

# **Building M&E Capacity of Community-based Organization**

## **Asia Regional Evaluation Summit I-Pager**

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**Presenters:** Ana Coghlan, Program M&E Specialist, ACTion Consulting (for Pact)  
Chatwut Wangwon, Program Manager, Pact Thailand  
Jeffery K. Phillips, Resident Program Officer, International Republican Institute (IRI)  
Orlen Ocleasa, Deputy Chief of Party, ACDI/VOCA – USAID Project, Philippines

**Panelists:** John Callanta, USAID/Philippines  
Dennis Bours, SEA Change CoP Team Leader, Cambodia  
Kyaw Hlaing, President and Executive Director, Myanmar Survey Research

**Summary:** There were three presentations during this session by Pact Thailand, IRI, and ACDI/VOCA. Pact's model involves stakeholders throughout the M&E cycle from logic model development, design of data collection methods/tools, data analysis/interpretation, and data use. IRI's model employs Theory of Change and Theory of Action to develop M&E workplan; define indicators; and plan for process, strategy, and participatory utilization evaluations through consistent reviews and analysis of the set indicators. ACDI/VOCA used a joint M&E system assessment between ACDI/VOCA and its implementing partners as a tool to inform the needs and processes for data quality improvement.

**Highlights:** Several factors are critical to the success of M&E efforts and M&E capacity strengthening. Key factors highlighted were meaningful participation of implementing partners and relevant stakeholders; an on-going process for capacity enhancement that includes also follow-up on-site coaching and/or virtual support; ensure appropriate number of indicators to avoid data bottleneck and system collapse; careful selection of participants for capacity strengthening for continuity; and a well balance effort between activity and M&E implementations.

**Synthesis and Reflection:** Capacity building is a long-term process that should at least include four pillars: 1) trainings/workshops; 2) empowerment of individuals, communities, organizations; 3) continuous support; and 4) organic process of growth and development. There are urgent needs to promote understanding on M&E while changing the culture that M&E is not merely for donor accountability but also for the organizations' and individuals' own learning. Evaluators should act as facilitators to ensure participatory and learning processes. Involvement of local partners throughout the M&E process is also critical to ensure culturally appropriateness, ownership, and use of the data obtained from M&E efforts in intervention design and implementation in favor of results-oriented programming. It is, however, important for donors and capacity builders to bear in mind that local non-governmental and, especially, community-based organizations are dependent on short-term donor funding; and often face a challenge in setting a long-term strategy/plan. Many of them are (relatively) newly established with limited infrastructure and qualified staff. As it might not be realistic to try to equip all skill sets in all organizations, working in partnerships with M&E organizations/experts could be a more effective option for local solutions.

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