



Learning from M&E

Virtual Learning Event on Monitoring and Evaluation for National Adaptation in Pacific Small Island Developing States

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Paddy Pringle, Climate Analytics/SPREP



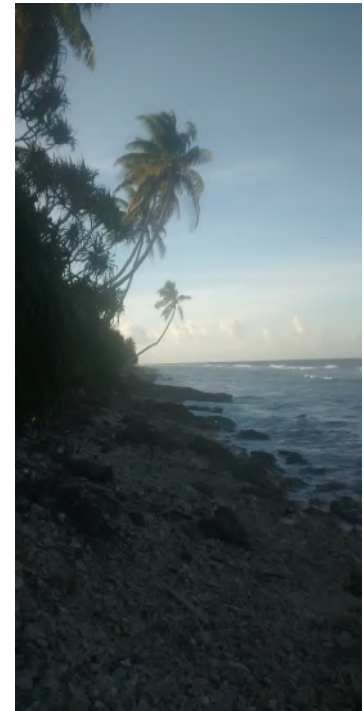
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Purpose of this session



- Why learning matters
- Why it is sometimes difficult to learn
- How can we use M&E to learn?



What does learning mean?



- O'Dell and Hubert (2011) refer to it as *new knowledge that is used to shape behaviour, as manifested in decision-taking or actions.*
- To make evidence-based improvements to systems and processes in the context of the urgent challenge of climate change.

- Learning is implied in M&E
 - The assumption that we assess and gather evidence in order to learn and act upon that learning.
- Growing appreciation of the importance and potential of M&E as a means of learning
 - It does not happen automatically, how we approach M&E can help or hinder learning
- Learning needs insights into how and why change occurred
 - This requires more than just indicators

- Significant, radical and rapid adjustments to ‘business as usual’ societal decisions are likely to be needed
- Urgency and cost do not allow us the luxury of a trial and error approach
- CCA is still an emerging field, effectiveness of adaptation policies and actions is poorly understood
- There may be winners and losers resulting from adaptation

- M&E approaches may be shaped by funders rather than decision-makers such as national authorities (OECD, 2015) or communities.
 - Creates tensions between accountability and learning objectives - emphasis on reporting and tracking agreed actions, rather than on reflection and learning
 - Pressure to spend



Barriers to learning through M&E



- A lack of incentives to learn (and disincentives to talk about failure)
- Only considering lessons that appear immediately relevant within the spatial, temporal and thematic boundaries of a given funding stream
- Staff turnover and losses of institutional memory
- Lessons not reaching reach decision-makers in a timely and accessible form.



- Paris Agreement (UNFCCC, 2015) acknowledges the role of ‘Monitoring and Evaluation and **Learning** from adaptation plans, policies, programmes and actions’ (Article 7, paragraph 9d)
- DFID’s BRACED programme actively designed **learning** into M&E approaches at the start
- Climate Investment Funds (CIF) have established the Evaluation and **Learning** Special Initiative



- Ensure purpose/objective of M&E is clear from the outset
 - Establish learning objectives
- Improve alignment between quantifiable metrics and qualitative narratives
 - Both important tools that should be complementary.
- What we need to measure for accountability may be quite different to what we need to learn.
- Consider multiple perspectives
 - Success may look different from different perspectives

How do we learn more effectively through M&E?



- Be prepared to learn the unexpected
 - Cast the net wide
- Look beyond the question ‘are we doing/did we do what we said we would’
- Speak to those who are not always heard
 - Consider performance from multiple perspectives, not just those set when the activity was designed
- Timeliness matters – can what you learn make a difference?



- Technical learning
 - Ways of improving projects and programmes e.g. irrigation techniques
- Social learning
 - Creating ways of learning through sharing knowledge and experience e.g. communities of practice
- Systemic learning
 - Improving systems, policymaking processes
- These might need to be measured in different ways

- Learning seems an obvious purpose of M&E but it doesn't just happen!
- Learning is vital for climate change M&E given the urgency and emergent nature of actions
- We need to make more time for learning in M&E and consider how we communicate lessons