

Book Reviews / Comptes rendus de livres

Anne Markiewicz and Ian Patrick. (2016). *Developing Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. Paperback, 293 pages. (ISBN: 978-1-4833-5833-8)

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Monitoring and evaluation have distinct, yet complementary roles in program planning and development. As Markiewicz and Patrick state, “Monitoring generates questions to be answered in evaluation, and evaluation studies identify areas that require future monitoring” (p. 13). While there is an overlap in information sources, organization, and methodology, there are key differences between monitoring and evaluation (M&E) with respect to the main stakeholders involved, purpose, timing, and scope. The complementarity between these two processes often results in confusion about their roles, so either M&E are sometimes conflated or core steps can be missed entirely. When M&E are undertaken by organizations thoughtfully, programs are able to obtain a complete picture of their performance and impact.

In response to this common confusion, Markiewicz and Patrick’s *Developing Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks* provides a general introduction to M&E frameworks that are integral to designing a program evaluation plan. The text is organized into ten main chapters, which describe foundational concepts as well as the purpose and steps for creating and implementing an evaluation framework. Markiewicz and Patrick focus on program evaluation using a results-based approach. The authors describe a M&E framework as “both a planning process and a written product designed to provide guidance to the conduct of monitoring and evaluation functions over the life span of a program or other initiatives” (p. 1).

Chapter 1 begins by introducing the reader to M&E frameworks. Before delving into the steps, readers are presented with the core functions and overall purpose. The authors begin by importantly establishing the difference between monitoring and evaluation. Table 1.1 clearly distinguishes the main agents, interests, timing, scope, resources, measures, and reporting styles associated with each concept (pp. 13–14). Importantly, the authors describe the purpose of each activity, where monitoring is primarily concerned with support management and accountability, whereas evaluation is interested in program/policy improvement and learning in order to help inform program delivery and decision making.

Chapter 2 provides foundational concepts and roots the framework discussion in theory and a results-based management approach. Chapter 3 covers the

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first steps of evaluation framework planning, including scoping, stakeholder mapping and evaluation capacity building. Chapter 4 discusses program theory and program logic as a foundation for frameworks, and Chapter 5 reviews the development of evaluation questions. This background enables readers to identify gaps in existing program theory and ground their application of theoretical concepts. While program theory, stakeholder engagement, and evaluation questions are topics covered by most evaluation texts, the authors provide necessary detail on critical steps that are often overlooked. The design of evaluation questions is given an entire chapter, as the authors recognize that these preliminary steps form the basis of a program evaluation framework and are integral to developing a clear framework.

Chapters 6 and 7 review M&E plan steps, and Chapter 8 describes the collection, management, analysis, and synthesis of data to reach evaluation conclusions. Chapter 9 covers learning, reporting, and dissemination strategies, while Chapter 10 describes planning for implementation of M&E frameworks.

This text is not a comprehensive guide for data analysis and synthesis; however, this was not the authors' goal. The graphics throughout the book provide a helpful visual aid for students and serve as a reminder of the broader steps for developing a framework. Practice examples are embedded in every chapter to aid the reader in applying concepts. Each chapter includes useful, applicable tools such as tables and mapping diagrams. The authors provide fillable electronic templates of all mapping and planning tools in the online textbook that is available for download. Beyond the traditional evaluation plan steps, the authors remind readers of adjacent topics relevant to program planning and evaluation, including capacity building, that could be incorporated into the plan.

Creating frameworks is core to M&E practice, as frameworks anchor the overall plan and ensure that the steps logically contribute to the larger purpose. However, the framework development process is often not well communicated in a systematic way for users to practically apply. This text delves into program theory and logic to help ground readers, although it should still be considered an introduction to this area, as entire texts have been devoted to this topic for more advanced readers/evaluators. This book is clearly designed to support evaluators' practice, rather than provide a theoretical backdrop alone. A range of planning and other tools is provided, with complete examples for readers to follow through. Markiewicz and Patrick advocate for early planning in M&E, rather than end-of-program initiatives. The tools provided in this text are useful for a wide range of settings, as the examples and steps are general and thus applicable to multiple fields and settings. The authors fill a gap in the evaluation literature through their inclusion of monitoring as a distinct, yet complementary process to evaluation.

Overall, this book is a good introduction to M&E that can be used by many disciplines—include performance measurement, strategic planning, and policy development in a number of fields—and user types, whether students, program planners, policymakers, or seasoned evaluators. It is not a comprehensive guide

detailing data collection and analysis methods, nor is it meant for exploration of theoretical concepts underlying M&E frameworks. Rather, it is a practical guide and reference text useful for creating an evaluation plan or framework. Overall, this book establishes the importance of M&E for all programs for measuring performance, reporting results, supporting accountability, and promoting program development, delivery, and decision making.