# CHAPTER 2

Foundation Concepts

This chapter introduces and discusses the concepts that are central to the approach adopted in this text. Subsequent chapters elaborate on the groundwork established here. The five foundation concepts which collectively represent and support the approach to the design of a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework are depicted in Figure 2.1 and summarized in the text that follows.

The following key concepts inform the design of a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework:

1. **Multiple purposes for monitoring and evaluation:** The purposes served by monitoring and evaluation are likely to include tracking the progress of program implementation, identifying results, providing a basis for accountability to funders and stakeholders, facilitating learning, guiding program improvement, and informing decision-making processes.

2. **Informed by Results-Based Management (RBM):** The approach is informed by and incorporates RBM principles. These promote a dynamic and inter-linked relationship between planning and monitoring and evaluation.

Figure 2.1 Foundation Concepts

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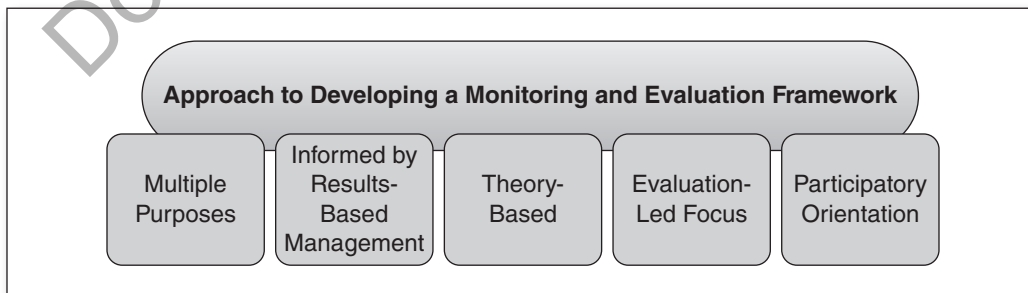
3. **Evaluation-led focus for monitoring and evaluation**: Evaluation represents the broader, overarching form of inquiry being undertaken and therefore provides a leading focus for the approach. Monitoring represents a subset of evaluation. Evaluation questions guide both monitoring and evaluation activities, and their organization within evaluation domains provides a focus for areas of investigation.

4. **Theory-based:** A theory-based approach clearly establishes anticipated causal relationships, identifies anticipated results from a program, and uses these theories to organize and guide the evaluation process.

5. **Participatory orientation:** The approach promotes the input and influence of stakeholders in the process of design of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and in the monitoring and evaluation activities that it contains.

Each of these concepts is discussed in turn in the following sections.

1. MULTIPLE PURPOSES FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The value of a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework lies not just in its development but in the use of the information that it generates to track the progress of implementation, to identify results and account for funding provided, to improve program performance and enhance service delivery, to support learning and program development, and to inform policy development and decision making. The purpose of this text is to provide guidance on developing a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework that incorporates and supports this full range of functions.

In practice, those developing a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework will need to consider the generic functions identified above as guidance but also consider the specific needs and expectations arising from the particular context. The political context in which evaluation operates is a reality, and its influence and effect on practice has been widely discussed (Datta, 2011; Weiss, 1983). The evaluator's role includes identification and mediation of a range of expectations that can arise from different stakeholders (Markiewicz, 2005). These stakeholders can be both external and internal to the program and its host organization. Issues of timing, feasibility, and resource availability will also influence the scope and focus of a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.

Most commonly, a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework developed for a program will aim to encompass a full range of functions. This reflects factors intrinsic to programs that are typically designed to address complex needs and problems and operate in sophisticated organizational contexts. Program design

is a highly skilled area and also subject to increasing levels of demand and scrutiny. This is typically reflected in program guidelines provided by funders and regulatory and governing organizations. In what Kettner, Moroney, and Martin (2013, p. 4) refer to as the "Era of Accountability," high expectations are directed to programs to measure and report on results while also justifying their cost effectiveness. These expectations clearly have an impact on arrangements made for monitoring and evaluation.

Maintaining an appropriate balance between functions in a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework requires knowledge of evaluation issues and practice and also discussion and negotiation skills in order to explore and accommodate different needs and focus areas. A clear understanding of what is entailed by the different functions of evaluation is a starting point. For example, while accountability is essentially concerned with being answerable to those with power over a particular context, this is not necessarily confined to providing information and explanations to funding bodies or internal management. This is typically characterized as *upward accountability*. Accountability requirements also need to be considered toward stakeholders such as constituents and members of organizations, toward beneficiaries and other stakeholders in civil society, and toward peers and similar organizations (Guijt, 2010).

Accountability pressures, particularly in an upward direction, are one of several factors that can skew the design of a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, placing an inordinate degree of emphasis on the identification of results. Other related pressures can derive from factors such as organizational promotion and even competition with rival organizations in relation to their results profile. While results are a critical area of organizational performance, it is important that other dimensions are not obscured or minimized. For example, monitoring and evaluation may pay limited attention to program quality. Instead, their perspective may be limited to examining "what differences the social program has made in the lives of its participants and not the experience of being in it" (Greene, 1999, p. 163). An appreciation of program quality yields insight into how the identified outcomes were reached, or in other words, the nature of the means that were used to achieve the ends. Furthermore, assessments of program quality need to consider and incorporate the diversity of different participant experiences and not be reduced to just one answer (Greene, 1999).

Learning is another dimension to which program monitoring and evaluation, and its guiding Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, can make a critical contribution. This includes deriving and using lessons on what does and does not work and what is applicable to similar programs. More methodological and process-orientated aspects of learning are also important and have intrinsic value. These include learning new ways of engaging with stakeholders, undertaking

ethical and effective evaluation practices, and developing capacities for reflection, research, analysis, and dialogue (Preskill, 2008). Tensions are often identified in relation to a program's ability to incorporate learning due to pressures of upward accountability. In this context, monitoring and evaluation systems may become too focused on measurement and grading performance, data systems are over-taxed, and limited time, capacity, and resources remain for a learning focus (Ebrahim, 2005). Attempts to resolve these tensions seek to reposition and reaffirm learning as intrinsic to accountability. Learning is viewed as necessary to ascertain whether a program had delivered as anticipated and is supported through practical steps such as timing learning events to feed into required reports (Guijt, 2010).

Similarly, the status of learning and its critical role within monitoring and evaluation processes is reinforced where organizational leadership promotes a culture. Such support from leadership needs to extend across the field of monitoring and evaluation. Where monitoring and evaluation are viewed as mechanisms for program improvement and betterment of service delivery, it is more likely to embrace all the functions and purposes indicated earlier. Effective leadership, ownership of monitoring and evaluation purposes and processes, evaluation capacity building, and adequate resourcing of the monitoring and evaluation system are highlighted in this text as important elements of successful evaluation practice.

Overall, it is critical that a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework is not constructed simply to support compliance with accountability requirements. Despite a range of challenges involved, the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework needs to reflect a range of purposes, many of which are generic, but which are also refined and given particular definition according to the specific context. Such an approach is highlighted in this text.

2. RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT APPROACH

Results-Based Management (RBM) is a management approach that has achieved wide currency in the public sector. It has drawn on management practices in the private and not-for-profit sectors, in addition to asserting its own level of influence in these contexts. In essence, RBM aims to gear organizational and program efforts to improving performance and the achievement of results. This emphasis and accompanying concerns with accountability have heightened expectations of what monitoring and evaluation should deliver. RBM is identified as part of a broad movement of public sector reform orientated toward outcomes and efficiency that had its inception in the 1980s. It has made an impact on many governments worldwide but with local differences and levels of

acceptance (Chouinard, 2013; De Vries & Nemec, 2013; McDavid, Huse, & Hawthorn, 2013).

RBM has been defined as a management strategy by which all actors "ensure their processes, products, and services contribute to the achievement of desired results (outputs, outcomes and higher level goals or impact)" (United Nations Development Group, 2011). The actors are expected to use the information and evidence generated to improve decision making, accountability, and reporting. RBM is strongly associated with a need to increase the use of reliable evidence as a basis for decisions made, as opposed to the conventions of "usual practice" or simply drawing the perceptions of a limited range of stakeholders. In this context, the RBM approach identifies a critical role for monitoring and evaluation to establish the evidence that is required. To promote the use of such evidence, it further advocates for breaking down traditional divides between planners and managers and those assessing organizational and program performance. In this manner, monitoring and evaluation are functionally integrated not only within a broader program or organizational setting but also within a shared commitment to achieving results.

A range of management approaches share a similar orientation to RBM. These include an early originator, Management by Objectives (Drucker, 1954) and the later Managing for Results (Drucker, 1964; Moynihan, 2006). Management for Development Results (MfDR) is prominent in international development contexts (Asian Development Bank, 2011; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] Development Assistance Committee [DAC]). All expound a cyclical management process involving result setting, identifying and assessing performance information using monitoring and evaluation processes, and returning findings on results to management to make further adjustments to organizational direction and commitment of resources. The interconnectedness that is inherent to this approach has been used as a guiding principle for this text.

The RBM approach (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2011) is represented in Figure 2.2. This management approach with its cyclical, iterative, and integrated orientation also typifies what is known as *performance management*. The term is used with this sense in this text in contrast to more general usage where it often appears as a descriptor for a range of efforts to focus the performance of an organization.

While few proponents of monitoring and evaluation practice question the value of an integrated approach between planning, monitoring, and evaluation functions, the RBM approach has been subject to considerable critique. The approach and its accompanying mind-set have been critiqued for displaying an "obsessive measurement disorder" (Natsios, 2010). Such a perspective is based on concern that the approach relies too strongly on quantification, affirming

Figure 2.2 Results-Based Management Life Cycle Approach
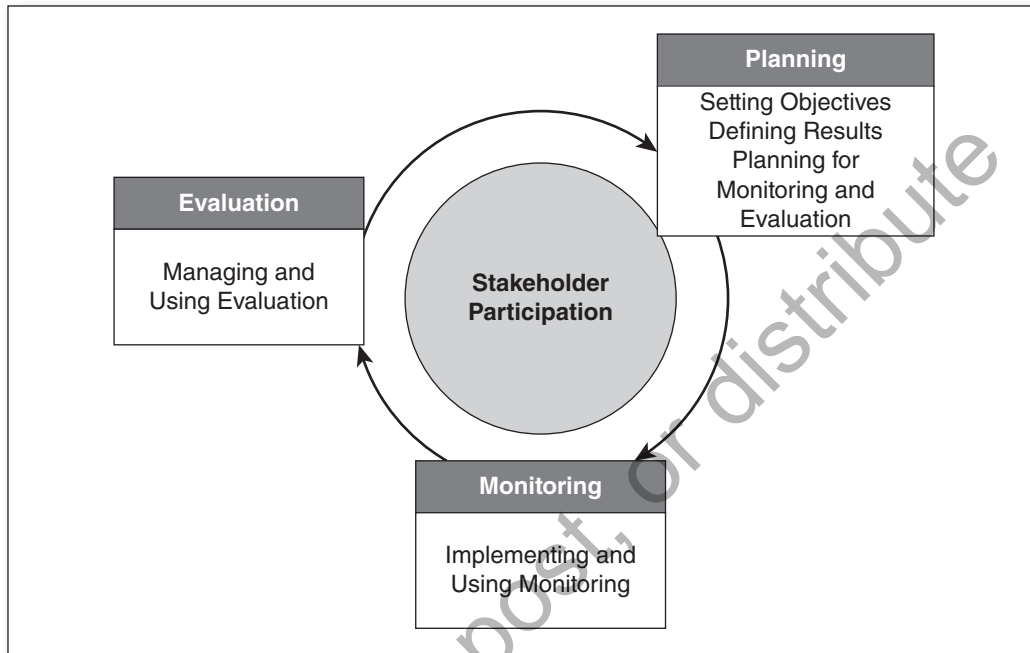
that which can be easily measured and discounting that which cannot (Eyben, 2013). An accompanying risk is to similarly discount the value of transformational initiatives that may be relatively less amenable to measurement. RBM has also been critiqued for reinforcing top-down perspectives where what is valued and measured is not in accord with the needs of implementing partners, operational personnel, and beneficiaries.

Exponents of social theories including complexity theory and systems theory have identified what they consider to be flaws in the linear, cause-and-effect type thinking that characterizes RBM (Hummelbrunner, 2010; Ramalingam, Jones, Toussant, & Young, 2008). A major evaluation of the implementation of RBM in the United Nations system identified that the approach had failed to identify how outcomes may be influenced by multiple actors and external risk factors. Its perceived formalistic perspective was seen to stifle the innovation and flexibility required to achieve those results (United Nations, 2008). Further concerns have identified RBM as adding to an administrative burden in contemporary organizations with a range of

procedural requirements and incompatible systems, rules, and regulations. Measurement systems have frequently been described as overengineered with too many indicators employed. Systems developed in this manner have commonly experienced many constraints in implementation, especially in developing country contexts with limited capacity for data collection.

Despite the critiques of RBM and its limitations, this text has proposed that the approach and its broader governing principles have merit. The key feature of the approach is to promote a culture of results and integration between the functions of planning, monitoring, and evaluation. This is in contrast to any prescriptive dictates about any particular methods selected to establish change and measures employed. In practice, there are a variety of different interpretations of what constitutes RBM. As Hatton and Schroeder (2007) state, "it is not easy to find two people who will describe RBM in the same way" (p. 428). In practice, RBM approaches can use a variety of different methods to establish change including quantitative indicators, theory-based evaluations, or impact evaluations, and complexity theory can also be used to understand complex change (Vahamaki, Schmidt, & Molander, 2011).

Although not without its challenges, many perceived issues with RBM are likely to derive from the competing paradigms that play out in its application rather than in its broader intent. Positivistic perspectives and strong concerns with accountability reinforce calls for use of particular methods. These include more scientific and precise measurement involving more singular use of quantitative data due to their perceived greater validity and reliability. Such perspectives are opposed by a constructivist or interpretive approach, which is concerned with learning in complex nonlinear environments by eliciting stakeholder voices using participatory methods (Armytage, 2011). Armytage (2011) observes that the dominance of a more positivistic paradigm "may explain the current trend toward performance-based models, which markedly emphasize monitoring at the expense of evaluation" (p. 274).

To avoid adoption of uniform approaches to RBM, this text suggests that it should not be regarded as a prescriptive or restrictive model but rather as a management approach or perspective that it is nuanced in its application. Key to the approach is the interlinked and balanced relationship between planning, monitoring, and evaluation; the incorporation of monitoring with its focus on tracking progress and more learning-focused evaluation; and a broad base of inquiry driven by evaluation questions. Such inquiry includes a key focus on identifying outputs, outcomes, and impacts that are what are typically formally identified as the results of an initiative. A range of other performance areas such as the appropriateness and efficiency of an initiative are also assessed to provide a broader view of performance.

Risks of adopting an RBM approach characterized by reductionist, linear, or positivist thinking are reduced where a range of methods and measures are used to establish change, including but not confined to use of indicators and targets. Both qualitative and quantitative perspectives are encouraged. The approach advocated of developing plans for monitoring and evaluation simultaneously promotes the adoption of evaluative thinking. This approach is outlined in greater detail in Chapter 6, "The Monitoring Plan."

3. THEORY-BASED APPROACH

This text adopts a theory-based approach and incorporates this into the formulation of a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. The approach is fundamental and widely applied in evaluation practice and is an important distinguishing feature. A theory-based approach can be broadly understood as developing models of how a program works, and through the practice of evaluation, examining the viability of the model, including its level of appropriateness and accuracy. Such an approach includes the process of theory making, theory testing, and any required readjustment of the theory as a result. As part of this process, the evaluator is required to identify and understand the assumptions that underlie anticipated changes brought about by the program. Different stakeholders may perceive how the program works and its assumptions differently, and the role of the evaluator is likely to involve mediating such differences and arriving at a consensus position (Chen, 2015).

One notion of theory-based evaluation that reflects the above schema, and resonates with the intent of this text, is that developed by Donaldson (2007) who identified three steps involved in undertaking his approach termed "program theory-driven evaluation science" (p. 10). These are

1. developing program impact theory,

2. formulating and prioritizing evaluation questions, and

3. answering evaluation questions.

Donaldson (2007) details how this involves a process of working with stakeholders and drawing on research to develop a common understanding of how a program addresses an issue, identifying questions, and then answering these questions using the most rigorous methods available given the context. While Donaldson's approach has received considerable support, the evaluation field

reflects wide variation in how theory-based evaluation is understood. As Coryn, Noakes, Westine, and Schroter note,

> even though a common vocabulary, definition, and shared conceptual and operational understanding has largely been elusive, theory-driven forms of evaluation have, nonetheless, increasingly been espoused by numerous evaluation scholars and theorists, practitioners and other entities as the preferred method for evaluation practice. (2011, p. 200)

While sharing a common basis in theory-led evaluation, this text uses two different concepts to delineate between more conceptual and more operational models of how the program operates. *Program theory* aims to make explicit the reasoning as to how and why a program's actions will produce the intended results. A *program logic* identifies and maps the intentional and sequential progression from a program's actions to its intended results over time. A program logic also categorizes a program's results according to a range of factors including timing. Both program theory and program logic, as discussed in Chapter 4, are used to generate evaluation questions and serve as reference points against which the actual program, as implemented, is compared.

Despite strong support for theory-based approaches to evaluation, there are also those who express reservations. Scriven (1991) has argued that if evaluators undertake development of program theory, this can deflect their focus away from the conduct of the evaluation itself. Scriven's view is that the task of developing a program theory should be completed by social scientists or program theory specialists, not evaluators. Furthermore, Scriven has argued that it is the role of evaluators to determine only whether programs work, not how they work (Coryn et al., 2011). In support of Scriven's position, some evaluators support "goal free" evaluation that focuses on what a program actually does rather than what it intends to do (Youker, 2013). In this case, they are likely to deliberately avoid identifying and learning about the stated objectives and anticipated outcomes of a program.

Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (2007) express related reservations stemming from the perceived complexity of program theory and the frequently inadequate time available for its proper development. The authors observe that "in claiming to conduct a theory-based evaluation, evaluators often seem to promise much more than they can deliver" (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007, p. 186). They express further concern that through developing program theory, evaluators may potentially usurp a program's responsibility for program design, that evaluators face a conflict of interest in evaluating a program theory that they themselves have

developed, and that evaluators tend to present an unvalidated and untested program theory as fact. Coryn et al. (2011) refer to a range of publications of Coryn where he identified some misplacement of priorities with theory-driven evaluation being more focused on evaluating the underlying program theory rather than the program itself. Furthermore, he expressed concerns that evaluation questions are generally not well connected to the program theory and that the approach is overly abstract with little guidance provided as to how to use it in practice.

Others have observed that despite claims to the opposite, program theory is frequently undertaken in a partial or simplistic manner. Rogers (2007) observes, for example, an evaluation using a program logic model may only investigate whether a particular result occurred and provide little or no associated explanation. Additionally, only some aspects of the logic may be investigated without explanation of the focus adopted. Such observations are consistent with that of Coryn et al. (2011), who made assessments of a wide range of practice examples of theory-based evaluation against identified principles of this approach. They found, for example, that program theories postulated were often narrowly formulated on the basis of existing scientific theory and did not incorporate stakeholder views to develop a comprehensive theory. Similarly, questions formulated on the basis of the program theory were often descriptive in nature, rather than evaluative questions that prompted investigation of the program's quality and value.

The approach used in this text, notes both a generally high value accorded to the theory-led evaluation approach, as well as cautions expressed regarding limitations in the manner in which it is implemented. A theory-based approach to evaluation offers considerable explanatory value in providing a model of how a program causes intended or observed outcomes and also at least partially focuses the investigations undertaken through the evaluation (Rogers, Petrosino, Huebner, & Hacsi, 2000). The position of this text is to strike a balance between a pragmatic approach to development of program theory and logic, while retaining adequate methodological integrity to meet their purposes. Care is taken that the approach is not overly complex and that development is not too time-consuming. Such a balance is further influenced by the need for user-friendly constructs that will be applied when engaging with stakeholders involved in contributing to the development of program theory and logic. While possibly open to critique for oversimplification, accessibility and participation are promoted amongst stakeholders and professionals charged with their use.

A further strength of the approach adopted in this text is the use of program theory and program logic to inform development of evaluation questions that otherwise may have been developed through a more random, free-form brainstorming process. The interconnection between these three constructs is

further demonstrated in the manner in which the evaluation questions lead logically to the development of a monitoring plan and an evaluation plan, which then inform methodology development, data collection, and analysis processes. This integrated approach is consistent with the notion of program theory-driven evaluation science as proposed by Donaldson (2007). It also aims to address limitations identified in the literature through providing clarity in how a theory-based approach can be planned and implemented as directed by a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.

4. EVALUATION-LED MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation are intrinsically linked and important functions, although they have evolved from different historical roots and theoretical foundations. In this text, an evaluative approach is used to establish the theory and principles that are used to guide both monitoring and evaluation processes. Such an orientation stands in contrast to many other traditional approaches to developing Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks, where the central focus is placed on monitoring inputs, activities, and outputs in order to track program implementation. In such traditional approaches, evaluation, if included, is positioned as an add-on to complement the centrality of monitoring activities. In many practice areas, and particularly in international development, what is termed *evaluation* is often more characteristic of monitoring. As a consequence, the emphasis on monitoring can overshadow the more "vexing challenges of evaluation" (Armytage, 2011, p. 262).

The central positioning of monitoring within a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework has occurred in part because monitoring has provided funders and managers with more tangible, immediate, and regular information than evaluation has been able to with its focus on producing in-depth, periodic studies. In view of this paradox, the question of whether evaluators should "engage in cross-fertilizing performance-management and monitoring efforts with evaluation thinking and techniques" has been raised and responded to by suggesting that evaluators "must elevate evaluative thinking and processes at the core of organizational operations" (Nielsen & Hunter, 2013, p. 121). In concert with this intent, this text has consciously adopted an approach where evaluation theory and principles are used to guide the nature of inquiry that takes place through program monitoring.

The issue of emphasizing monitoring at the expense of evaluation may also be attributable to an inherent tension that exists between the functions of accountability and learning (Armytage, 2011). In the earlier discussion, the many different purposes of a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework were

described as inherent rather than a set of options from which a few are chosen. In adopting this perspective, the artificial divide which overly equates monitoring with accountability and evaluation with learning will hopefully be reduced.

In order to adopt an evaluation-led approach, this text draws on a range of evaluation concepts. The following are critical to the text:

- Commitment to use of a participatory approach
- Use of theory-based approaches
- Development of evaluation questions to guide inquiry
- Framing areas of inquiry against the domains of appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability
- Use of mixed methods or pluralist approaches to guide methodology development and data collection
- Support for implementation-focused, formative as well as summative, evaluation processes
- Development of agreed criteria and standards for assessing program quality and value
- Assessment of fidelity of program implementation
- Identification of results with consideration to issues of attribution
- Development of useful and useable reporting processes with wide dissemination of findings
- Commitment to organizational learning and evidence-informed decision making
- Commitment to organizational evaluation capacity building

Underpinning the concepts, are fundamental evaluation values as identified and expounded by various professional evaluation associations. These include values such as ethical conduct, public interest, inclusiveness and diversity, cultural responsiveness, quality and competence, confidentiality and respect, integrity and truthfulness, accountability, and reflective evaluation practice (American Evaluation Association [AEA], 2004; Australasian Evaluation Society [AES], 2013). An evaluation-led approach is also reinforced through the use of evaluation questions to guide both monitoring and evaluation processes and the use of a wide range of measures beyond indicators and targets. The approach is also characterized by drawing on a common pool of methods, tools, and analytical skills that are then used within monitoring and evaluation functions according to need, timing, expertise, available resources, and feasibility. This approach avoids the development of parallel, unrelated systems.

Overall, this text affirms critical principles and theories that are derived from the field of evaluation. These apply to both monitoring and evaluation and

define their interrelationship. Sound monitoring is critical and has important inherent functions. It also provides information, drawn from regular data gathering exercises, that forms a basis for many evaluation processes. In this manner, the two functions complement each other and support the drawing of balanced and integrated assessments.

5. PARTICIPATORY ORIENTATION

Stakeholder participation is an important feature in both the process of developing a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and in determining its contents. The latter will involve choices made regarding the approach and methods adopted. The evaluation field is characterized by wide debate regarding what level and type of participation is optimal in practice. Recognizing the complexity of this area, and how levels of participation are partly determined by context, this text does not make dictates about this area. Instead, the approach taken is to advance the principle of encouraging as much participation as is possible and feasible and to reflect this in the development of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.

The definition of what participation means in monitoring and evaluation, and in social programs more generally, is open to many interpretations (Cullen & Coryn, 2011). It can be viewed, for example, as promoting the representation and voice of different stakeholders in concert with democratic principles (MacDonald, 1976). Stakeholder involvement enables the range of diverse, varied, and often competing perspectives and interests to be canvassed and represented. This reflects a democratic process where the diversity of values and interests in society are represented (Greene, 2006). It can also be viewed from a social justice perspective, which seeks to redress power imbalances, build capacity, and promote the levels of control of stakeholders who may be otherwise marginalized (House & Howe, 2000). In addition to the quest for democratic representation and social justice, the involvement of stakeholders is also undertaken with the aim of increasing the utilization of evaluation findings and placing value on participation as part of an empowerment approach to evaluation. Examples of approaches primarily based upon principles of utilization include Patton's (2008) utilization-focused evaluation where he proposes substantial consumer involvement in the evaluation process in order to increase the utility of evaluation findings. Fetterman and Wandersman (2005) put forward an approach where evaluation supports stakeholders and program beneficiaries, through evaluation capacity-building efforts, to evaluate their own programs in order for them to achieve self-determination and empowerment.

As demonstrated by the preceding examples, different social values and political perspectives underpin different approaches to participatory evaluation practice. A schema frequently used to characterize participatory practice uses a continuum that commences with no participation, moving through to provision of information, consultation, partnership with stakeholders, to control by stakeholders (Pretty, 1995). King (2005) emphasizes that while most evaluations involve some degree of participation, this does not necessarily make them participatory. A distinction can thus be made between the notion of "participation in evaluation" and what may be termed as "participatory evaluation." King (2005) notes that the importance of interacting with stakeholders to gain their perspectives and input has been widely recognized as important to good evaluation practice. However, her argument is that consultation does not in itself define participatory practice, with the latter requiring stakeholders to be actively engaged throughout the evaluation process in making decisions across a broad range of areas such as evaluation design, data collection, and dissemination.

Critical views, such as that of King (2005) observe that forms of participation in evaluation from lower levels of the continuum are misidentified and more token in orientation. Other perspectives, such as that of Cullen, Coryn, and Rugh (2011), use a more pragmatic and less absolutist schema to categorize participatory evaluation. They identify three major variables, these being (a) who maintains control of the evaluation process, (b) stakeholder selection for participation in different stages of the evaluation process (design, data collection, data analysis, etc.), and (c) depth of participation within different evaluation stages. Incorporating this schema within a survey of levels of participation in evaluation in an international development context, they identify wide degrees of variation, while also identifying that evaluators mostly retain control over the evaluation process. The authors also cite another survey undertaken in the United States/Canada context (Cousins, Donohue, & Bloom, 1996) that highlights comparable results.

A contributing cause to variations in levels of participation in evaluation is likely to be a tendency toward tokenism in incorporating participation in practice. This in turn reflects the status of *participation* as a buzzword (Cornwall & Brock, 2005), readily claimed as a defining characteristic of evaluation but often with little substance. Beyond this, there are many constraints and challenges in application, including levels of required knowledge and skill among evaluators, time and expense involved in implementing participatory practice, lack of familiarity or comfort with participatory methods among stakeholders, potential domination of participatory processes by some individuals over others, and resistance that may be experienced from certain stakeholder groups including funders, governing bodies, and powerful elites.

Despite such challenges, there are compelling reasons to promote the concept of participation in both the development of a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and the specific arrangements determined for monitoring and evaluation functions. The justification derives from political and values perspectives, in support of evaluative principles. Drawing on the work of Mayoux (2005), reasons for supporting participation may be summarized as follows:

Rights: Participation, particularly of marginalized people, is a human right and advances their empowerment.

Relevance: Participation of a wide range of stakeholders increases the relevance of evaluation questions and their alignment with the realities of peoples' lives and the policy context.

Accuracy: Participatory methods overcome the limitations of reliance on fragmentary individual views and thereby increase the reliability of the information collected and promote the generation of realistic recommendations.

Effectiveness: Involvement of the main stakeholders in the development of a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and evaluation planning builds awareness and ownership, increasing the likelihood of effective implementation and the use of findings and recommendations.

Process: Adopting participatory evaluation processes builds skills, capacities, and networks and thereby makes a contribution to social conditions, civil society, and empowerment.

Opportunities to promote participatory practice in both the development of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and in specific arrangements for monitoring and evaluation are likely to vary according to different contexts and the orientation of involved stakeholders. Furthermore, participation levels may vary at different stages of the process, allowing for different possibilities for participation at different times (Plottu & Plottu, 2010). While it is therefore difficult to be prescriptive, participatory practice is likely to involve strong cooperation or even partnership between the evaluator and stakeholders. There is likely to be a shift in power dynamics so that stakeholders are involved in influencing or making decisions in relation to both approach and process (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998). As highlighted above, there are many advantages in promoting such ends.

Chapter 3, building on the concept of stakeholder participation, outlines how this takes place in practice through the development of a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. Chapter 3 discusses concepts of stakeholder selection and mapping, the management of stakeholder relationships, and approaches to evaluation capacity building.