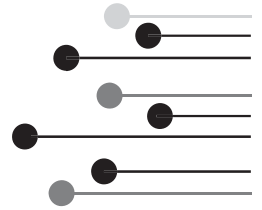


CHAPTER
1

M&E Training That Makes a Difference



One of the principles of adult learning we discuss later in the book is to respond to the “need to know” what, why, and how learning will happen. In short, adults learn better when they have a sense of direction of where learning is heading and for what reasons. That is largely the purpose of this introductory chapter. We expand upon the preface to clarify for readers what this book is about and how it can support monitoring and evaluation (M&E) training.

1.1 What is M&E Training That *Makes a Difference*?

As the title of this chapter suggests, this book was written to help readers provide M&E training that will make a difference. Readers familiar with the field of evaluation will know that “utility” is a core standard for program evaluation.¹ Likewise, we believe that if M&E training is to make a positive difference, it should be useful and used. In the vernacular of training, we refer to this as “training transfer” or the ability of trainees to apply learning from training after training has been completed. However, effective M&E training is more than just the ability of trainees to practice newly acquired learning; it makes a difference when it contributes to meaningful change at individual, organizational, community, and even societal levels.

1. For example, see the *Program Evaluation Standards* of the Joint Committee for Standards for Educational Evaluation (JCSEE, 2015).

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter readers will be able to . . .

- ✓ Identify key factors that contribute to M&E training that makes a difference
- ✓ Explain what is meant by systems thinking as it relates to M&E training
- ✓ Define M&E and results-based management
- ✓ Explain the reasons for the increased demand for M&E training
- ✓ Describe who may be involved in providing M&E training
- ✓ Describe the kinds of M&E training this book can be used to support

An underlying premise of the book is that *the more training helps people understand M&E, the more capable they are to become involved in, support, and own M&E practices*. This, in turn, contributes to more effective and sustainable programming and results that make a difference. However, for many people M&E is not the most exciting or appealing training topic, and some even feel threatened by and are reluctant to participate in such training. Having solicited people's expectations prior to M&E training, we have found it is not unusual for them to anticipate it to be boring or technically intimidating and to negatively associate M&E with terms like "required," "mandatory," "controlling," "judgmental," "bureaucratic," "unnecessary," and "burdening." More often than not, we find resistance to M&E training heightened for the very reason people need it: they do not understand and value M&E.

This book was written to help redress such potential obstacles, so people are instead stimulated by M&E training and motivated to learn. Therefore, a second premise of the book is that *M&E training can be delivered in an enjoyable and meaningful way that engages learners; such an approach helps demystify M&E so it can be better understood, appreciated, and used*. Among other things, this requires a sound understanding of adult learning principles and practical methods and activities to apply them in M&E training. In Chapters 4 and 9, we will take a look at adult learning and tips for effective training facilitation, and in Part 3 of the book we present a selection of activities to inspire active, engaging delivery of M&E training.

However, providing M&E training that makes a difference is more than just engaging facilitation during its delivery. It requires careful planning and consideration of the larger system or context in which M&E training is both provided and to be used. This includes a variety of different actors and factors specific to the training context, such as the individual learners and other training stakeholders, the identified needs and desired outcomes for M&E training, the training content, trainers and delivery system, and the available resources and support for training and its transfer.

It is not enough to design and deliver training that provides M&E learning, but it is also critical to identify key factors that can help or hinder its potential to be used. This requires understanding the demand and opportunity for M&E learning to realistically transfer after training into meaningful practice at the level of the individual, organization, or society. As Preskill and Boyle (2008, p. 453) underscore, "Unless people are willing and able to apply their evaluation knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward effective evaluation practice, there is little chance for evaluation practice to be sustained." Thus, another central premise for this book is that *if M&E training is to make a difference, it should be approached with careful attention to the larger system or capacity-building context in which training is provided*.

Finally, and as the book's subtitle conveys, a fourth premise for this book is that *M&E training should be approached in a systematic manner*. Therefore, it should be orderly planned to gather information and analyze training demand, needs, and resources and identify relevant objectives; and it should be designed to realistically achieve

and evaluate these objectives. However, a systematic approach does not imply the development and use of a rigid blueprint to be followed blindly. Such practice can inhibit experimentation and the ability of training to adapt and respond to changing needs and unanticipated outcomes (whether positive opportunities or challenging obstacles). A systematic approach will recognize the dynamic and systemic nature of the training context, which will vary and change over time.

M&E training is a substantial investment in time and resources, for those providing as well as those participating in training. Careful, systematic planning, implementation, and evaluation helps ensure the return on that investment so that M&E training makes a positive difference.

1.2 Systems Thinking for Training

As we have suggested, if M&E training is to make a difference it is important that it is conceptualized as systematic. It is equally essential to approach training as part of larger system. In short, training does not occur in isolation, nor is it the only way to build M&E capacity, but it should be planned and delivered as a coherent approach that considers other factors that affect M&E capacity building. In the following chapters in Part 1 of the book, we provide the conceptual background to understand various aspects of the larger system for M&E training. At this point, we provide a brief introduction to the concept of systems thinking to inform this discussion.

The origins of systems thinking as a field trace back to the first half of the twentieth century and are associated with several disciplines, notably biology and engineering. As its name implies, it seeks to understand complex phenomena, such as a training event or a program being implemented and evaluated, as part of a larger system composed of interdependent parts. Therefore, to understand any one part of the system, it is best to examine it in relationship to the other parts of the overall system rather than in isolation (Ramage & Shipp, 2009).

Systems thinking has evolved as an increasingly influential, interdisciplinary perspective. It has given rise to an assortment of approaches and methods to study a range of systems, whether physical, biological, social, engineered, or conceptual.² It has had an especially significant influence on the understanding of how people and organizations learn, and during the 1990s, systems thinking received much attention when it was identified by Peter Senge (1990) as the “Fifth Discipline” that makes the other disciplines work. Readers familiar with the field of evaluation will know the concepts of systems thinking has had a growing influence on the understanding and practice of evaluation (e.g., Hargreaves, 2010; Morell, 2010; Patton, 2011; Williams & Imam, 2007).

2. For instance, Williams and Hummelbrunner (2009) summarize nineteen different approaches and methods for using systems thinking in a range of areas, from evaluation to teaching.

Systems thinking has also had considerable influence on the field of training. During the 1970s, influential models for instructional design, such as Dick and Carey (1996) and Morrison, Ross, and Kemp (2011), popularized a more holistic approach to the entire training process and context. This systems emphasis has given rise to what is now commonly referred to as Instructional Systems Design (ISD), and a variety of models, frameworks, and approaches to guide training and other forms of education based on a systems approach.

In Part 2 of the book, we discuss ISD in more detail, presenting an approach to ISD for training consisting of five iterative phases commonly referred to in training circles as “ADDIE”: training **a**nalysis, **d**esign, **d**evelopment, **i**mplementation, and **e**valuation. For now, these key phases or aspects of training will help us highlight two overall features of systems thinking that will be useful for the chapters to come, specifically (1) M&E training as a system within a system and (2) M&E as dynamic and changing.

1. M&E training as a system within a system

For some readers, it may sound very abstract to consider M&E training as a subsystem embedded in and interdependent on larger systems. In fact, it can even be counter-intuitive for those accustomed to “scientific reductionism” to understand things in this way. In contrast to breaking down what is to be understood into constituent parts and examining their properties, systems thinking explores the properties that exist when the parts are combined and functioning as a whole. To help better understand this for M&E training, we will use a metaphor of a chef preparing a meal to help explain M&E training as a system within a system.

2. M&E training as dynamic and changing

Our chef metaphor helps convey a second and related aspect of systems thinking: Reality is complicated, with multiple factors interacting over time, which means things are constantly shifting and may not always go as anticipated. Such a dynamic understanding takes one away from linear notions of change. For example, in our metaphor there may be unannounced guests who arrive for dinner or unexpected incidents, such as a spilt wine. Similarly, during training a variety of unanticipated encounters may occur, from unexpected questions to disruptive behavior. Related, there may be unintended outcomes resulting from training; for instance, while M&E training may improve performance among staff, it may also result in higher levels of staff turnover because they are more qualified and leave the organization for better-paying positions elsewhere.

Systems thinking draws upon the fields of systems dynamics and complexity theory to help understand the important role of feedback loops and emergent behavior that can occur when individual yet interdependent parts of the overall system interact. It is important to understand that the feedback or influence of one actor in the system

A "Chef Metaphor" to Understand System's Thinking for M&E Training

Just as trainers need to analyze the larger training context for M&E training, so must a chef to prepare a meal. For instance, the chef needs to consider the purpose of the meal, that is, whether it is for an event like a wedding banquet or to be served on a regular basis, such as a cafeteria at a workplace. How many people will be dining and are there any individual dietary preferences or restrictions, such as people who are vegetarians, do not eat pork, or have food allergies? Obviously, it is critical to identify such preferences, whether they are because of culture, religion, or individual constitution. Other questions to consider include, is there a limited budget for the meal, an equipped kitchen, an appropriate facility to serve the meal, and will multiple cooks and servers be needed or will it be a one-person operation? These various considerations mirror those during training analysis to determine what is realistic for training needs and purpose, time frame and setting, number and profile of trainees, and available resources for training.

Next, the chef will need to design a menu with recipes for each dish based on dietary preferences and needs, the available time, produce at the market, cooking facilities, and equipment. Then there is the actual preparation and serving of the meal. Whether the dining experience is a white-tablecloth affair or a picnic with paper plates, the utensils, presentation, and serving of the food should be tailored accordingly. Likewise, servers should observe proper etiquette appropriate for the event. Attention should also be given to whether diners need directions to the dining area, where they should park their cars, the location of toilets, and so forth. Such considerations reflect those during the training design, development, and delivery, including the training curriculum,

development of instructional aids, practical logistics, and the actual training facilitation.

Finally, throughout and after the meal, it will be important to monitor and obtain feedback from the diners. Did they get what they ordered (well done or rare), was there sufficient variety and quantities of food, were dishes on time, at suitable temperature, and were refills forthcoming? In short, were diners satisfied? Some of this monitoring occurs during the meal by observant servers, provided by unsolicited comments (compliments or complaints) from diners, and can also be solicited from diners—for example, many restaurants have a comment book or feedback forms, and people are increasingly using social media, such as websites, to rate restaurants.



Jessie Mountfield

These last considerations highlight the importance of monitoring and evaluating during and after a training event. However, as we will discuss, there may be longer term outcomes than just satisfaction, such as what difference has the training made for stakeholders? For instance, if it was a wedding banquet, did it provide a lasting experience and memories for all those attending? Similarly, did M&E training for an organization, for example, contribute to better M&E practice and organizational objectives in the long run?

can result in unanticipated outcomes (positive or negative) that can reinforce or hinder M&E training and its transfer. Recognizing such complexity, it is not always easy to map everything out in advance, as the different interactions may result in “emergent,” unanticipated behavior within the system.

This does not mean that we “throw the baby out with the bathwater” and discard planning altogether. In fact, as Part 2 of the book reflects, just as projects and programs develop plans or frameworks to achieve their intended results, we recommend a *systematic* approach to identify and achieve training objectives. However, we humbly acknowledge the complexities of the training context and the need to remain flexible and open to multiple perspectives and possibilities in our approach. This underscores the importance of establishing feedback mechanisms within the training system itself, to “tune in” and listen to how things are going during training and went after training—hence, the ironic importance to apply M&E principles to training that also focuses on M&E.

Because our book is written at an introductory level, our treatment of systems thinking is limited and focused for the most part on M&E training. Hopefully, our discussion thus far underscores that successful training requires more than just good facilitation but encompasses a variety of considerations and related roles and responsibilities. Just as a chef may need to wear multiple hats, from researching the market to cooking, serving, cleaning up, and soliciting feedback, so must a trainer—which we will examine more closely in Chapter 5.

In fact, providing training can be much more complicated than providing a meal, and we understand that it might seem like a whole lot. However, we do not want to scare people off. On the contrary, we wrote this book to help readers successfully navigate the potential complexities of M&E training, and we adopted a systems approach for the very reason that it is useful for “addressing and resolving situations that are wicked, messy, and horribly tangled” (Williams & Hummelbrunner, 2009, p. 1).

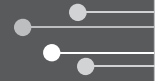
We will revisit the systems perspective as it applies to M&E training throughout the book, but for now, let’s take a closer look at what we mean by “M&E” and how we will be using it in the book.

1.3 Revisiting M&E

While we assume readers of a book on M&E training are already familiar with M&E, we nevertheless recognize it can mean different things to different people. For example, **Box 1.1** lists some of the acronyms/abbreviations used by different organizations that reflect the various practices and purposes associated with M&E. Therefore, we want to

BOX 1.1

M&E Related Acronyms



- **DME** (design, monitoring, and evaluation)
- **DMEL** (design, monitoring, evaluation, and learning),
- **MEA** (monitoring, evaluation, and accountability)
- **MEAL** (monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning)
- **MEL** (monitoring, evaluation, and learning)
- **PARME** (program accountability, review, monitoring, and evaluation)
- **PMER** (planning, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting)
- **PM&E** (performance monitoring and evaluation)
- **PM&E** (planning, monitoring, and evaluation)
- **PM&E** (participatory monitoring, and evaluation)
- **SM&E** (strategy, measurement, and evaluation)
- **RM&E** (research, monitoring, and evaluation)

clarify how we are using M&E in relation to training. First, we will specifically look at *monitoring* and *evaluation*, and then we will explain how we will be using M&E broadly to encompass other related processes as part of a program's overall management system.

As its abbreviation reflects, monitoring and evaluation are closely related and often considered together as one process. However, it is important to understand they are distinct. A good starting point is to consider the definitions of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Although intended for international development, these definitions largely capture the purpose and use of M&E for most program contexts, whether domestic or international:

- ***Monitoring*** is a continuous function that uses the systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders of an ongoing development intervention with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds (OECD, 2002, p. 27).
- ***Evaluation*** is the systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed project, program, or policy, including its design, implementation, and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfillment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness,

impact, and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of both recipients and donors. (OECD, 2002, p. 21)

A couple of points are worth noting. First, although it is essential for M&E to focus on what is intended, it is also important to assess unintended consequences, positive or negative, of interventions. Second, it is helpful to understand the purpose of and relationship between monitoring and evaluation with regard to timing. Monitoring is ongoing to *describe* what is happening, whereas evaluation is periodic to *judge* how well it happened and what difference it made, intended or not. Monitoring happens throughout program implementation, providing information for program management and decision-making. Evaluation can occur during (formative) or after (summative) program implementation, but is less frequent, with the intention to “step back” for more in-depth assessment to judge the worth of programming. This valuation of programming is then used externally to uphold accountability to program stakeholders (e.g., intended program beneficiaries and donors) and to foster learning (internally and externally) to inform future programming, strategic planning, and best practices for the respective program area/s.

There are a variety of different types of program monitoring and evaluation (IFRC, 2011a, pp.12 & 15). Monitoring types include process (activity), performance, results, compliance, beneficiary, financial, and context monitoring. Evaluation types include those according to who conducts evaluation (e.g., self, joint, internal, external, or independent evaluations), when they are conducted (e.g., ex-ante, real time, midterm, final, or ex-post evaluations), or the evaluation’s particular method or focus (e.g., meta-, impact, or participatory evaluation). Recognizing their differences, the distinction between monitoring and evaluation is not always “black and white.” Monitoring typically provides data for evaluation, and elements of evaluation (assessment) can occur when monitoring. For instance, results monitoring can merge with evaluation to assess a program’s efficiency and effectiveness during implementation.

With regards to training, it is important to recognize that the knowledge and skills required for evaluation can be more advanced than monitoring. For example, program monitoring typically focuses on tracking shorter-term outputs or deliverables that are easier to measure, such as the number of items or amount of service provided. On the other hand, evaluation often examines longer-term outcomes, such as changes in knowledge, attitudes, and practice that require more methodological rigor to assess causality and impact.³ Consequently, instruction to prepare people to be “evaluators” is typically more demanding, requiring a longer period of training and/or formal education and practical experience:

3. Note that standards or rigor are independent of method in impact evaluation. Rigor is important regardless of whether a conventional social sciences approach (e.g., randomized control trials, [RCT]) or an alternative approach such as contribution analysis (Mayne, 2012) is employed.

Ultimately, nothing teaches how to do evaluations as well as direct experience in designing and running actual evaluations. (Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman, 2004, p. ix)⁴

M&E and results-based management (RBM)

M&E does not happen in isolation but are two of many interrelated processes in a program management system. As such, M&E and its training often includes other processes that are not technically monitoring and evaluation but are very much part of an M&E system. For example, program design, data management, and reporting are often considered part of the M&E system and included as topics in M&E training (or M&E may be included as topics, [modules] in other program management training).

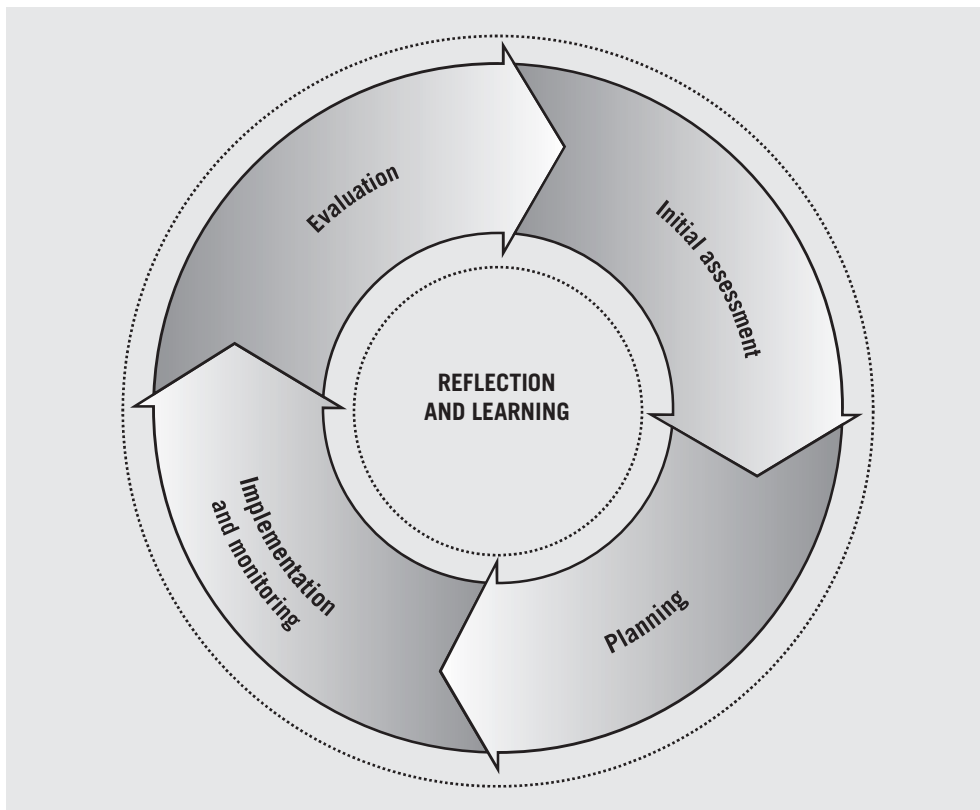
For our purposes, we consider the larger program management system for M&E from the perspective of results-based management (RBM). Also referred to as performance management, RBM is a management strategy based on clearly defined and measurable results (objectives) and the methodologies, processes, and tools to achieve those results (Görgens & Kusek 2009; Kusek & Rist 2004; OECD & World Bank, 2006; UNDG, 2011). RBM supports better performance and accountability by applying a clear, logical framework to plan, manage, and measure programming and its intended results.

The current practice of M&E largely evolved with RBM during 1990s, coinciding with the adoption of the logical framework approach to programming by the public sector and international development agencies (Edmunds & Marchant, 2008; Mathison, 2005). As we discuss below, it reflected the increasing demand for performance accountability. We believe the basic premise and practices of RBM applies just as well to smaller domestic programs as to larger international ones. It is based on a strong notion of causality or attribution of how various inputs and activities lead logically to higher orders of results (outputs, outcomes, and impacts) (OECD & World Bank, 2006, p. 8). By identifying in advance the intended results of a program and how to measure them, M&E becomes more straightforward, and related reporting becomes more relevant and useful.

It is helpful to conceptualize M&E as part of a RBM system by considering a generic project (or program) cycle. **Figure 1.1** represents a basic project cycle, reflecting four interrelated phases in a project, and **Figure 1.2** illustrates in more detail potential M&E activities that occur during the project cycle. An initial (needs) assessment is typically conducted first to determine if there are and the extent of any problems or needs to address. A variety of methodologies can be used at this stage, such as stakeholder, SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats), and problem analysis (e.g., IFRC 2010; Watkins, Meiers & Visser, 2012). This is followed by a planning or design phase to prepare for project

4. As Rossi et. al. (2004, p. 27) point out, while “there are many evaluation tasks that can be easily carried out by persons of modest expertise and experience,” the most complex evaluation activities “require the dedicated participation of highly trained specialists at ease with the latest in social science theory, program knowledge, data collection methods, and statistical techniques.”

FIGURE 1.1 Basic Project Cycle



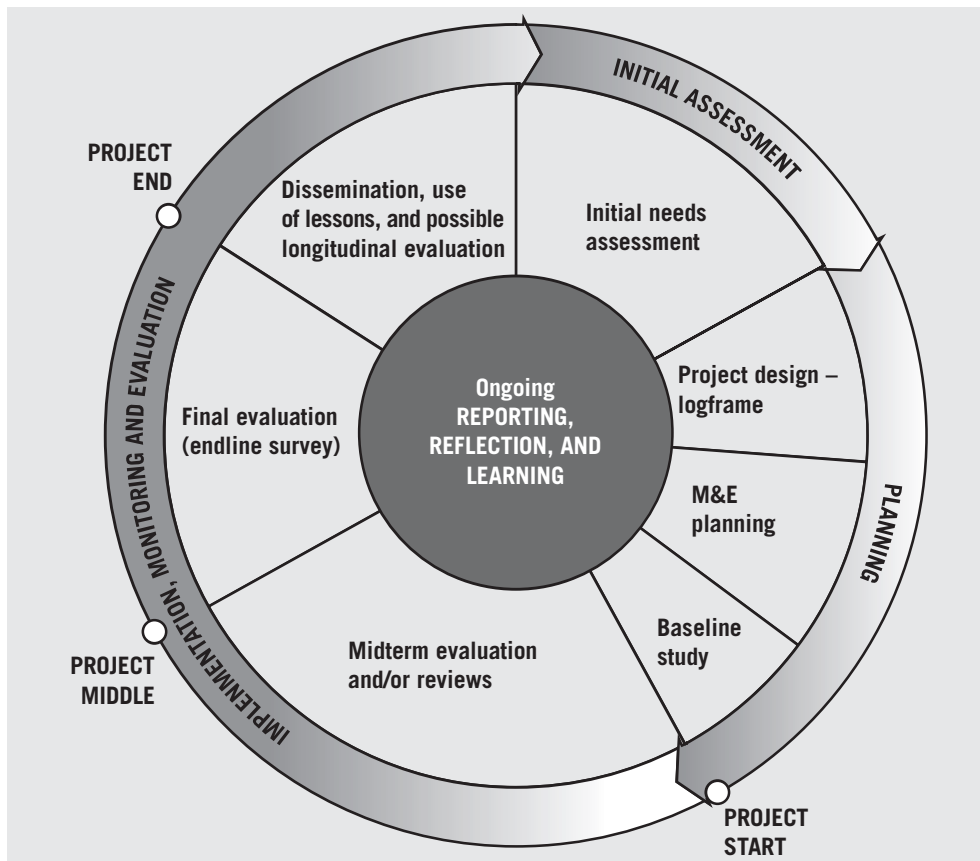
Source: IFRC 2010, p. 6, IFRC 2011a, p. 10.

implementation. For M&E, this can include a logframe specifying the identified objectives, indicators, means of verification and assumptions, as well as a M&E plan, baseline study, reporting templates, and other tools and activities contributing to the M&E system.

Project implementation operationalizes the M&E system, which includes routine monitoring and reporting as well as any formative (e.g., midterm) evaluations or reviews to assess and inform ongoing program implementation. Summative evaluation after implementation is used to assess the project's impact (both intended and unintended) and what difference it made. Throughout the project cycle, data management and reporting is ongoing, sharing information to support learning, project management, and accountability.

The phases summarized in the project cycle are only illustrative and will vary according to the operational context and organizational culture. For example, programing in emergency contexts may begin with immediate implementation to provide services to

FIGURE 1.2 Project Cycle With Example M&E Activities



people in need and later conduct more thorough assessment and planning to inform longer-term continuation of programming. The important point is that M&E consists of a variety of interrelated processes in the overall RBM system. Such a systems perspective approaches M&E as a subsystem that is interdependent on other program management systems. We adopt this broader interpretation of M&E, recognizing that training for it can be tailored according to different understanding of and needs for M&E practice.

As our above discussion suggests, this book is centered on what we consider to be a conventional conception of M&E. However, it is important to recognize there are alternative and emerging approaches, as **Box 1.2** highlights. Nevertheless, we believe the core principles and practices presented in this book apply to effective planning and delivery of training regardless of the specific M&E concepts and content (which should be tailored according to specific training needs).

BOX 1.2

Developmental Evaluation



Note that so far we have been talking primarily about conventional approaches to M&E, which are particularly appropriate when the program logic, theory of change, or intended results chain of an intervention's impact are well understood and explicated. However, many organizations embrace innovation and develop interventions in an incremental and evolutionary way. Such interventions are more suited to what Patton (1994; 2011) has dubbed "Developmental Evaluation." In this alternative approach, M&E is not structured in advance, but actually follows an intervention as it evolves. The evaluator participates as part of the program/administrative team and contributes to the enhancement of evidence-based decision-making along the way. For our purposes, and for reasons of simplicity, we will focus predominantly on conventional approaches to M&E in the present book. This is not to say, however, that many of the ideas that we have about training for M&E do not apply to those working in developmental evaluation contexts. It is to say, rather, that ideas about training for developmental evaluation remain relatively untested at present.

1.4 The Rising Demand for M&E Training

The demand for M&E training reflects the need for broader M&E understanding, support, and practice. Two parallel trends have played a particularly important role fueling this demand. One is an increased emphasis on performance accountability, and the other is a growing expectation for stakeholder participation in M&E to foster learning and ownership.

Increasingly, programs, projects, and related initiatives are being gauged by what difference they make. Stakeholders, whether program donors, management or recipients, want to be assured that interventions are well-planned and resources used efficiently and effectively to achieve longer-term outcomes that have sustainable impact over time. This trend has been heightened by economic pressures and increased competitiveness that has affected all sectors of the economy—private, public, and civic. For instance, in international development, public agencies and NGOs have increasingly been asked by donors to demonstrate their Value for Money (VfM) to maximize the impact of each dollar spent on programming (e.g., DFID, 2011; Emmi, Eskiocak, Kjennerud, Rozenkopf, & Schatz, 2011). As the World Bank conveys:

There are constant and growing pressures on governments and organizations around the world to be more responsive to demands from internal and external stakeholders for good governance,

accountability and transparency, greater development effectiveness and delivery of tangible results. (Görgens & Kusek, 2009, p. 1)

As the demand for performance accountability has grown, so has the demand for more effective and efficient practices to assess the impact of programming. It is no longer enough to ensure that interventions are designed with frameworks to manage inputs, activities, and outputs. Expectations are high for M&E that provides reliable and useful information for performance feedback and reporting to demonstrate long-term as well as short-term results. Consequently, there has been an increased demand for improved capacity, such as M&E training, to meet these expectations for M&E.

The second trend for greater stakeholder participation in M&E has a historical precedence over the last 40 years of lessons from participatory research and practice in development and community-based initiatives: “Human development is development *of the people for the people by the people*” (UNDP, 1993, p. 3, emphasis in the original). It is now widely accepted that if social initiatives are to bring about meaningful change, they need to meaningfully involve the very people whose lives they seek to change. Building local capacity fosters greater understanding, ownership, and ultimately sustainability of public and social programs. In turn, this contributes to performance accountability to deliver lasting results.

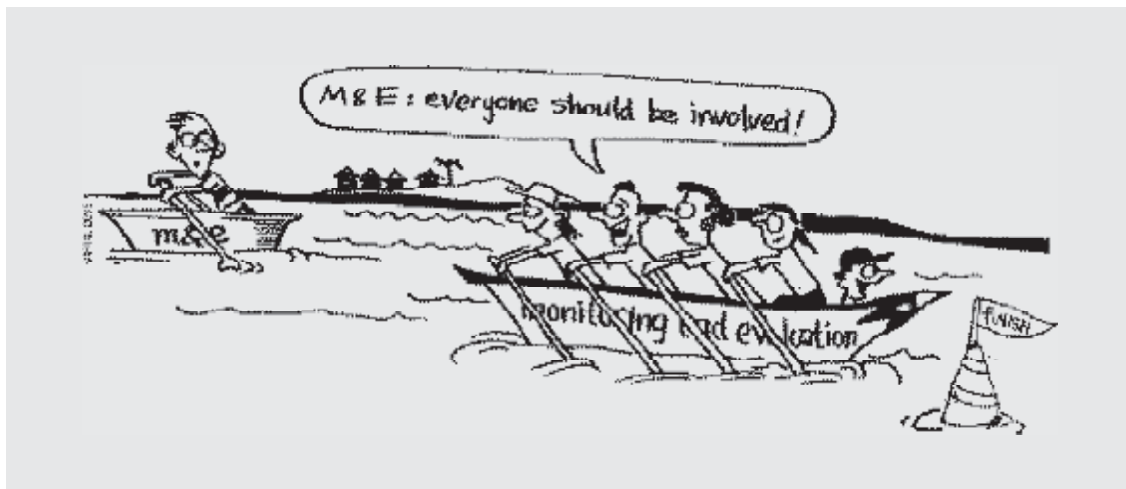
The spotlight on participation has been unmistakable in both the literature and practice of evaluation.⁵ It would be hard to find a book or guideline on evaluation that does not include a section on the importance of and recommendation for stakeholder consultation and involvement. Some of the most influential approaches to evaluation, such as Utilization-Focused Evaluation (Patton, 2012) and a range of collaborative approaches to evaluation (Cousins, Whitmore, & Shulha, 2013), are premised on the importance of stakeholder engagement in determining the questions and type of information gathered, its analysis, and how it can be used in the future.

Likewise, the focus on greater participation has had a significant impact on the practice of M&E. As stakeholders take a more active role in decision-making and resource allocation, they have not only become more involved in identifying their own needs and designing interventions, but also in determining, monitoring, and assessing the measures of success. For instance, **Figure 1.3** illustrates a cartoon messaging a more inclusive approach to M&E in the M&E guidelines of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC, 2011a).

In international development, the attention on participation has given rise to what is called Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) (e.g., Estrella & Gaventa, 1998; Estrella et al., 2000). PME challenges the once conventional approach to M&E that is conducted by external experts and prioritizes accountability requirements of funding

5. It is beyond the scope of this book to do justice to the scholarly research and practical guidance in this area, but examples include works such as PRIA (1981), Feuerstein (1986), Guba and Lincoln (1989), Rubin (1995), Jackson and Kassam (1998). A comprehensive, scholarly review of research on participatory and collaborative approaches to evaluation can be found in Cousins and Chouinard (2012).

FIGURE 1.3 IFRC Cartoon for Participatory M&E



Source: Drawn by Julie Smith for IFRC. IFRC (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies). (2011). *Project/programme monitoring and evaluation (M&E) guide*. Geneva: IFRC Planning and Evaluation Department.

agencies and policymakers (Estrella & Gaventa, 1998, p. 12). When M&E becomes more inclusive it supports more than reporting and auditing; it builds social capital and responsibility as stakeholders reflect upon and learn from their own experience, using this to make and own decisions about their future.

Participation is increasingly being recognized as being integral to the M&E process, since it offers new ways of assessing and learning from change that are more inclusive, and more responsive to the needs and aspirations of those most directly affected. (World Bank, 2014a)

The trend toward and lessons from stakeholder participation in M&E are not limited to international programming. The scholarly literature on capacity building and training related to M&E is growing,⁶ and most would agree that M&E will be more effective when it is done *with* rather than *to* program stakeholders. Communities, community-based organizations, public agencies, elected officials, and other stakeholders in both “developed” and “developing” countries have long been involved

6. For example: Adams and Dickinson (2010); Bakken, Nunez, and Couture (2014); Barnette and Wallis (2003); Clinton (2014); Cooksy (2008); Cousins and Bourgeois (2014); Darabi (2002); Davis (2006); Kelly and Kaczynski (2008); Kingsbury and Hedrich (1994); LaVelle and Donaldson (2010); Lee, Wallace, and Alkin (2007); Orr (2010); Preskill and Boyle (2008); Preskill (2008); Rotondo (2012); Trevisan (2002; 2004)

in and developed systems to track and assess their work (whether or not they called it “M&E”). As Preskill and Boyle (2008, p. 443) express for ECB,

Seeking to enhance stakeholders’ understanding of evaluation concepts and practices, and in an effort to create evaluation cultures, many organizations have been designing and implementing a variety of strategies as a means of helping their members learn about and engage in evaluation practices.

Later in this book, we will look more closely at the demand for M&E training during the training analysis. While performance accountability and stakeholder participation are fundamental considerations, there can be other factors contributing to training demand according to the specific context. Whatever the reasons, the demand for M&E training is an important determinant of the potential for M&E training and its transfer: the higher the demand, the more likely stakeholders will be receptive to and supportive of M&E training and M&E practice afterward. It is worth noting that M&E training itself can help shape people’s attitudes toward and thus demand for M&E.

1.4 Who Provides M&E Training?

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Terminology Tip

Trainer or Facilitator?

We often use the terms “trainer” and “facilitator” interchangeably when, in fact, there are some differences. A trainer has expert knowledge and experience in a particular subject area that trainees need—for example, M&E knowledge and experience. A facilitator may not necessarily have that knowledge but helps trainees learn from each other and solve problems, drawing upon existing knowledge and skills within the group. Sometimes the difference is framed to say that trainer is a content expert, while a facilitator is a process expert (e.g., Barbazette, 2006, p. 85). However, we contend that it is not so black and white and will depend on the training context. *We chiefly use “trainer” in this book because people attending M&E training typically lack and thus are seeking M&E knowledge and understanding.* However, this does not discount that there may be experience within the group to draw upon, and good trainers use facilitation techniques to create an active learning climate in which knowledge is discovered through discussion and practical activities. Therefore, we will also use the term facilitation, as this is very much part of M&E training.

In Chapter 5 we will take closer look at what makes a good M&E trainer, but for now we want to clarify how we will be using “trainer” in the book. For the most part, we use trainer to broadly refer to those providing M&E training, recognizing that other terms are often used. Thus, we want to clarify that this usage is often for the sake of convenience and brevity. In actuality, those involved in providing training encompasses a wide range of people, as diverse as the contexts where M&E training is provided. Training providers come from the public, civic, and private sectors, including community, government, educational, nonprofit, health care, corporate, and professional organizations.

As we have already seen, there are various aspects of M&E training, and the people involved can range from one trainer who oversees the entire training process to a number of people who focus on different parts (i.e., in a large organization where a high degree of specialization is possible). While job titles may not literally include trainer or training and roles and responsibilities can vary, there is an assortment of people who participate in providing or supporting training. Even community members and other recipients of M&E training are increasingly included in developing training plans and other aspects of training. While not exhaustive, the word cloud in **Figure 1.4** provides a snapshot to remind readers of the breadth and diversity of people who can be involved in providing training.

FIGURE 1.4 People Potentially Involved in M&E Training



1.5 What Kind of M&E Training?

M&E training can take many shapes and forms. Ultimately, the kind of training provided will depend on a variety of contextual (systemic) considerations, such as the training needs, content, learners' profile, trainers' experience, available time, and resources. We will explore this in more detail in later chapters, but for now we want to look at five aspects of M&E training that will help clarify the focus and scope of this book for readers.

1. Program and project M&E training

This book focuses primarily on M&E for programs, projects, and related interventions. While there are differences between programs and projects, usually in relation to scale and scope (programs tend to be larger, consisting of multiple projects), the commonality is that they are planned interventions, typically with objectives, indicators, and within a defined time frame, budget, and other performance parameters. For our purposes, the basic principles for good M&E (and related training) are the same for programs and projects.

Terminology Tip

Programs Versus Projects

In the interest of brevity, we will use *program* throughout this book, but the concepts and practices discussed apply also to M&E training for projects and related interventions.

Programs are designed and implemented for different stakeholders and purposes in all sectors for society—public, civil, and private. This book was largely written with M&E training for social programs in mind, designed and implemented to improve social conditions, such as development, health care, and education. However, we believe the concepts and practices can be applied to a variety of program contexts where objectives need to be monitored and evaluated for effective service delivery.

2. Short-term and long-term M&E training

This book can be used to guide the planning and delivery of M&E training of different duration, ranging from single-event training delivered in hours or days to a longer

training program with sequenced activities delivered over weeks or months. As we will discuss, training duration will depend on the training needs, content, available time, resources, and other factors. Single-event training is often used to introduce a particular M&E topic, raise awareness, or address an immediate need. Ongoing training can explore more complicated topics and provide more repetition, practice, and feedback to reinforce learning; understandably, it also requires more time and resources in planning and delivery.

3. Face-to-face versus distant (e-learning) M&E training

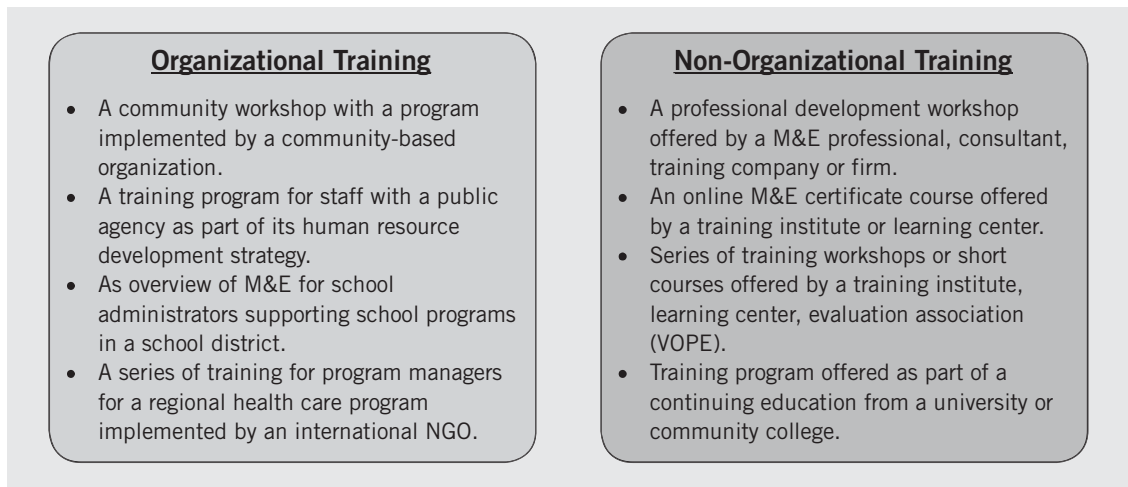
There are a variety of training delivery options (media) available today, foremost being traditional, face-to-face training (e.g., classroom based) versus training provided through e-learning (e.g., technology based, such as online training). We have written this book primary for in-person instructional settings, where face-to-face interaction is possible. However, many of the concepts we discuss are also useful for providing distance, e-learning training. While in-person training remains the most popular medium for training delivery (ASTD, 2013), to ignore the potential of e-learning in the 21st century would be a mistake. E-learning offers a range of possibilities for M&E training, whether as a complement to enhance in-person training delivery or an alternative that better meet training needs. Therefore, while our focus is largely in-person training, you will also find considerable attention given to e-learning in this book (especially in Chapter 2).

4. Organizational versus non-organizational M&E training

There is no one setting for M&E training, and throughout this book we will refer to two major types of M&E training contexts. **Organizational training** refers to M&E training provided to organizations, communities, or other group entities for a specific program or as part of their overall capacity building for future programming. In addition to individual learning goals, training objectives for organizational training also target outcomes for the specific organization or institution. **Non-organizational training** refers to M&E training provided to individuals who are independent of any organization or unaffiliated with the same organization or group (although a few may be from the same organization); for instance, independent learners attending training for their own personal development goals or coming from different organizations where they intend to apply what they have learned.

Figure 1.5 provides some examples of organizational and individual training. However, we want to stress that we use this distinction for the convenience of looking at M&E training in this book. In reality, the boundary between the two can be very blurred and fluid, with the outcomes of M&E training crossing over from organizational into individual training, and vice versa. For example, one of us

FIGURE 1.5 Organizational Versus Non-organizational M&E Training



has been involved in extensive evaluation capacity building (ECB) work in India in recent years that took the form of an integrated approach involving workshops that were synchronized with ongoing evaluation work at critical junctures (e.g., planning, instrument development, data processing, and analysis). This multiyear initiative uniquely contributed to both organizational- and individual-level ECB because many of the individuals involved were not employed by the host organization.⁷

We distinguish these two types of training settings because they can have different and considerable implications for M&E training. For instance, in an organizational setting, training objectives and available information (e.g., about the staff and training needs) may allow for and require more detailed and elaborate planning as part of a larger capacity-building strategy to meet and sustain organizational strategic goals. In contrast, such information and the rigor required may not be available when planning training for individuals unaffiliated with the same organization (see **Box 1.3**). Related, the potential to evaluate and follow up training will typically be higher in an organizational setting, where it is often easier to access trainees after training versus training with individuals coming from different places. These and other differences between these two training types will be important to consider as they affect the planning and delivery of M&E training.

7. For more information, see <http://www.ssatcfund.org/>

BOX 1.3

Basic Volkswagen or Luxury Mercedes Benz



For some readers, the level of detail and rigor outlined in Part 2 of the book may seem like overkill, and far beyond their prior experience with or current requirements for providing M&E training. Other readers may seek even more detail and rigor. To a large degree, preparing this book was a balancing act between providing enough detail for different training contexts. For example, in an organizational setting, there may be a need for a training *program* that will be sustained over a period of time for staff development. In this situation, practices like gap, causal, and training analysis (discussed in Chapter 6) may be appropriate. In contrast, such detailed analysis and rigor may not be required or practical in time and cost for a single training *event* for non-organizational training, such as a one-day workshop. Therefore, we encourage readers to take what they can use from the book, and leave behind what they don't need. To use a metaphor, sometimes you don't need a luxury car to get around the block when a basic car with air in the tires, gas in the engine, and seatbelts that work will suffice.

5. Inclusive M&E training

Training everyone accepts the premise that if we are to realize the promise of mainstreamed evaluation, everyone must have some basic knowledge and appreciation of evaluation. . . . We already have programs in place to teach evaluation skills for the select few who intend to conduct or manage evaluations, but that does not fully meet the need because these are not the only groups with a claim or responsibility to participate in or conduct evaluation. (Barnette & Wallis 2003, pp. 53–54)

Although the above quote speaks to evaluation, we believe it also applies to the M in M&E. As we have already discussed, there is a growing demand to build the capacity of different stakeholders to participate in M&E. Increasingly, M&E is evolving from a specialized pursuit of professionals or technical specialists to a more inclusive practice involving a wider assortment of stakeholders. Therefore, this book is written to support M&E training for a broad range of people, varying in level of M&E knowledge and experience from beginner to advanced and varying in motivation and purpose for training from people who need to perform M&E

BOX 1.4

Example Learners for M&E Training



- **Community members** or intended “beneficiaries” of a program intervention so they can better understand and participate in M&E processes
- **Project team members** or other partners who need some understanding of M&E to perform their responsibilities
- **Program management** who need to oversee and manage a program’s M&E system, uphold quality assurance, and ensure reporting is evidence based and useful
- **Organizational senior leadership**, HR managers, or other members who need a better understanding and appreciation of M&E to support it within the organization
- **M&E experts** or professionals who needs an in-depth understanding to lead the development and implementation of M&E systems, conduct evaluations, and provide technical assistance
- **University or continuing education students** interested in M&E to complement their professional background for career purposes
- **Professional trainers** or facilitators who want to better understand M&E to train others

to those seeking an understanding to support others performing M&E. **Box 1.4** highlights some examples to illustrate the range of potential learners for whom this book can be used to provide M&E training.

Inclusive training encompasses not only trainees but also those involved in supporting M&E training. Stakeholder engagement is an important way to build demand so M&E training is owned and supported. Stakeholder participation is more than just consultation, but a meaningful opportunity for people to provide input and become involved in various aspects of M&E training. Who are M&E training stakeholders? They are the individuals or groups with a direct or indirect role or interest in M&E training. Foremost this includes the trainees but can also include a range of other people depending on the training context: for example, program managers and staff, volunteers, community members, sponsors and donors, support agencies and partner organizations, public workers, elected officials, and the general public. We will revisit the importance of engaging key stakeholders in training throughout this book.

1.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter we provided a road map for the book and laid out some foundational ideas that will be important as the reader moves forward. We will build upon and elaborate these ideas throughout the book, but some important summary points of this introductory chapter are the following:

- M&E training makes a difference when it is useful and used. Therefore, it is important to plan, deliver, and follow up training with attention to training transfer—the ability of trainees to meaningfully apply learning after training.
- Rather than threatening or boring, M&E training can be enjoyable and engaging, inspiring participants to learn and practice M&E
- Training is likely to make a positive difference when it is systematic; planned, implemented, and evaluated in a coherent, ordered, cyclic manner.
- Systems thinking helps understand the interrelated and dynamic components of systematic training and the larger context in which it is provided. M&E training does not happen in isolation and will have a unique configuration of different factors that change over time and should be carefully considered to achieve and sustain training results. It is intentional and conducted to meet specific needs, yet it should remain flexible and adaptable to changing needs and unanticipated outcomes
- Monitoring and evaluation are two distinct but interrelated processes. Monitoring is the routine collection of information to *describe* what is happening, whereas evaluation is episodic to *judge* how well it happened and what difference it made. Both contribute to learning, inform decision-making, and uphold accountability for effective program (and project) delivery.
- M&E is part of a results-based management (RBM) system, based on clearly defined and measurable results (objectives), and the methodologies, processes, and tools to achieve those results. Therefore, M&E training often includes other related processes as part of a program's overall RBM.
- Two important trends that have contributed to the demand for M&E training are increased expectations for performance accountability and greater stakeholder participation in M&E to support learning for and ownership of program goals.
- In addition to trainers who deliver M&E training, there are a variety of additional people who may support M&E training and therefore use this book, ranging from subject matter experts and instructional designers to program managers and donors.
- This book was written for M&E training of different duration for programs and projects, (which we will refer to as “programs” throughout the book for brevity). While the focus is on face-to-face training, we also give considerable attention to distance and e-learning because of their importance as a source of learning for M&E training
- An important distinction to make for M&E training is whether it is organizational or non-organizational training. Organizational training is for organizations, communities, or other group entities, whereas non-organizational training targets individuals who are independent of or affiliated with different organizations or groups.

- When training builds understanding, people are more likely to become involved in, support, and own M&E practice. Therefore, this book

is written to support M&E training for a broad range of people with different levels of understanding and involvement in M&E.

1.7 RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

For readers interested in learning more about systems thinking, Peter Senge is a prominent thinker in the field. In addition to his influential book, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*, he has authored two field books on systems thinking, and there is a concise overview on the subject by Senge on the website of the Society for Organizational Learning (2015, webpage *Systems Thinking*) as well as other related resources. The website of the Free Management Library (2015) also provides a useful introduction to *Systems Thinking, Systems Tools and Chaos Theory*, and the website of the Donella Meadows Institute (2015) on *Systems Thinking Resources*.

We highly recommend the work of Bob Williams for understanding systems thinking, not only for its clarity but also its practical application to M&E, as Williams is himself an evaluator: *Systems Concepts in Action: A Practitioner's Toolkit* (Williams and Hummerlbrunner, 2009) and *Wicked Solutions: A Systems Approach to Complex Problems* (Williams and van 't Hof, 2014). For the field of evaluation, we recommend four books that incorporate a systems approach to evaluation: Hargreaves (2010), Morell (2010), Patton (2011), Williams and Imam (2007). USAID (2015a) offers a series of podcasts as part of their Systemic M&E initiative, and we also recommend *Dealing with Complexity Through Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation* (Ongevalle, Maarse, Temmink, Boutylkova, & Huyse, 2012). In Chapter 6, we summarize additional recommended resources related to systems thinking for instruction design and training.

On the topics of RBM, M&E, and participatory M&E, we recommend the following resources, all freely available online. For RBM, readers can refer to the comprehensive publication from the World Bank, *Ten Steps to a Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation System* (Kusek & Rist, 2004) and the United Nations Development Group, *Results-based Management Handbook* (UNDG, 2011). On the topic of M&E, readers can refer to the concise overview by Chaplowe (2008), *Monitoring and Evaluation Planning*, which is also summarized in a 20-minute webinar available as part of the AEA Coffee Break Webinar series (Chaplowe, 2012). Also developed by Chaplowe, we recommend the *IFRC Project/Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Guide* for a more comprehensive but user-friendly overview on the topic (IFRC, 2011a). For further reading on participatory M&E (PM&E), we recommend *Who Counts Reality? Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation*, by Estrella and Gaventa (1998) and the edited volume, *Learning from Change: Issues and Experiences in Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation* for a more thorough discussion on the subject (Estrella et al., 2000). We also steer readers to the valuable web portal on PM&E from Wageningen University (2015).

Finally, we point out to readers that many of the online resources we recommend at the end of Chapter 2 for M&E training and capacity building will also lead to a host of publications on the topics of RBM, M&E, and PM&E.