one way or another. As the data collected in this study was from staffs who are working in those organizations, the study did not involve perspectives of the beneficiaries, the partners and key stakeholders in the projects. The study was confined to indigenous NGOs found in Addis Ababa and those solely engaged in RH and FP interventions. Therefore, the results obtained from this study cannot be generalized to other NGOs in other localities or to other NGOs which have been engaged in other development interventions. In the study, document analysis was not conducted because of the reluctance of the sampled NGOs to give access to relevant published and unpublished documents. Therefore, these constraints or limitations tantamount to influence the validity of some of the data generated in order to address questions partly related to one or two specific objectives of the study.

Delimitations of the Study

The scope of this study is delimited by geography, project type and time.

Geographical Delimitation

The scope of the study was restricted to sexual and reproductive health projects implemented by CORHA member NGOs stationed in Ethiopia's capital city, Addis Ababa. The restriction is due to its geographical convenience and cost consideration.

Project Delimitation

It was found difficult to conduct project monitoring and evaluation in order to assess practices and to identify challenges at all members of CORHA and in all projects they have been implementing in Addis Ababa. To this end, the researcher also wanted to delimit the study on their projects' nature and by giving emphasis to sexual and reproductive health projects.

Time Delimitation

It was difficult to conduct an assessment study on monitoring and evaluation practices and challenges in all projects that CORHA member NGOs have been implementing for the past ten or more years. Hence, the student researcher needs to delimit the study on time basis. Therefore, the study was delimited by selecting those projects that had been implemented for the last five years. This study was based on cross-sectional data of the five years. Generally, the assessment of monitoring and evaluation practices in indigenous NGOs and then to identify challenges which may emanate from some factors affecting effective M & E implementation and practice in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Definition of Key Terms

Monitoring

Monitoring is the routine and continuous tracking of the key elements of project implementation performance, that is, inputs (resources, equipment, etc.) activities and outputs through recordkeeping and regular reporting (McCoy et al., 2005).

Evaluation

Evaluation is the episodic (not continuous as the case with monitoring usually midterm and at end of the project) assessment of an ongoing or completed project to determine its actual impact against the planned impact (strategic goal or objectives for which it was implemented) efficiency, sustainability, effectiveness (McCoy et al., 2005).

Organization of the Paper

The study is organized in to five parts. The first part is on background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, objectives of the study, definitions of key terms, limitations of the study and organization of the paper. The next part presents review of related literature. The

third presents research design and methodology. It also describes target population and sampling technique, data collection tools and procedures and data analysis methods. The fourth part presents both primary and secondary data, their, analysis, and interpretation in the light of the objectives of the study. The last part summarizes the most important issues in the paper and puts together major findings in order to draw conclusions, and then to forward recommendations of the study.

Review of Related Literature

Introduction

This part presents review of related literature in the study. It discusses about reproductive health situation in Ethiopia, importance of monitoring and evaluation, concepts of monitoring and evaluation, the relationship between monitoring and evaluation, monitoring and evaluation techniques, differences between monitoring, evaluation and audit, comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework, approaches of monitoring and evaluation, methods of data collection for M & E, and challenges of monitoring and evaluation. Next, let us present each topic one by one.

Reproductive Health Situation in Ethiopia

High fertility and low use of modern contraceptive methods, like elsewhere in sub- Sahara Africa, reflect a host of factors that have affected both the supply of contraceptive services and the demand for them in Ethiopia. Regarding the former problem, shortage and recurrent stock-outs of contraceptives, shortage of trained human power, poor quality of care and lack of integration of services as well as weak Information and Education/Behavioral Change and Communication (IE/BCC) Programs are recognized as critical challenges in ensuring quality, integrated, and sustainable Reproductive Health/Family Planning (RH/FP) services. As to the latter problem, massive poverty, low status of women, low rate of female literacy, and traditional practices (such as Female Genital Cutting [FGC], early marriage, widow inheritances, and polygamy) are some of the impediments in the health seeking behaviour of the society, particularly among women who neither have the resources nor the decision making power (CORHA, 2010, p.3).

In Ethiopia, maternal and infant mortality rates are the highest in the world which 871 per 100,000 and 97 per 100,000 live births in 2004/5 respectively. The socio-economic situation and

overburdened health care delivery system have contributed greatly to this effect. Although access to primary health care has increased over time, service utilization remains low due to low level of awareness about the danger signs and symptoms during pregnancy, labor, and delivery. This situation is further exacerbated by poor quality services and weak community support system, as most households particularly in the rural areas do not have cash on hand that will enable them to facilitate their decision.

The expansion and promotion of family planning service is an excellent opportunity in reducing too frequently births, early pregnancies and the subsequently associated risks. Strengthening the health care delivery system, increasing public awareness and organizing community support systems should be considered as a means to reduce such an incidence in the future. Likewise, family planning services have a far reaching impact in reducing maternal and infant mortality rates and must be an integral part of the Ethiopia's health care delivery system to achieve the goals set by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) within the given timeframe. These Goals concentrate in the reproductive age group 15 to 49 years. There is a significant gender disparity with a high infection rate among the female population compared to their male counterparts. The consideration of the fact that 85 percent of the Ethiopian population resides in rural areas and the highest prevalence is among the youngest population implies how the epidemic is threatening national development and the need for giving a serious attention to the issue (CORHA, 2010, p. 3).

Importance of Monitoring and Evaluation

UNICEF (2005, p. 3) states that to evaluate means "to ascertain the value or worth of," according to its Latin root. Knowing what difference development programmes are making motivates workers and their supporters to renewed effort.

Although evaluations may be retrospective, they are essentially forward looking with regard to their purpose. Evaluation applies the lessons of experience to decisions about current and future programmes. Good evaluation presents alternatives for decision-makers to consider.

Too often, evaluation is perceived as threatening; it should be constructive. For example, an evaluation can be tapped for developing human resources and improving management and planning capabilities. Evaluation results can be used in advocacy and fundraising efforts to obtain greater support from governments, private organizations, and the general public.

Concept of Monitoring

What is Monitoring?

As in many other specialist circles, professional jargon abounds, including the term ‘monitoring’. The ‘monitor’ is derived from its Latin word, which means ‘watches over and reminds’. Different authors have defined monitoring differently. However, there is some overlap and disagreement between the operational definition of the term and the definitions given by different authors as narrated below.

According to CRDA (2004, p. 2), monitoring is a continuous or periodic review of project implementation focusing on inputs, activities, work schedules, outputs, etc. it is designed to provide constant feedback to ensure effective and efficient project performance.

UNICEF (2010, p. 2) defines Monitoring is the periodic oversight of the implementation of an activity which seeks to establish the extent to which input deliveries, work schedules, other required actions and targeted outputs are proceeding according to plan, so that timely action can be taken to correct deficiencies detected. "Monitoring" is also useful for the systematic checking on a condition or set of conditions, such as following the situation of women and children.

Concepts of Evaluation

What is Evaluation?

As we just constantly conduct monitoring on a day-to-day basis, we also keep on evaluating. If we have thrown a party, we ask ourselves and the guests how it was, what they thought of the food, atmosphere, music, etc. Perhaps, the musicians hired for the event were fabulous, and can be recommended to others, whereas the food might have left something to be desired, suggesting that we should use a different supplier next time. Thus, we have carried out a minor evaluation, systematizing our experiences for future use. However, we do not write anything down, and we may not ask the opinions of a representative cross-section of party-goers. Had we done so, the majority might not have been so upbeat about the music. The difference between small and ongoing day-to-day evaluation and a project evaluation is that the latter seeks to approach the issues as systematically and objectively as possible (DPOD, 2009, p. 35).

UNICEF (2003, p.2) defines evaluation as a process which attempts to determine as systematically and objectively as possible the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact of

activities in the light of specified objectives. It is a learning and action-oriented management tool and organizational process for improving current activities and future planning, programming and decision-making.

According to Christian Relief and Development Association (CRDA) (2004, p.3), evaluation is a systematic periodic review of the performance, effectiveness, and impact of a project. It focuses on making judgments on the value, outputs, and impact of the project.

Shapiro (2004) as cited by Mark (2009) emphasizes the fact that evaluation compares the project impact with what was set to be achieved in the project plan and further argues that evaluation examines how the project impacts were achieved and what went wrong or right for the benefit of organizational learning. The emphasis of this approach to evaluation is on impact of the project after it has been implemented. It does not recognize mid-term evaluations that tend to look at the continued relevance and sustainability of the project and the impacts that the project has even had before its completion.

The Relationship between Monitoring and Evaluation

According to UNICEF (2003, p.3), both monitoring and evaluation are management tools. In the case of monitoring, information for tracking progress according to previously agreed on plans and schedules is routinely gathered. Discrepancies between actual and planned implementation of the project are identified and corrective actions taken. When findings are used to monitor the development results (effects, and impacts), it is sometimes referred to as *ongoing evaluation*.

Evaluation is more episodic than monitoring. It is facilitated by monitoring but utilizes additional sources of information. Many such sources are identified during project reviews when there is a need to understand why inputs did not lead to planned outputs. Evaluation focuses on specific questions related to effectiveness and impact in order to influence future programmes or services (CF/EXD-IC, 1986, p. 8).

Research Design and Methodology

Research Design

In this study, descriptive survey research method was used. This method was used to describe project monitoring and evaluation practices and challenges of CORHA member NGOs in Addis Ababa. In line with this, the research method enables us to describe the phenomena at hand.

Target Population and Sampling Technique

In this study, CORHA based-NGOs and their officials in different offices were considered as units of study. Out of the total of 77 CORHA based NGOs that have office in Addis Ababa 23(30%) of the NGOs were contacted. In line with this, the NGOs were contacted on the basis of stratified random sampling technique on the ground that these NGOs have different concentration areas such as Family Planning, Adolescence Reproductive Health, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), Maternal Child Health Care, and Harmful Traditional Practices. In addition, this technique allows the student researcher to gain unbiased estimates of the population's characteristics. Besides, semi-structured interviews were held with two senior officials of the CORHA in Addis Ababa. The purpose is to assess in-depth data about monitoring and evaluation practices and challenges of the case organizations and to obtain confirmation.

Table 1 – Distribution of Strata in CORHA-Based RH/FP Project in Addis Ababa

No	Strata	Population	30% (sample)
1	Adolescence Reproductive Health	13	4
2	Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)	32	9
3	Maternal Child Health care	8	2
4	Harmful Traditional Practices	2	1
5	Family Planning	22	7
Total		77	23

Source: CORHA, 2010, Project documents.

Once the units of study or analysis (NGOs) were classified into five strata, the student researcher was then used systematic random sampling. The total number of NGOS which were included in this study can be represented by N – this is, the number of NGOs would be included in the sample by n. In the study, the sampling fraction that was used to select every member of the sampling unit or element which is represented by K can be calculated as follows:

Thus, $K = N/n = 77/23$

Where, study population size, $N=77$; n is sample size which is equal to 30% of 77 which is 23. Therefore, $K=77/23$ in which $K=3$. Every 3rd of the NGOs in the list was selected as a member of sample until the desire sample size was met. In addition, there was a random start between 1 and 3 in the sampling frame.

Types of Data Collected

In order to obtain relevant data and to achieve the above-stated research objectives, the student researcher collected both primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected from CORHA based-NGO's officials as well as project officer of the CORHA's Secretariat Office. Further, the secondary data were collected from relevant books, published and unpublished materials, web-based files, and files downloaded from the Internet were used to secure additional data.

Tools and Procedures of Data Collection

In order to collect the relevant data for this study, the student researcher used structured questionnaires and interview guide/protocol for primary data collection. Structured questionnaires were distributed to respective samples of CORHA-based NGOs' officials. Qualitative data were gathered using individual in-depth through probing with the help of interview guide to triangulate the quantitative data gathered which focused on gathering information related to the research questions considered. In addition, to supplement both quantitative and qualitative data collected and some of the findings, secondary data were collected from documentary analysis of the NGOs, from M & E related books, manuals and other documents through document analysis techniques.

Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were first verified, organized, tabulated, and analyzed as per the research questions and objectives. In order to facilitate this process, the data was further analyzed using SPSS Version 17.0 for computerized analysis and accurate outputs for further interpretation which help make sound conclusions and generalizations possible. The analyzed data were edited, presented in tabular and other statistical methods like mean, percentage, standard deviation and others were used. Furthermore, qualitative data that were obtained through semi-structured interviews and using open-ended questions described in the structured questionnaire. To qualitative data analysis, the data on interviews were elaborated and narrated to analyze them using categories of themes and thematic analysis in order to triangulate the findings of the quantitative data analysis.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

This part of the paper presents data analysis, major findings, interpretation, and their discussions in the light of previous and related empirical studies. The data are presented under the following themes, namely, profile of the respondents, types of project implemented, M & E capacity building, primary sources of data for M & E, frequency of M & E data gathered, systems designed for quality of data collected, report dissemination mechanisms, M & E indicators used, challenges faced during M & E implementation, availability of M & E expertise, sound project organization, inter-link between various activities of the project, deviation from the implementation plan designed, estimation of resources, specific cost standards, and availability of adequate funds in order to present empirical evidence to those questions investigated that the survey sought to answer.

As qualitative data were gathered using in-depth interviews, qualitative data which focused on major themes related to the research questions. Accordingly, the qualitative data generated from the two CORHA's officials (i.e. Monitoring and Evaluation Program Officer and Population/RH Advocacy Program Officer) are presented in this part of the paper.

General Characteristics of the Respondents

In the study, the respondents were profiled using areas of operation. Table 1 shows the profile of the responding NGOs in terms of the nature of projects they have been implementing.

Table 2 - Projects Implemented by the NGOs

No	Type of projects implemented	N (23)	%
1	Family Planning (FP)	16	53.3
2	Adolescence Reproductive Health (ARH)	13	42.3
3	Maternal Child Care (MCH)	8	14.0
4	Harmful Traditional Practices (HTP)	2	1.0
5	Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)	22	71.3
Total		*61	

*N.B Each of them has the possibility of running more than one project.

Source: Own survey outputs, 2011.

Table 2 illustrates that Projects on Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) were found to be the most frequent interventions on those sampled Organizations. Out of the total sample organizations involved in this study, 22(71.3%) of them were involved in implementing projects

related to STIs prevention and treatment. This can be explained by the fact that the governments and other donor agencies have given huge emphasis and then pledged higher resources for prevention and controlling of STIs, particularly HIV/AIDS and mitigating its impact.

Among those projects on RH sector, Projects on Harmful Traditional Practices (HTP) were to be given lower emphasis which accounted for only 2(1.0%) of the organizations that had been engaged in this area of intervention. This can be attributed to the fact that the majority of the NGOs have been operating in urban areas where the Harmful Traditional Practices (HTP) are not a significant problem. According to the Demographic Health Survey (2005), harmful traditional practices like female genital cutting (FGC), feeding butter for the newly born baby, etc. are not significant problems as that of the rural parts of the country.

Table 3 - Organizational Responses on their Capacity Building

S/N	Questions Asked	Organizational responses (%)			
		Yes		No	
		f	%	f	%
1	Does your organization have separate M&E Department in place?	3	13.0	20	87.0
2	If “Yes” is the department has the necessary human resource?	0	0.0	3	100.0
3	If “yes,” what are the qualification/educational status of the M & E employees in the sampled NGOs?				
	Master’s degree and above	3	100.0	0	0.0
	Degree	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Diploma	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Below diploma	3	100.0	0	0.0
4	Does the department have fully functioning and sound M&E system in place?	0	0.0	3	100.0
5	Does the department having proper equipment like computers, data gathering and processing software’s and other necessary materials?	0	0.0	3	100.0

Source: Results of own survey, 2011.

As shown in Table 4, out of the 23 organizations assessed in the study, the following results were obtained about their capacity on M&E processes. A total of 20(87%) of the organizations responded that they had not had separate M&E Department. Only 3(13%) of the organizations had separate M&E Department. It shows that monitoring and evaluation practices have been neglected among the member NGOs in Addis Ababa.

Out of the sampled Organizations which had had separate M&E Department, all of them 3(100%) replied that their Department were found not to have the necessary human resources required for efficient M & E activities. Among those organizations which had claimed to have

separate M&E Department, a total of 3(100.0%) responded that their employees were found to be holder of master's degree and above in their respective professional qualifications. Even though there had been few member NGOs which had separate M&E Department, they were found to have sufficient number of qualified professionals. Despite the fact that the human resources the NGOs had had were limited, it was found to be imperative that their deployment on project activities were managed and controlled effectively. If this was the case, then the projects would have a chance of achieving their objectives set. The fact that those NGOs did not have a lot of human resources could be even additional reason which had compelled them to efficiently and effectively manage to implement the project activities in those NGOs successfully. This is one of the main functions of effective monitoring and control of projects.

Almost all 23(100.0%) of the NGOs involved in this study responded that their organizations had had no fully functioning and sound M&E system. Meanwhile, 3(100.0%) of the NGOs replied that their Department had not had proper equipment like computers, data gathering and processing softwares and other necessary materials for M & E purpose. This shows how monitoring and evaluation process, which is one of the pillars of successful organizations, are neglected and given lower emphasis.

Table 4 - Data Collection, Organization, Analysis and Interpretation

S/N	Questions Asked	f	%
1	In your organization, who are the primary source(s) of monitoring and evaluation data?		
	Project Beneficiaries	7	30.4
	Frontline project workers	0	0.0
	Key stakeholders in the area	0	0.0
	All these and other unstated sources	16	69.6
	Sub Total	23	100.0
2	What type(s) of monitoring data have been conducted in your organization in relation to RH?		
	Quantitative	12	52.2
	Qualitative	0	0.0
	Quantitative and Qualitative	11	47.8
	Sub Total	23	100.0

Source: Own survey findings, 2011.

According to the results depicted in Table 4, among the 23 sample organizations selected for this study, only 7(30.4%) of the organizations responded that their sources of monitoring and evaluation data had been project beneficiaries. The remaining, 16(69.6%) of the organizations

claimed that their monitoring and evaluation data sources had been key stakeholders in their areas of intervention and other unstated sources. Out of those organizations involved in this study, 52.2% and 47.8% of them claimed to collect quantitative and to use both quantitative and qualitative data as inputs for their M&E process indicators respectively. However, the NGOs still do not employ triangulated data collection methods and quantitative as well as qualitative data while implementing M & E program.

The major advantage of using both quantitative and qualitative data in monitoring and evaluation process is that the NGOs would be able to capture both qualitative and quantitative data that may enable them to make thorough analysis on their projects' progress and made sound decisions based on these inputs. Besides, some of the beneficiaries' satisfaction level, opinion of the key stakeholders, psychological and social achievements of the projects and unquantifiable outcomes and impacts of the projects were able to be captured by employing qualitative approach. Therefore, using quantitative and qualitative approach for M&E processes in the projects have several sound advantages. As clearly illustrated in Table 4, those responding NGOs which used both qualitative and quantitative methods in their M & E Programs were found to be lower than those Organizations solely collecting quantitative data for their M&E processes. According to USAID (2004, p.21), it is possible to use both quantitative and qualitative methods in a complementary way to investigate the same phenomenon. One might use open-ended, exploratory (qualitative) methods to investigate what issues are most important and to decide what language to use in a structured questionnaire.

Alternatively, one might conduct a survey and find unusual results that cannot be explained by the survey, but that might be better explained through open-ended focus group discussions or in-depth interviews with a subgroup of survey respondents.

Regarding frequency of M & E data gathering practice in the sampled NGOs, 15(65.2%) of the organizations gathered data every three months; while 5(21.8%) of them collected it every month. In addition, 3(13%) of the Organizations collected such data at the end of the project. This shows that the majority of the Organizations have collected data either every month or three months, which is important for collecting regular data for monitoring process and also assist in taking corrective measures sooner before unintended damage have been caused. Among 3 (13%) of the Organizations, the required data was collected from front line project implementation areas once per annum. This practice makes data analysis and interpretation very difficult and

might lead to project failure because taking progressive measures based on the findings of the M & E practice would not be applied on timely basis.

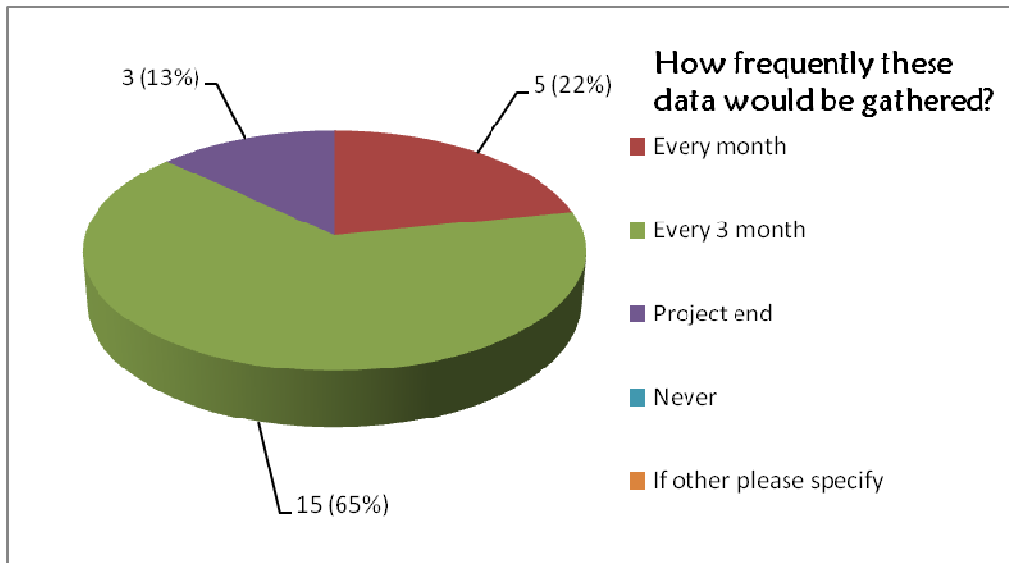


Figure 1-- Frequency of Data Gathering Practice

Table 5 - Data Quality Verification

S/N	Questions Asked	f	%
1	What type(s) of M & E system are in place to verify the quality of the data collected?		
	. Developing clear goals, objectives, indicators and research questions	17	74.0
	. Planning for data collection & analysis	3	13.0
	. Pre testing methods/tools	0	0.0
	. Training staff in M&E, data collection	3	13.0
	. Incorporating data quality checks at all stages	0	0.0
	. Other(s)	0	0.0
Sub Total		23	100.0

Source: Outputs of own survey data analysis, 2011.

As it is shown in Table 6, 17(74%) of the Organizations had a system of M&E in place to verify the quality of data and the primary tool that they had employed through developing clear goals, objectives, indicators and research questions for the project implemented. While 3(13%) of the sampled Organizations expressed that they had tried to boost the quality of the data collected for M&E process through planning for data collection and analysis. Only 3(13%) of the Organizations used holistic approach and system to verify the quality of data at all stages.

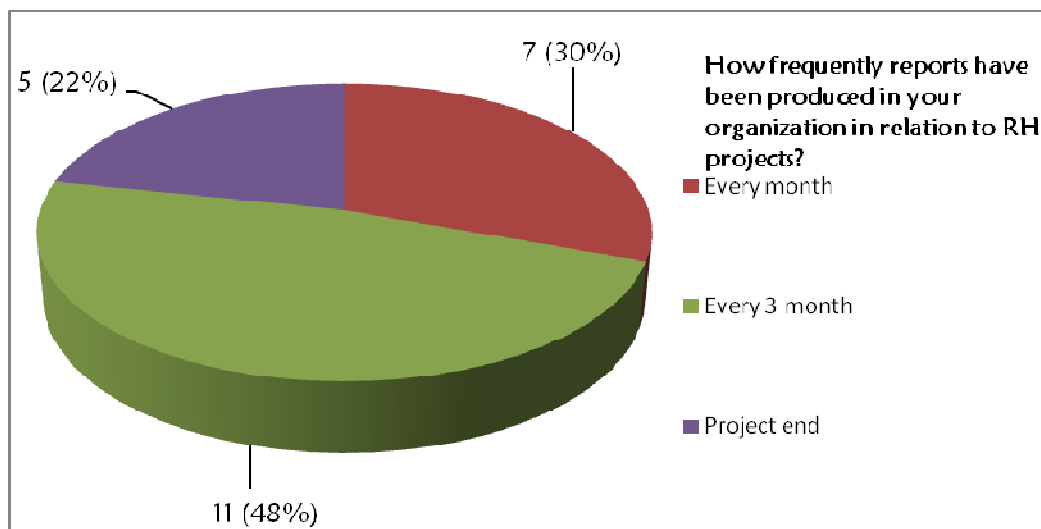


Figure 2--Frequency of Reports

As illustrated Figure 2, 7(30.4%) of the respondent Organizations produced reports every month. 11(47.8%) of the NGOs produced it every three months or quarterly progress reports. The rest, 5(21.7%) of the Organizations produced their reports at the end of each projects.

Table 6 - Report Dissemination Mechanisms

S/N	Questions Asked	f	%
1	Is there dissemination mechanism or is the report produced on RH projects under implementation in the Organization?		
	On notice board	0	0.0
	Newsletter Report	6	26.1
	Report to field staff	6	26.1
	No dissemination of Report	11	47.8
	Total	23	100.0

Source: Own survey, 2011.

Even though the majority of the NGOs responded that their reports had been mainly disseminated from field staff to the head office, there were still substantial number, 11 (47.8%) of the Organizations which had no any report dissemination mechanisms and system in place. Another 6(26.1%) of the NGOs even did not disseminate their reports to their respective field staff. Only 6(26.1%) of the NGOs disseminated their reports through newsletters that these Organization had been producing and disseminating them to the general audience. This indicates that those NGOs involved in this study would need to aggressively show their efforts to the

wider reproductive health community mainly to the donor groups and to their target beneficiaries about their achievements and successes. These would help them to mobilize further resources and support for their causes from key stakeholders and to promote transparency and accountability to their target groups. Finally, it also helps them to show their endeavours to the general public.

Table 7 – Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Indicators

S/N	Questions Asked	Organizational response					
		Yes		No		Do not know (DK)	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
1	Are the RH projects being implemented in your organization have clearly defined indicators?	16	69.9	4	17.4	3	13.0
1.1	If “yes”, are these indicators SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time bounded)?	12	52.2	4	17.4	7	30.4
1.2	If “yes”, how these indicators are verified or are there means of verification(s) designed for the RH projects implemented by your organization?	11	47.8	6	26.1	6	26.1

Source: Own survey, 2011.

Table 7 shows that 16(69.6%) of the NGOs replied that their Organizations had had clearly defined indicators. A total of 4(17.4%) of the respondents indicated that the member NGOs had not had clearly defined indicators. Another 3(13%) of them expressed that they had not known whether their Organizations had clearly defined M &E indicators or not. This information is very vital in evaluating the projects achievement at end, for example, to determine the total number of people reached by the project services. As this method was consistently used on projects, the project managers were in position to determine coverage of their services in terms of numbers of people reached. However, the big figures of the member NGOs were found not to have clearly defined indicators.

One of the critical steps in designing and conducting an M&E system is selecting the most appropriate indicators. Indicators should always be directly related to the project’s or program’s objectives. Consequently, the process of selecting indicators can be fairly straightforward if the project’s or program’s objectives have been clearly presented in terms of defining the quantity, quality, and timeframe of a particular aspect of the program (SMART).

Even with well-defined objectives, however, the selection of evaluation indicators requires careful thought of both the theoretical and the practical elements (USAID, 2004, p.18). As to all other types of indicators, it is imperative to consider the degree of measurability of the indicators

as a key criterion when selecting which indicators to follow. Therefore, when defining each indicator, it is essential to pay attention to the time and cost necessary to collect the data, and the frequency with which these data could be obtained (EC, 2002, p.55).

Question 1.1 in Table 7 sought to determine whether or not the indicators are SMART amongst the sample NGOs to carry out their monitoring and evaluation activities. As depicted in the same table, 12(52.2%) of the responding NGOs indicated that the indicators used in M&E had been SMART. However, 4(17.4%) of the Organizations expressed that their indicators had not been SMART ones. Another figure, 7(30.4%) of them were found to be unaware of whether the indicators used had been SMART or not.

Consequently, about half of the member NGOs used M&E indicators for each project under implementation without any means of verification(s) designed for this purpose. Those NGOs selected for this study had used M&E indicators which were not SMART to facilitate the monitoring and evaluation activities and to crosscheck the outputs and the outcomes achieved in implementing those RH/FP Projects. In addition, a standard deviation of 0.902 implied a narrow variation amongst the respondents, which also indicated that the problem of designing and implementing the SMART indicators had been the common problem prevailing among NGOs selected for the study.

Question 1.2 in Table 7 sought to determine the means of verification(s) amongst the respondents to carry out monitoring and evaluation activities. As indicated in Table 7, 47.8% of the respondents replied that there had been means of verification(s). About twenty-six percent of the sampled member NGOs stated that there had not been any means of verification. The rest, 26.1% the respondents had no any idea on a means of verification. In the same vein, this finding of the study also clearly shows that how these NGOs have faced a challenge in designing suitable and reliable means of verification to carry out monitoring and evaluation activities on the projects they implemented. Moreover, a standard deviation of 0.850 implies that there has been a narrow variation amongst the respondents and then the problem is rampant.

The qualitative data generated further supported those findings of the study. The findings obtained from the interviews regarding key indicators in meeting the Organizations' targets. One of the sampled interviewees said that "due to the complex nature of their projects, standardized, but simple and practical system of M&E had not been in place."

Indicators (“Objectively Verifiable Indicators”) describe the project’s objectives in operationally measurable terms (quantity, quality, target group[s], time, and place). Specifying Objectively Verifiable Indicators (OVIs) helps the Organizations to check the viability of objectives and forms the basis of the project monitoring system. The OVIs should be measurable in a consistent way and at an acceptable cost. Sources of verification are documents, reports and other sources providing information that makes it possible to check the indicators.

In addition, indicators should be independent of each other; each one relating to only one objective in the Intervention Logic, i.e. to one of the overall objectives, to the Project purpose or to one result. Indicators at the level of the results should not be a summary of what has been stated at the activity level, but should describe the consequences. Often, it is necessary to establish several indicators for one objective, if the single indicator does not provide a full picture of the change expected. Together, these will provide reliable information on the achievement of objectives. At the same time, the trap of including too many indicators should be avoided (EC, 2002, p. 54).

In addition, the measurement and interpretation of the OVIs should be identical if they are determined by different persons, i.e. that different persons using the indicator would obtain the same measurements. This is more easily done for quantitative measures than for those that aim at measuring qualitative change. The OVIs should already be defined during project identification and appraisal, but they often need to be specified in greater detail during implementation when additional pieces of information is available and the demands for monitoring become apparent. Care should be taken to ensure that the OVIs for the RH/FP Project purpose - the Project’s “centre of gravity” - do in practice incorporate the notion of ‘sustainable benefits for the target group’ (2002, p.55).

Table 8 - Challenges Faced By NGOs during M&E Implementation

S/N	Questions Asked	N	Mean	SD
1	The report is accessible for the key stakeholders and the general public.... the organization is willing to share them	23	3.52	0.947
2	There are tools developed in the organization for gathering monitoring and evaluation data in RH Projects implemented by the organization	23	3.74	0.689
2.1	If “there are” , the instruments or tools developed are standardized and tested for specific purpose	23	3.22	1.126
3	There is a system for data storage and management process in relation to RH Projects	23	3.30	1.063

4	Does there a database or software to assist the data organizing, analysis and interpretation process?	23	1.13	0.344
5	The project beneficiaries participate in the M&E process of the RH Projects	23	3.57	1.121
6	The beneficiaries will get the completed report of each projects	23	2.70	0.974
7	Baseline data for each project had been gathered and analyzed thoroughly before each project was designed and implemented	23	3.35	1.152
8	Evaluation studies would be conducted for each project	23	3.83	0.650
8.1	The beneficiaries fully participate in this evaluation studies	23	3.35	0.935

Source: Outputs of descriptive data analysis of own survey, 2011.

Table 8 shows that the mean score for the report is accessible for the key stakeholders and the general public, the organizations willingness to share them to be 3.52. This implies that the report has not been accessible for key stakeholders. While the standard deviation is found to be 0.947 which indicates a narrow variation that, in turn, implies the problem is still the same amongst the member NGOs in the study.

Question 2 in Table 8 sought to determine the tools developed in the NGOs for gathering monitoring and evaluation data in RH Projects implemented by the Organizations. As illustrated, the mean score was 3.74 which showed that there had been tools developed in the Organizations for gathering monitoring and evaluation data in the Projects. However, the standard deviation, 0.689 implies a narrow variation amongst the respondents and there are few NGOs which have not developed tools for this purpose in the Projects.

Among those Organizations which responded earlier there had been tools for M&E data gathering, the mean score was found to be 3.22 which indicated the tools were standardized. Besides, the standard deviation 1.26 implies a wide variation. It shows that there have been some variations among the respondents in that some of them may not standardize the tools on any projects but others may standardize the tools on some of their projects.

In the survey, the sampled NGOs were also asked if their respective Organization would have a system for data storage and management process in relation to RH Projects. The mean score was 3.33 which showed that there had been a challenge regarding a system for data storage and management process. However, the standard deviation 1.063 shows that there exists a wide variation. Generally, this finding indicates that there has been variations among the responding NGOs with regard to the issues under investigation (i.e. some NGOs have no system on any projects but others have a system for storing and managing the data generated for the purpose of M&E).

Question 4 in Table 8 sought to determine if there is a database or software to assist the data organizing, analysis and interpretation process or not. The mean score equal to 3.13 is interpreted to mean that this method is not used by the respondents. Based on this empirical value, those NGOs do not have any system of data storage and management. The standard deviation of 0.99 implies a small variation among the respondents, meaning that all organization involved in this study have either weak database or software to assist the data organizing, analysis and interpretation process in their organization or they don't have database or software at all.

Table 8 shows that the mean score for question of whether or not the beneficiaries have participated in the M&E process of the RH Projects is to be 3.57. This finding implies that the Projects' beneficiaries have been inconsistently participated in monitoring and evaluation activities of the sampled NGOs. The standard deviation of 1.31 implies a wide variation between the respondents concerning whether or not a database or software was available in the NGOs to assist the data organizing, analysis and interpretation process in the M&E system. The implication of this finding is that the beneficiaries have been mostly considered them only as a source of monitoring and evaluation data without any meaningful input.

Participatory evaluation goes further. Not only does it encourage beneficiaries to voice their views or gather information; it also entails assisting community members to analyze data themselves and to plan actions to improve their situation as well (Feuerstein, 1986; Rugh, 1986). UNICEF has assisted such community self-help efforts. Supporting local communities to design, implement and evaluate their own activities has many advantages. Self-help efforts may be more sustainable and have greater impact than others, because the people themselves are convinced of their value and assume decision-making responsibility. Training community leaders in evaluation can strengthen their ability to plan and carry out development activities (Feuerstein, 1986 cited in UNICEF, 2006).

According to the European Commission (2002:13) the stakeholders likely to be most important for the project have been consulted; and target groups and other beneficiaries have been identified. They have expressed their interest and expectations, the role they are willing to play, the resources and capacities they may provide, also in a gender-differentiated way. The other stakeholders have expressed general support for the likely objectives of the project. Conclusions are drawn on how the project could deal with the groups.

Question 2 in Table 8 sought to determine whether or not the beneficiaries will get the completed reports of each projects. With a mean score of 2.70, this practice was inconsistently done by the responding NGOs. The standard deviation of 0.97 implies a narrow variation among the sample NGOs; whereas some NGOs share the report of each projects to their target beneficiaries. Some others have never shares any report to their beneficiaries.

When selected sample Organizations were asked whether or not their respective organization would have baseline data for each project which had collected and analyzed thoroughly before each projects designed and implemented. The mean score was found to be 3.35 implying that this practice had never been done and the mean score with a standard deviation of 1.52 implies a wide variation in the practice of conducting baseline survey among the sampled NGOs. It shows that few member NGOs have claimed they conduct baseline survey to generate baseline data.

Regarding the question on whether or not he beneficiaries fully participate in the evaluation studies, the study came up with mean score of 3.35. This value indicated that the respondents had not allowed the project’s beneficiaries to fully participate in the evaluation studies. While a standard deviation of 0.935 implies a small variation among the respondents. Therefore, the majority of the sampled Organizations which have implemented the CORHA-based Projects do not allow their respective beneficiaries to fully participate in M&E activities of the Projects. In other wards, there is no community participatory M&E practice in those NGOs in Addis Ababa.

Table 9 - Challenges related to the Implementation of Monitoring and Evaluation

S/N	Asked questions	Mean	SD
1	There is a lack of expertise	4.35	0.885
2	There is sound project organization	3.48	1.082
3	There is inter-link between various activities of the project	4.26	0.449
4	There is continuous anticipation of deviation from the implementation plan	3.17	0.717
5	There is a comprehensive time plan for various activities	4.17	0.576
6	Estimate meticulously the resources required for each period to realize the time plan	3.83	0.833
7	There are specific cost standards	3.96	0.870
8	Adequate funds are available	3.83	0.388

Source: Own survey, 2011.

Availability of M&E Expertise

Question 1 in Table 9 sought to determine the respondents’ opinions on the level of availability of monitoring and evaluation expertise amongst the sampled NGOs. The mean score for this

variable was found to be 4.35 which could be interpreted to mean that the expertise had not been available amongst those NGOs. However, a standard deviation of 0.885 implies a very narrow variation amongst the responding Organizations. Lack of adequate monitoring and evaluation expertise or capacity of M&E among the local NGOs is one area that has been highlighted by several scholars. Monitoring and evaluation requires specific skills and expertise such as monitoring and evaluation design skills, particularly log frame design, indicators setting (both qualitative and quantitative), design of data collection instruments, including questionnaires, and focus discussion guides (d'Aeth, 2002; Gibbs et al., 2002 cited in Mark, 2004).

Kelly and Magongo (2004 cited in Mark, 2004) noted that skills such as advanced data analysis, conducting focus group discussions, and qualitative indicators setting were found to be very scarce amongst the local NGOs in the study. The local NGOs may not be in position to procure the required types of M&E experts which, in turn, implies that these areas that have required these skills are not well-staffed. Hence, monitoring and evaluation are not effectively performed in the NGOs which participated in the study.

Thorough interviews were also held on how the organization provided training or technical assistance, specifically in the area of research, monitoring and evaluation. The CORHA-based Organizations were found to give training and development in relation to monitoring and evaluation issues. However, the findings of the study in this regard show that most of the NGOs under investigation have had serious problems on shortage of the required monitoring and evaluation expertise.

Sound Project Organization

Question 2 in Table 9 sought to determine whether or not there is sound project organization amongst the NGOs to carry out monitoring and evaluation activities. Table 9 shows that the mean score was 3.48 which could be interpreted to mean that the NGOs had faced a challenge to carry out sound monitoring and evaluation activities on the projects they implemented. These Organizations did not have sound project organization. In addition, a standard deviation of 1.082 implied a wide variation amongst the respondents. Thus, there are few NGOs which have had sound project organization.

Besides, all of the interviewees said:

CORHA does not have a documented monitoring and evaluation strategy in that this Organization is not a project implementing Organization. The Organization mainly

focuses on coordination, networking and advocacy issues. The nature of their projects is really difficult and not suitable for designing concrete and specific strategy document to assist the monitoring and evaluation process.

Inter-link between Various Activities of the Project

Question 3 Table 9 sought to determine opinion of respondents on the inter-link between various activities of the Project amongst the NGOs. The above table shows that the mean score for this variable was 4.26. This value means that the Projects are not inter-link between various activities amongst the NGOs. However, a standard deviation of 0.449 implies a very narrow variation amongst the respondents. One can deduce that some NGOs have had Projects which are not inter-link between various activities.

Continuous Anticipation of Deviation from the Implementation Plan

Question 4 in Table 9 sought to determine how often the respondents carried out continuous anticipation of deviation from the implementation mid-term (interim evaluations) of the projects they implemented. The variable had a mean of 3.17, implying that this practice was not done by the respondents. The standard deviation of 0.717 implies that there was a minimum variation amongst the respondents with the majority of them had not carried out mid-term evaluations. This means that the member NGOs have not been in the position of continuous anticipation of plans in order to make necessary measurement on a timely basis.

Comprehensive Time Plan for Various Activities

The mean score for comprehensive time plan for various activities was found to be 4.17 which implied that these comprehensive time plans had not been used on the projects implemented by the member Organizations. However, a standard deviation of 0.576 denotes a wide variation amongst the respondents. It implies that there are some NGOs which have had comprehensive time plans for various activities in the Projects being implemented.

The student researcher also collected qualitative data on the monitoring protocols (forms) for keeping track of the status of the programme activities and services delivery. One of the key informants stated:

They [the sample NGOs] have monitoring protocols in its efforts to standardized monitoring and evaluation among members. CORHA in collaboration with Family Health International (FHI-Ethiopia) has developed different record keeping and reporting

formats. CORHA has also been encouraging the members and the partners in the use of these recording and reporting formats. Most of the member organizations that have had Program on Service provisions use these formats.

Estimation of Resources

Question 6 in Table 9 sought to determine the estimation of resources amongst the respondents to carry out monitoring and evaluation activities. As depicted in Table 9, the mean score of this variable was found to be 3.83 which implied that the NGOs had faced a challenge in meticulously estimating resources required for each period to realize the time plan and to carry out M & E activities on the projects they implemented. In addition, a standard deviation of 0.833 implied a narrow variation in their responses in that some NGOs reported that they had not had adequate finance for this purpose.

Specific Cost Standards

The study further sought to determine opinion of respondents on the specific cost standards amongst the NGOs. Table 9 indicated that the mean score for this question was found to be 3.96. This means that the projects haven't had cost standard amongst the NGOs. However, a standard deviation of 0.87 implies a very narrow variation amongst the respondents. Thus, the member NGOs have serious problem on cost standards.

Cost estimates must be based on careful and thorough budgeting. They will have significant influence over the investment decision at project appraisal and, subsequently, on the smooth implementation of the project if the go-ahead is given. Again, the list of activities should be copied into an input and cost schedule pro-forma. Each activity should then be used as a checklist to ensure that all necessary means under that activity are provided for. Then, the means necessary to undertake the activities must be specified. It will probably be necessary to aggregate or summarize the cost information. Project costing should allow the allocation of cost to the different funding sources so that each party can become clear about their respective contributions (EU, 2002, p. 59).

Once total costs have been calculated, it is important to remember that the implementing agency will be required to meet any recurrent cost of maintaining service provision beyond the life of the project. Recurrent cost may be covered (fully or partly) through increased revenue that has been generated through project activities. Whether or not this is the case, it is important that the net

recurrent cost implications of the project are clearly specified so that the future impact on the implementing agency's budget can be determined (2002, p. 60).

Availability of Adequate Funds

Question 8 in Table 9 sought to determine the availability of finance amongst the respondents to carry out monitoring and evaluation activities. The mean score for this variable was found to be 3.83. This figure clearly indicated that the NGOs selected for this study had faced huge challenges in finding inadequate financial resources to carry out M&E activities for the projects they have been implementing. In addition, a standard deviation of 0.388 implies a narrow variation among the respondent organizations which is a clear signal for the severity of the problem.

Without adequate finance, the NGOs would be forced to scale back on some of the monitoring and evaluation activities they were supposed to carry out. This would have a huge implication on the quality of the projects under implementation by these NGOs. Therefore, the outputs, outcomes and impacts created by these projects cannot be verified which, in turn, quest the very existence of these NGOs in Addis Ababa.

Regarding the fundraising, those key informants interviewed expressed, "CORHA does not have strategy for mobilization of resources. Their fundraising schemes were limited only to grant proposal development. There was an attempt to introduce cost sharing for services provided by CORHA; however, this has not been efficient and strong so far."

Finally, the survey considered issues related to the system which overseeing the member NGOs regarding proper utilization of funds allocated.

CORHA does not have mandate to oversee proper utilization of funds among the members. Nevertheless, with the financial support from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), CORHA did get the opportunity to manage sub grantee assistance. As per the memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed among CORHA's project implementer organization and CORHA, CORHA oversees and monitor both financial utilization and program implementation [CORHA has been conducting monitoring visits to operational sites of its members. Here an emphasis is given to the sites of SIDA sub grantees. Joint monitoring visit with project implementers was also made to monitor the progress of activities in the light of the predetermined supervisory plan).

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation

Summary

This part of the paper brings the research to a close by returning to the issues which raised established in beginning. It summarizes the project monitoring and evaluation practices and challenges, and draws conclusions from the discussions and results in the previous parts. In this part, we briefly describe some thoughts and open issues which should become the avenues to be explored for future developments about and around monitoring and evaluation.

At the start of the study, it was stated that the aim of this research was to assess monitoring and evaluation practices and to forward possible solutions. The preliminaries about the challenges and potential problems faced by CORHA members NGOs in these subjects were first summarized. Following these, review of related literature was entertained thoroughly in the second part of the paper. Here, the concepts, principles, practices and challenges of monitoring and evaluation were discussed a bit in detail.

Finally, qualitative and quantitative data were gathered and analyzed to give an answer for the research questions set to be answered in this research and forward some recommendation to assist CORHA's member NGOs to improve their monitoring and evaluation process and other related endeavours.

Almost all NGOs in this study have very weak monitoring and evaluation capacity. Only few (3) NGOs have separate M&E Department, even those who have separate Departments were not adequately organized. Their Department doesn't have proper equipment like computers, data gathering, and processing software(s) and other necessary materials.

As far as CORHA's member NGOs data collection, organization, analysis, and interpretation processes are concerned; all the Organizations involved in this study had claimed to use around 52.2% of quantitative data and 47.8% of both quantitative and qualitative data as inputs for their M&E processes. Some of the Organizations have system in place to verify the quality of data generated. Besides, the majority (73.9%) of them were found to verify the quality of data through developing clear goals, objectives and research questions. However, most of the NGOs were found to be weak in planning adequately for data collection and analysis. Therefore, they don't have data quality assurance tools.

Concerning the availability of finance amongst the respondents to carry out monitoring and evaluation activities, this showed that the mean score was found to be 3.83 which clearly indicated the NGOs selected for this study had faced huge challenges in finding inadequate financial resources to carry out monitoring and evaluation activities for the projects they have been implementing. In addition, a standard deviation of 0.388 implies a narrow variation among the respondent organizations which is a clear signal for the severity of the problem.

Regarding sound project organization amongst the respondents to carry out M&E activities, this research found out that the mean score was 3.48 which indicated the NGOs had faced a challenge. The findings also documented that the project organization had not been sound to carry out monitoring and evaluation activities in the projects they implemented. Moreover, a standard deviation of 1.082 implies the existence of a wide variation amongst the respondents which, in turn, shows that there are few NGOs which have sound project organization.

Besides, CORHA does not have a documented monitoring and evaluation strategy for the umbrella Organization is not project implementing organization. The Organization mainly focuses on coordination, networking and advocacy issues. The nature of their projects is really difficult and not suitable for designing concrete and specific strategy document to assist the monitoring and evaluation process.

As to the level of availability of M &E expertise, the findings of the survey document that the expertise has not been available amongst the NGOs. However, there is no as such wide in terms of M &E expertise amongst the members of the CORHA in Addis Ababa. In summary, the selected NGOs are mostly weak in their overall monitoring and evaluation practices but they have faced some problems and got challenged by them.

Conclusion

The study has revealed that the monitoring and evaluation practices carried out and challenges faced by the NGOs implementing Sexual and Reproductive Health Projects in Addis Ababa. The study findings show that the projects implemented by the NGO have not effectively monitored and evaluated. In addition, the same NGOs have serious constraints and limitations on project organization, collection of baseline data, and making available funds for M&E coupled with lack of expertise in the area.

By way of conclusion, the member NGOs of CORHA does not have fully functioning system for data collection, organization, analysis, storage and dissemination. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the member NGOs are not in position to successfully monitor and evaluate their projects efficiently and effectively by designing appropriate system for data collection, organization and interpretation.

Inaccurate baseline data that the NGOs have used to design their projects is another problematic issue. This was raised by the respondents. Designing a project using inaccurate baseline data would make the project defective and, hence, monitoring and evaluation inaccurate and flawed. Based on this fact, the CORHA member NGOs should set accurate baseline data.

In the end, monitoring and evaluation is a new concept amongst the NGOs. Consequently, they need some training in order to be able to carry out it. The majority of those NGOs lack the knowledge and skills in the use of the tools that the donors prescribed. In addition, the NGOs loss trained personnel due to high staff turnover. This could be associated with lack of financial resources to adequately compensate the staffs that go for better payment.

Recommendation

Based on the major findings and conclusions drawn from them, the student researcher recommends the following specific measures to be taken by CORHA and/or NGOs:

- They should design appropriate and efficient monitoring and valuation system. Those NGOs which are implementing RH Projects need to have sound monitoring and evaluation data capturing instruments, software (like SPSS and EPI INFO) in place, should need to have properly trained human resource in the area of statistics, demography or related field of specialization to manage these processes. Besides, these NGOs must develop M&E system to check whether accurate monitoring data is collected and submitted monthly or quarterly and/or on timely basis. They have to assure how collected data is summarized, analyzed and produced in reports at specific time period if there is a system for data storage and management.
- The Organizations should have to assure whether or not monitoring data is utilized by project staffs and managers at different levels to review and update work plans and to track project progresses.

- The NGOs should develop their human resources and other expertise in the area of project monitoring and evaluation. There should also be trained and efficient human resources in place to manage the overall M&E processes in the Organizations which are involved in the implementation of the RH Projects.
- As monitoring and evaluation processes require huge resources, donor agencies should allocate the required amount of funds for the NGOs' monitoring and evaluation activities and build their capacity to do so.
- Project target beneficiaries, influential individuals, and key partner organizations (which have stakes in the project areas) should have to participate in the NGOs' M&E processes and to make their monitoring and evaluation process participatory through consultation and collaboration with all these. In addition, they should determine what is to be monitored and evaluated, how monitoring and evaluation is to take place, including identification of indicators. These Organizations should then do the analysis of the data and assess the performance of the Project and be able to generate guidance on how to proceed with the project so that every key stakeholder that has a stake may know what has been performed in the processes.
- It is vital and sounds strong if the M&E system in the respective NGOs is developed based on the overall organizational strategy and plan which should have been stated in detail in their three or five year strategic plan. Above all, the strategy plan should be prepared as an integral part of the project's work plan and design.

REFERENCES

- Aune, B. (2000). Logical framework approach and PRA – Mutually exclusive or complementary tools for planning? *Journal of Development in Practice*, 10(5), 687-690.
- AUSAID. (2006). M and E framework good practice guide. Sydney, Australia: Government of AUSAID.
- Birkmayer, J., & Weiss, H. (2000). Theory-based evaluation in practice: What do we learn? *Evaluation Review*, 24(4), 407-431.
- Chandra P. (2004). Project planning, analysis, selection, financing, implementation and Review. (Unpublished project document), New Delhi, India.
- CORHA. (2010). *Strategic Plan*. Addis Ababa: CORHA Office.
- Crawford, P. & Bryce, P. (2003). Project monitoring and evaluation: A method of enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of aid project implementation. *International Journal of Project Management*, 21(5), 363-373.
- CRDA. (2004). *Project implementation guide*. Addis Ababa: CRDA.
- Davidson, E. (2000). Ascertaining causality in theory-based evaluation, in Program theory in evaluation: Challenges and opportunities. In P. Rogers, T. Hasci, A. Petrosino, & T. Huebner (Eds.). *New directions for evaluation*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank.
- EU. (2002). *Project cycle management handbook*. Sussex, U.K.: ITAD Ltd. (Information Training and Agricultural Development), Lion House, Ditchling Common Industrial Estate, Hassocks, West.
- Gilliam, A., Barrington, T, Davis, D., Lascon, R, Uhl, G., & Phoenix, U. (2003). Building evaluation capacity for HIV prevention programs. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 26, 133-142.
- Kaplan, S., & Garret, K. (2005): The use of logic models in community-based initiatives. *Evaluation and Program Planning* 28, 167-172.
- McGill, K., & McGill, S. A. (2011). New Jersey Children's Behavioral Health Care Stem: Cross service delivery planning for transitional population of youth (ages 16 and 18+ years). (Article in press). *Journal of Evaluation and Programme Planning*. Retrieved from www.elsevier.com/locate/evalprogplan.
- Kelly, K., & Magongo, B. (2004). *Report on assessment of monitoring and evaluation capacity of HIV/AIDS organizations in Swaziland*. Swaziland: NERCHA.
- Mark, M. (2007). *Monitoring and evaluation practices and challenges of Gaborone based local NGOs implementing HIV/AIDS projects in Botswana*. Gaborone: University of Botswana.
- Martin, B. (1993). Peer review and the origins of AIDS: a case study of rejected ideas. *Journal of Bioscience*, 43(9), 624-627.
- McCoy, L., Ngari, P., & Krumpel, E. (2005). *Building monitoring, evaluations and reporting systems for HIV/AIDS programmes*. Washington, D.C.: USAID.

- OPOD. (2009). *Monitoring and evaluation manual*. Denmark: OPOD.
- PASSIA. (2011). Civil society empowerment: Monitoring and evaluation. Retrieved from www.passia.org/seminars/2002/monitoring.htm
- Reidar, D. (2003). The logical framework: An easy escape, a straightjacket, or a usefully planning tool. *Journal of Development in Practice*, 3(1), 57-70.
- Shapiro, J. (2004). *Monitoring and evaluation*. Johannesburg, South Africa: CIVICUS.
- Uitto, J.A. (2004). Multi-country co-operation around shared waters: Role of monitoring and evaluation. *Global Environmental Change*, 14, 5-14.
- UNICEF. (2005). *A UNICEF guide for monitoring and evaluation: Making a Difference?* Geneva: UNICEF.
- World Bank. (2004). *Monitoring and evaluation: Some methods, tools and approaches*. New York: The World Bank.
- Webb, D., & Elliot, L. (2000). *Learning to live: Monitoring and evaluation of HIV/AIDS programmes for young people*. London: SCF.
- Weiss, H. (2004). *On theory-based evaluation: Winning friends and influencing people. Evaluation exchange*. London, U.K.: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Welling, S., & Macdowall, W. (2000). Evaluating mass media approaches to health Promotion. *Journal of Health Education*, 13(1), 27-44.