

Institutional Factors affecting Integration of M &E in Capacity Development Programs among NGOs in Kenya

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DOI: 10.29322/IJSRP.13.10.2023.p14245
<https://dx.doi.org/10.29322/IJSRP.13.10.2023.p14245>

Paper Received Date: 17th September 2023
Paper Acceptance Date: 22nd October 2023
Paper Publication Date: 30th October 2023

Abstract: The integration of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) into capacity development initiatives is of utmost significance in ensuring the effectiveness and impact of these programs. Nevertheless, there is a limited body of academic work on this topic, leading to a dearth of understanding of the determinants of effective integration of monitoring and evaluation (M&E). Thus, the study answered the research question; What institutional factors are affecting the integration of M&E in capacity development programs and how do they impact the effectiveness of these programs? The present study was grounded on the theoretical framework of the Theory of Change (ToC) approach. The study employed descriptive research design and conducted in Kenya by purposively selected PELUM Kenya as the case study. The target population for the research was 56 organizations. The survey used stratified random sampling technique. The sample size was determined using Slovin's method giving 171 respondents. Questionnaires were employed to gather both quantitative and qualitative data in the context of Focused Group Discussions (FGDs). A preliminary investigation was conducted in order to assess the content validity. The assessment of the study instrument's reliability was conducted through the utilization of Cronbach's Alpha. The Alpha coefficient was determined to be 0.65. The study used descriptive statistics (Frequency, Mean, percentage and Chi square) and regression. The study showed that institutional aspects such as alignment with culture and effectiveness of leadership play a crucial role in successfully integrating M&E into capacity development programs. The study concludes that decision-making in terms of integrating M&E findings into capacity building programs, coherence of policies/strategies, and the strength of Monitoring and Evaluation system. The study recommends that various institutions consider the utilization of specialized technologies/methodologies for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E).

Key words: *Capacity development, Institutional factors, Monitoring and evaluation, M&E integration, Non-Governmental Organizations*

Introduction

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) play a vital role in capacity development programs since it offers valuable insights into their efficacy and impact. The incorporation of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) into capacity building initiatives has been more imperative in recent decades. This is due to organizations' efforts to ensure that their programs effectively achieve intended objectives and contribute to sustainable development in the long run (WHO, 2017).

On a global scale, the integration of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) into capacity building initiatives has been widely acknowledged and embraced by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international development agencies, and governments (Bamberger et al., 2009). These organizations employ monitoring and evaluation (M&E) methodologies to monitor the development of their programs, assess their impact, and make informed decisions on program design and implementation. According to Horton and Kraft (2017), there has been a notable improvement in the calibre of capacity development initiatives and a more efficient use of resources as a result.

According to a report released by the Africa Development Bank (ABC) in 2019, several organizations in Africa have placed significant focus on incorporating monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices into their capacity development activities. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and foreign development agencies operating in Kenya have made efforts to establish and

implement monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems. These systems are intended to facilitate the monitoring and evaluation processes of their capacity building initiatives. According to Kessy and Shirima (2013), the implementation of these approaches has resulted in enhanced transparency and accountability inside these programs, hence enabling them to deliver the anticipated outcomes.

In addition, the integration of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices has facilitated the identification of areas in need of enhancement and the implementation of necessary adjustments to organizational programs. As a result, this has played a role in fostering Kenya's enduring and sustainable economic development. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) play a crucial role in capacity building activities as they are vital in showcasing the effects of the knowledge and skills acquired via capacity development (Chen and Wang, 2015).

Despite the significance of monitoring and evaluation (M&E), several problems exist that impede the effective integration of M&E into the implementation of capacity building programs. Potential factors contributing to these challenges encompass institutional, implementation, inadequate organizational skills, and management concerns, such as the omission of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) results from decision-making procedures (Kirk and Reid, 2008). This study aimed to examine the factors associated with the integration of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) in capacity building programs, and to explore the possible influence of such integration on the efficacy of programs.

Participatory, Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) Kenya is an organization that prioritizes capacity building as one of its fundamental programs. The aforementioned entity is a nationwide network that operates as a membership-based organization, with 56-member Organizations. These organizations collaborate closely with various communities spanning over 42 counties within Kenya. One of the primary objectives of the organization is to strengthen the capabilities of its member organizations and the communities they engage with, in order to facilitate the organizations' efficient delivery of services in their respective areas of intervention. Nevertheless, the organization acknowledges in its latest strategic plan (2021-2025) that it has encountered challenges in successfully incorporating monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices into its decision-making processes. PELUM Kenya is a compelling case for study due to its exemplary portrayal of an organization in Kenya that endeavours to successfully incorporate monitoring and evaluation (M&E) into its programming, while simultaneously prioritizing capacity improvement as a central approach.

The integration of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) into capacity development initiatives is of utmost significance in ensuring the effectiveness and impact of these programs. Nevertheless, there is a limited body of academic work on this topic, leading to a dearth of understanding of the determinants of effective integration of monitoring and evaluation (M&E). Despite the recognized necessity of including monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in capacity building programmes, there is a scarcity of scholarly investigation about the particular factors that lead to effective integration, specifically within Kenya. The existence of this research gap hinders our capability to develop and execute efficient monitoring and evaluation principles within capacity development initiatives in Kenya.

Factors such as organizational culture, leadership support, financial resources, and technical expertise have been identified as potential determinants of successful M&E integration, but their relative significance and interrelationships remain insufficiently explored. Additionally, there is a lack of comprehensive understanding regarding institutional factors' impact on M&E integration within capacity development programs in Kenya, as well as limited exploration of the relationship between resource allocation and its influence on M&E integration. The role of staff technical expertise in facilitating M&E integration has also been under-researched. Thus, the study to answer the research question; What institutional factors are affecting the integration of M&E in capacity development programs and how do they impact the effectiveness of these programs?

Literature Review

The design, execution, and success of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) in capacity development projects are significantly influenced by institutional factors. The importance of the institutional environment on the quality and outcomes of monitoring and

evaluation (M&E) is emphasized in a study conducted by DeCorby et al. (2012). This study highlights that the organizational and stakeholder norms, values, and practices play a crucial role in shaping the effectiveness of M&E processes. An institutional climate that fosters support and appreciation for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) may have a positive impact on several aspects. These include enhancing the quality of data collection and analysis, promoting stakeholder involvement and participation, and facilitating the utilization of M&E findings for decision-making and knowledge acquisition.

Nevertheless, the absence of adequate institutional support for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) might impede its efficacy and restrict its ability to contribute to capacity development. According to the findings of Huber et al. (2015), the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems in many African nations exhibit tendencies of being deficient and disjointed, characterized by inadequate allocation of resources and a lack of political commitment towards their enhancement. Consequently, there is a deficiency in the involvement of pertinent stakeholders in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) programs, leading to subpar data quality and restricted utilization of M&E outcomes for decision-making and knowledge acquisition. This phenomenon has the potential to impede the effectiveness of capacity building activities in attaining their desired objectives and outcomes.

In order to effectively tackle these difficulties, it is imperative to enhance the institutional structure for monitoring and evaluation within capacity development programs. This may encompass the formulation of policies and guidelines that advocate for the integration of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) into capacity development initiatives, allocation of sufficient resources and provision of training for M&E professionals, and active involvement of stakeholders in the planning and execution of M&E initiatives. According to a research conducted by Welsh et al. (2005), the inclusion of stakeholders in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) endeavours has been shown to have several positive effects. These include heightened ownership and comprehension of the outcomes, improved accuracy of data, and increased use of M&E findings for decision-making and knowledge acquisition.

Furthermore, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2018) emphasizes the significance of institutional variables in facilitating the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) within capacity development endeavours. The analysis concurs with the notion that an institutional environment that provides support and places importance on monitoring and evaluation (M&E) may augment its quality and influence. Conversely, a dearth of institutional support might impede its efficacy.

The aforementioned research together affirms the significance of enhancing the institutional framework in order to enhance the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices. However, these studies fall short in explicitly elucidating the specific ways in which these elements influence capacity building activities. This study aims to investigate the influence of institutional elements on capacity building activities.

Theoretical Framework

The implementation and assessment of development programs are informed by a range of theories and methodologies, which serve as a structural basis for program formulation, execution, and decision-making. The selection of a theoretical framework is dependent on the specific characteristics, goals, and operational environment of the program (Kabonga, 2018).

The present study was grounded on the theoretical framework of the Theory of Change (ToC) approach. This method places emphasis on the understanding of the fundamental logic and assumptions of a program, as well as its projected effects. The process entails the delineation of the routes connecting inputs to outputs and effects, facilitating the identification of crucial areas for monitoring in order to evaluate the performance of a program (USAID, 2015). The incorporation of Theory of Change (ToC) and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is essential in guaranteeing the efficacy of capacity development initiatives. The program's anticipated processes of change are effectively elucidated by it, whilst monitoring and evaluation (M&E) enables the measurement of progress and assessment of impact (UNDP, 2018).

Prior research has indicated that the integration of a Theory of Change (ToC) framework into capacity development programs can significantly improve the overall efficacy of such programs. According to the study conducted by Kabonga (2018), the strategy employed in the project was considered to be beneficial for stakeholders as it offered important guidance and enabled project managers to make well-informed decisions. In addition, the incorporation of a Theory of Change (ToC) framework into monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes allows for the evaluation of the soundness of program theory and the identification of areas that may be enhanced (White, 2013).

Several previous studies conducted by Calvani (2003), Chen (2004), and USAID (2012) have emphasized the significant connection between the integration of a Theory of Change (ToC) approach and the implementation of impactful Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) capacity development programs. The program theory is effectively elucidated by this approach, whilst monitoring and evaluation (M&E) aids in the monitoring of progress and the quantification of impact. By employing both Theory of Change (ToC) and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) methodologies, organizations may assure the efficacy, efficiency, and good outcomes of their capacity development programs for the intended beneficiaries.

Although the theory of change (ToC) method is widely acknowledged for its significance in providing guidance for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes, it is crucial to note the existence of alternate views. Certain scholars contend that the Theory of Change (ToC) methodology may exhibit a tendency to oversimplify intricate development processes, disregard contextual intricacies, and largely depend on linear cause-and-effect presumptions (USAID, 2017).

Nevertheless, advocates argue that the Theory of Change (ToC) approach, when utilized with rigorous monitoring and evaluation (M&E) methodologies, offers significant contributions to understanding program efficacy, enhancing accountability, and enabling adaptive management (White, 2013). The authors contend that the Theory of Change (ToC) approach facilitates enhanced transparency and learning within capacity development projects by openly stating assumptions and outlining paths of change.

This study employed the Theory of Change (ToC) method as the conceptual framework to investigate the impact of technical competence on the incorporation of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) practices in capacity development initiatives in Kenya. The research sought to investigate the underlying assumptions and mechanisms through which technical competence contributes to program effectiveness, employing the ToC (Theory of Change) methodology. The incorporation of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) inside the Theory of Change (ToC) framework enables the evaluation of the soundness of program theory and the identification of areas that require enhancement, therefore guaranteeing the overall effectiveness of capacity development programs in Kenya.

Methodology

The study employed descriptive research design to characterize and assess the determinants of M & E integration in capacity development initiatives in Kenya. Specifically, the study used surveys and semi-structured interviews to collect data from the selected organizations. This research was done in Kenya and purposively selected PELUM Kenya as the case study. The target population for the research was the 56 organizations spread across the country working with PELUM Kenya to implemented capacity development initiatives in Kenya.

The survey used stratified random sampling technique. The target population was divided into distinct strata based on key sectors the network focuses on. In order to get an accurate sample, the study employed a multistage sampling technique. The sampling frame was structured according to the four zones defined by the PELUM Kenya zonation: Upper Eastern & North Kenya zone, West & Rift valley zone, Central & Nairobi zone, and Lower Eastern and Coast zone. The sample size was determined using Slovin's method, taking into account the total personnel of 300, as reported in the Network's Annual General Meeting (AGM) report.

$$n = N / (1 + N(\epsilon^2))$$

□ n is the sample size

□ N is the population size (300 in this case)

□ ϵ is the margin of error (expressed as a proportion, 0.05 for 5%)

Using this formula, if we assume a 95% confidence level and a margin of error of 5%, the sample size would be:

$$n = 300 / (1 + 300(0.05*0.05)) = 170.94$$

Therefore, a sample size of 171 was considered appropriate for the targeted population with a margin of error of 5% and a 95% confidence level.

Results and Discussions

In order to ascertain the primary institutional factors influencing the integration of monitoring and evaluation (M&E), the participants were requested to evaluate statements pertaining to their respective organizations. The objective was to get insight into the participants' perspectives and attitudes on their cultural alignment, leadership effectiveness, coherence of policies and plans, and the strength of Monitoring and Evaluation practices inside their respective organizations. The research revealed that certain aspects, such as the alignment of organizational culture, the effectiveness of leadership, the coherence of policies, and the implementation of robust monitoring and evaluation processes inside institutions, are crucial for the successful integration of monitoring and evaluation.

Participants were prompted to express their degree of agreement or disagreement using a five-point Likert scale, which encompassed responses ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." An extra option was provided for individuals who were uncertain, labelled as "N/A-I do not know."

Culture alignment-M & E prioritization in capacity development initiatives

The study aimed to evaluate if the institutions of the respondents place a high level of importance on the utilization of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices in their initiatives related to enhancing their organizational capabilities. The findings shown in Table 1 indicate a wide array of perspectives among the participants. A significant proportion of participants (60%) exhibited a high level of agreement, strongly asserting that their respective organizations place a heavy emphasis on the utilization of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in their capacity building initiatives. In contrast, a notable proportion of participants (27%), expressed a moderate level of agreement, suggesting a significant cohort that recognizes the significance of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in the context of capacity building, but without regarding it as their major emphasis. In addition, it is worth noting that 10% of the participants maintained a neutral stance, indicating a significant segment of the population that neither expressed agreement nor disagreement with the focus placed on monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

The inquiry pertains to the extent to which educational institutions prioritize the cultivation of knowledge and the ongoing enhancement of skills through monitoring and evaluation within capacity development initiatives. The analysis of the survey results revealed a strong unanimity among the participants. A minority of respondents (1.7%) expressed a partial disagreement about the perceived importance of learning and continuous development through monitoring and evaluation (M&E). Furthermore, a notable proportion of the participants, namely 4.1%, expressed a neutral viewpoint, indicating a considerable segment of individuals who were indecisive regarding their organizations' position on this issue. On the other hand, a considerable proportion (22.1%) expressed a moderate level of agreement, suggesting their acknowledgment of the significance of learning and advancement through

monitoring and evaluation, but without complete endorsement. A significant proportion of participants (71.5%) expressed strong agreement, indicating a firm conviction that their respective institutions really prioritize learning and ongoing enhancement through monitoring and evaluation in capacity building initiatives.

The results of the study underscore the varied viewpoints among participants in relation to the application of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in programs aimed at enhancing organizational capabilities. Although a substantial majority expresses strong support for the prioritizing of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) as well as the recognition of its significance in fostering learning and continuous improvement, a considerable percentage maintains a neutral stance or exhibits lesser conviction. The aforementioned insights possess significant value for policymakers, program managers, and stakeholders operating within the capacity development area. These findings may aid in the refinement of their plans and methods, thereby facilitating the successful utilization of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices inside their respective programs.

Table 1

Organizational Culture affecting M & E integration

practice	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
My institution prioritizes the use of M&E in capacity development programs	0.58%	1.16%	9.88%	26.74%	59.88%
My institution values learning and continuous improvement through M&E in capacity development programs	0%	1.74%	4.07%	22.09%	71.51%
My institution provides sufficient resources and support for M&E in capacity development programs	2.33%	4.65%	16.28%	35.47%	39.53%

Perception on Leadership role

To assess their perceptions of the role of leadership in utilizing Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) in capacity development programs. On a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree," participants were asked to designate their level of agreement or disagreement.

The survey results disclose varying perceptions among respondents regarding the clarity of guidance and expectations regarding M&E in capacity development programs from their institution's leadership. The majority of respondents (55%) strongly concurred, indicating a substantial endorsement of the leadership's role in providing explicit guidance and expectations for the use of M&E in their institutions' capacity development programs. 25% concurred in part, indicating that a sizeable proportion acknowledges a degree of clarity in guidance and expectations. Significant numbers of respondents (15.7%) remained neutral, indicating uncertainty,

lack of knowledge or experience, muddled perceptions, indifference, or simply no strong opinion regarding the leadership of M&E in Capacity building programs within their institutions.

Table 2 indicates a prevalent perception of the leadership's ability to empower staff to incorporate M&E into their work on capacity development programs. Only a negligible percentage (0.58%) of respondents firmly disagreed with the statement, indicating that very few believe that staff empowerment in this regard is lacking. Similarly, 2.3% were somewhat unconvinced, indicating a small but still limited number of skeptics. A sizeable percentage (12.8%) remained neutral. In contrast, 28% of respondents partially concurred, indicating a sizable proportion who recognizes some level of staff empowerment in their institutions. However, the majority of respondents (55%) firmly concurred, indicating a substantial consensus regarding the leadership's effectiveness in empowering staff to incorporate M&E into their work on capacity development programs.

In addition, the survey results disclose a variety of perceptions regarding the frequency with which leadership provides feedback on the utilization of M&E in capacity development programs. The majority of respondents (43%) firmly concurred, indicating a substantial consensus on the leadership's responsibility to provide regular feedback on the utilization of M&E in capacity development programs. On the other hand, 33% somewhat concurred, indicating a substantial portion that acknowledges some level of feedback from leadership. A sizeable minority (14%) remained indifferent, representing a sizeable proportion who neither concurred nor disagreed. Nonetheless, a small percentage (2,3%) firmly disagreed, indicating that a minority of respondents believe that leadership feedback is insufficient.

In general, the survey results cast light on the differing perspectives of respondents regarding the leadership's participation in M&E for capacity development programs. While a considerable majority acknowledges the leadership's role in providing clear direction, empowering employees, and providing regular feedback on M&E, a sizeable proportion remains neutral or unconvinced.

Table 2

Leadership perception on integration of M &E

	1	2	3	4	5	6
The leadership in my institution provides clear guidance and expectations for the use of M&E in capacity development programs.	0.58%	3.49%	15.70%	25%	54.65%	0.58%
The leadership in my institution empowers staff to incorporate M&E into their work in capacity development programs	0.58%	2.33%	12.79%	27.91%	55.23%	1.16%
The leadership in my institution provides regular feedback on the	2.33%	5.23%	13.95%	33.14%	43.02%	2.33%

use of M&E in capacity development programs	
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Key: 1-Strongly disagree, 2-Somewhat disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Somewhat agree, 5-Strongly agree, 6-N/A-I do not know

Effect of Organizational policies and strategies on M & E in capacity building programs

The objective was to determine the attitudes and perceptions of respondents regarding the degree of adaptability afforded by institutional policies and guidelines for adapting M&E approaches to specific program contexts in their respective organizations. The majority of respondents (44%) firmly concur, indicating a significant endorsement of the institutional policies and guidelines' ability to provide flexibility for M&E adaptation, as shown in Table 4. In contrast, 31% of the respondents somewhat concur, indicating some degree of flexibility. A sizeable proportion (18%) remained neutral, indicating a sizeable proportion of respondents who neither concurred nor disagreed with the statement, perhaps indicating ambiguity or a lack of clarity regarding the offered flexibility.

In addition, the survey data indicate a prevalent perception among respondents regarding the clarity of institutional policies and guidelines regarding the use of M&E in capacity building programs. A small percentage (1.2 %) disagrees vehemently, indicating that very few respondents believe the guidance is unclear. In contrast, the majority of respondents (55%) firmly concur, demonstrating strong support for the clarity of institutional policies regarding M&E in capacity building programs.

In addition, the survey results (table 3) indicate that respondents have differing perspectives on the frequent review and update of institutional policies and guidelines to support the incorporation of M&E in capacity building programs. A sizeable proportion (20.4%) remained ambivalent, indicating a sizeable number of respondents who neither concurred nor disagreed, perhaps reflecting uncertainty regarding the review and update of institutional policies and guidelines for M & E in capacity building programs. However, a majority of respondents (34%) strongly concur, highlighting support for the regular review and update of institutional policies and guidelines to facilitate effective M&E integration in capacity building programs.

The survey results provide valuable insights into respondents' perceptions of institutional policies and guidelines pertaining to M&E in capacity development programs. The majority of respondents strongly agreed that policies should be adaptable, that guidance should be clear, and that policies should be regularly reviewed and updated. This pervasive support suggests that stakeholders surveyed perceive institutional policies and guidelines as effective and supportive of M&E integration in capacity building programs.

It is notable, however, that a significant proportion of respondents remained undecided for each statement, indicating that further investigation and communication may be required to resolve concerns or improve understanding. There may be room for development in effectively communicating the policies and guidelines to stakeholders, elucidating their purpose and benefits, and involving stakeholders in the review and update processes, according to the neutral responses.

Table 3

Perception of policies and guidelines on effectiveness of M & E integration

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<https://dx.doi.org/10.29322/IJSRP.13.10.2023.p14245>

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	1	2	3	4	5	6
Institutional policies and guidelines provide flexibility to adapt M&E approaches to the specific context of capacity building programs	1.74%	4.65%	18.02%	30.81%	43.60%	1.16%
Institutional policies and guidelines provide clear guidance on the use of M&E in capacity building programs.	1.16%	4.07%	18.02%	29.65%	45.35%	1.16%
Institutional policies and guidelines are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure they support effective integration of M&E in capacity building programs	2.33%	11.63%	20.35%	29.65%	33.72%	2.33%

Key: 1-Strongly disagree, 2-Somewhat disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Somewhat agree, 5-Strongly agree, 6-N/A-I do not know

Perception on management decision on Use of M & E information

The survey sought to know the extent to which participants agreed or disagreed that their organization uses information from the M&E system to inform decisions in areas such as

- Decision Making
- policy formulation,
- planning
- Project impact assessment
- Sharing with other organizations/NGOs within the different sectors
- Project improvement

Table 4 below presents respondents' perceptions of how their organization uses M&E information to inform decisions across different activities. The responses are categorized into levels of agreement: Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Neutral, Somewhat Agree, and Strongly Agree. The findings reveal the distribution of opinions among participants regarding the integration of M&E data into decision-making processes.

Table 4
Use of M & E information

Category	Don't Know	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Making decisions	1.16%	1.16%	2.91%	16.86%	33.14%	44.77%
Formulating policies	1.74%	2.91%	1.74%	21.51%	36.63%	35.47%
Planning	1.16%	1.74%	1.74%	8.14%	31.98%	55.23%
Project impact assessment	1.16%	1.74%	2.33%	11.63%	25%	58.14%
Sharing with other NGOs in the sector	4.65%	2.33%	2.91%	18.02%	35.47%	36.63%

Project improvement	0.58%	1.16%	0.58%	10.47%	30.23%	56.40%
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Decision Making: The majority of participants (44.8 %) agree that their organization employs M&E information to make decisions. This demonstrates a high level of assurance in the capacity of M&E data to inform organizational decisions. Additionally, 33.1% concur somewhat, highlighting the significance of data-driven decision making.

Developing Policies: A sizeable percentage of respondents (36.6%) indicate that their organization is somewhat in favour of utilizing M&E data for policy formulation. This indicates a moderate degree of congruence between M&E data and policy decisions. Intriguingly, a sizeable proportion (21.5%) somewhat concur, indicating potential space for policy integration improvement.

Planning: A considerable majority (55.2%) of respondents strongly concur that their organization uses M&E data for planning. This finding demonstrates the close relationship between M&E insights and strategic planning activities. In addition, 40% of respondents partially concur, indicating a consistent trend toward data-driven planning.

A sizeable proportion (58.1%) of respondents firmly concur that their organization uses M&E information to assess project impact. This highlights the importance of M&E in determining the success of an undertaking. However, the proportion of respondents who somewhat concur (25%) is notable, suggesting a potential need for further strengthening the connection between M&E and impact assessment.

Sharing with Other Non-Profit Organizations: In this category, a balanced distribution of responses is observed. A sizeable proportion of respondents (36.6%) concur that M&E information is shared with other NGOs in the sector. This indicates a range of willingness to collaborate and share knowledge with colleagues.

Project improvement: A majority (56.4%) of respondents strongly concur that their organization uses M&E data for project improvement. This demonstrates a strong belief in the value of M&E insights for improving the performance of a project. Additionally, 30.2% concur somewhat, indicating a consistent trend toward utilizing data for improvement purposes.

The findings indicate a typically positive perception of the integration of M&E information into organizational decision-making processes. Strong agreement levels suggest that M&E data is seen as a valuable resource for making informed decisions across various domains. However, variations in response distribution across activities suggest that there may be opportunities to improve the utilization of M&E insights, particularly in areas where responses of somewhat concur are prevalent. There is room for continuous development and optimization in the utilization of M&E data to its utmost potential, particularly in activities where agreement levels are slightly lower.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study showed that institutional aspects such as alignment with culture and effectiveness of leadership play a crucial role in successfully integrating M&E into capacity development programs. The study concludes that decision-making in terms of integrating M&E findings into capacity building programs, coherence of policies/strategies, and the strength of Monitoring and Evaluation system.

The findings indicated that while a significant majority acknowledges the leadership's involvement in offering clear direction, empowering personnel, and delivering consistent feedback on M&E, a notable segment remains impartial or less convinced. The study also concludes that the institutional policies and guidelines as one of the elements that steer effectiveness of M&E integration in capacity building programs.

The study recommends that various institutions consider the utilization of specialized technologies/methodologies for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). There is need for continuous feedback loop facilitates the iterative enhancement of program design and implementation.

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