

Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines

Experiences in the field

St Vincent and the Grenadines

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Table of Contents

Part One

Key Features of Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E)

Five Simple Steps in PM&E

Step One - setting long term goals

Rose Place Community Vision

Step Two - creating check lists for action

Making a check list - the garbage problem in Rose Place

Step Three - participatory monitoring

Feedback on the garbage problem in Rose Place

Maintaining the baths and toilets: what we need to do

Step Four - participatory evaluation

Seeing changes in Rose Place: I change plenty

Community felt changes in Rose Place

Step Five - Creating Local ownership

Making a photo story

Part Two

PM&E in the Yearly Cycle

Concepts in PM&E

Differences between conventional evaluation and PM&E

Participatory evaluation cycle

Start, stumble, self correct and share

Examples of PM&E

Union Island - PM&E around an event

PM&E and cultural wakes

Tools for PM&E

Qualitative aspects of participation

Monitoring at a glance - six monthly monitoring table

PM&E and vocational training

Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E)

Key features of PM&E

- PM&E aims to empower local people
- Community members are fully involved in the process
- Community members identify their own indicators of success
- Methods are simple, open, with immediate sharing of results
- PM&E is built in from the start of a project
- PM&E is flexible to fit the local context

PM&E is *different from* conventional monitoring and evaluation in several key ways:-

It is not

about outsiders judging, checking and ‘macouing’ for accountability

It is

about empowering local communities; this means involving people in the decision making of all stages of the project, including the setting of the monitoring and evaluation criteria. PM&E therefore seeks to enable people to put forward their own vision of development so that they can work toward success as they define it.

For the community

PM&E is about creating local ownership. It aims to help communities to take more control of a the project. It is one way to help build up a community’s capacity to plan, to take decisions, to act and to get better projects that meet their needs.

It enables communities to look systematically at:-

- what they want to achieve (deciding on their own goals)
- what they have done (they reflect on their achievements)
- what they still need to do (what action has to be taken)
- what changes they have seen (examining the impact)

For the Field Officers/Facilitator/Department

It helps to obtain qualitative information and feedback from the project by sounding out people’s opinions on the impact of the project *as they see it*, as well as providing information on the progress of the project. *It helps us to listen.*

Five Simple Steps in PM&E

I. With community members:-

1. Set long term goals - the community's indicators of success - at the beginning of the project
2. Create short check lists for action - what needs to be done to reach the long term goals
3. Participatory monitoring of progress - carry out community feedback on what has been done and what still needs to be done using the check lists
4. Participatory evaluation - carry out community feedback on the changes people have noticed
5. Produce a people-friendly record of the community's own assessments for itself so that it has greater control over the whole process of PM&E

How to bring PM&E into a Project in a Systematic Way

This is the recommended process that is taken from experiences in the field. However, this process can be changed and adapted to suit the particular contexts of different projects. These are guidelines. It may well seem very familiar and you are probably doing it already. The key difference is ensuring that PM&E is carried out in a systematic way that is documented regularly. This will enable the department to have a better idea of the impact it is having on communities.

Step One - Setting the long term goals - ‘The Community’s Vision of Success’

Aim: To work towards a set of long term objectives/goals which become the projects success criteria or indicators of success as defined by the community members themselves. These can be used by the community, group, or Fo to assess progress during, and after the project.

1. At the beginning of a project, in a meeting setting or through individual discussion/chit-chat, take the community members to the end of the project. Get them to think about the kinds of things they would hope to see once the project has been completed successfully. Get them to think about the kinds of things that would be happening if the project is a success. Get them to tell you about the kinds of benefits *men, women and children* would expect to get from the project. You could ask them the following kinds of questions :-

“Imagine the project is all finished how will you know it is a success, what things will you see happening? How will men, women and children benefit? How will it affect your life? ”

2. Take notes of what they are saying making sure you use their own words. You may want to make a mental note and write it down later.

3. Share these ideas in the community at large. See if other people have similar ideas and build consensus. (You may want to do this orally, or visually writing on flip chart paper and getting people to discuss and comment).

4. With community members, agree on a set of long term goals which become the project’s success criteria or indicators of success as seen through the community’s eyes. As the facilitator, encourage people to look at the non physical aspects of the project too.

“This is what we hope to see at the end of the project. This is our vision”

5. Make sure both you and the community group or community has a list of these objectives. If possible and appropriate laminate them so that they are more permanent and can be displayed as a constant reminder of what the community is working towards.

Setting the Long Term Goals - Community Vision in Rose Place

In Rose Place (Bottom Town) the project involves renovating the baths and converting two bathrooms into toilets. Although there were four bathrooms in a state of disrepair, there were no toilets. Men women and children were having to use the bay side as a toilet. The sea was being used as a bucket dump too.

The community decided to concentrate on this problem first - the lack of toilet facilities. However, although they recognised the need for toilets, a key concern was the maintenance of the facilities. People were worried they would just get 'mash up' 'because people don't care down here.' They were also worried about the uncleanliness in the area. There was a serious garbage problem which was considered a health risk and this was seen as contributing to the general apathy of community members towards their own surroundings.

By talking to men and women individually, as well as in meeting settings on Nine steps, the community came up with the following long term goals and success criteria - what they would like to see at the end of the project. A very wide cross section of the community was involved in this. Even when questions were not being asked directly, the facilitator was always listening out for the community's vision. The community hopes to see the following by the end :-

Rose Place Long Term Goals
"Clean teams and an overseer to make sure the toilets are cleaned on a daily basis."
"Meetings are held regularly to talk about maintenance of the facilities and to see how things are going"
"Community members protect the facilities - people get 'licks' or are 'locked up' for misuse and abuse"
"Children practise good personal hygiene."
"People take more interest in their surroundings and the facilities."
"There is a sense of pride in the community."
"Plants are planted in the surroundings in tyres painted white to make Rose Place look nice - like at Nelson Block."

These goals are in fact the community's definition of success. These can be used as the basis for the PM&E in the future.

This shows that community members are not just thinking of the physical aspects of development, but of the intangible, social aspects too.

These goals have been laminated and are going to be fixed permanently on the facilities as a reminder of where the project is going. Community members have also expressed a wish to put these up in different places around the community.

Step Two - Reaching the long term Goals - Creating Check Lists for Action

Aim: To work towards meeting some, or all of the long term objectives by deciding what needs to be done to meet them. The different stages in the process form a check list for action by the community or a set of activities the community would like to see take place. These can be used by the community, group or Fo to help plan and then to assess progress during the project.

1. Together with the community decide which long term objectives/success criteria they want to deal with first.
2. Decide what needs to be done. Specify each stage or type of activity that needs to be carried out. Make *a written check list*. The check list becomes a list of short term objectives or steps to be completed. This makes it easier to ensure PM&E is undertaken systematically. It provides something tangible against which to assess progress with the community, possibly making it easier to document.
3. Make this list public. It can be useful for mobilising and giving the project a clear direction. Make sure both the Fo and the community has a copy.
4. These check lists may change during the project as problems present themselves and communities refocus their efforts or are diverted into other activities. Change the check lists when necessary with the community's consent and involvement.
5. Use these check lists to help develop action plans with the community.

Making a Check List to Deal with the Garbage Problem in Rose Place

The garbage problem was very much linked in people's minds with the unsanitary conditions of having no toilets in Rose Place. Dealing with this problem was seen as one way to work towards making Rose Place look nice and getting people to take care of the surroundings generally, and eventually, the facilities in particular.

By talking to different people, a whole set of problems came out that were all related to the garbage problem. "The waste master stinks and is not emptied enough." "We want to get rid of the waste master." "We need to build a dump and sanitation should come every day." "I would clean the drains but I have no water boots." "We need some brooms." "Some years back we got sanitation to help us with a big clean up we could do that again." "We need people to start keeping the place clean." "We need proper bins for Rose Place."

Out of all these problems a check list evolved of short term goals based on what people want to see happen. The community then started focusing on realising these goals.

- Build a dump
- Get sanitation to empty the dump daily
- Hold some clean-up campaigns
- Get tools and water boots so that people can clean drains
- Get bins for Rose Place and distribute them in the area (we could use drums)
- People start taking responsibility for keeping the area clean

Step Three - Carrying out Participatory Monitoring - Community Feedback on progress

Aim: To review progress during the project against the goals set; what has / hasn't been done

1. Use the check list to tick off the activities as they occur so the community has a visual record of its achievements.
2. During a project, to assess progress, return to these lists with the community members. They are useful for taking stock of the situation. Look at what has been done, and what still needs to be done.

Participatory Monitoring - Feedback on the garbage problem in Rose Place

“We've held three clean-up campaigns which put 'keeping Rose Place clean' high in people's consciousness. We have had meetings with the Public Health Officer and he helped us get drums from Vinlec to make into bins. We've still got to organise covers for the bins and handles. We have had more support from the sanitation workers. Now two ladies are coming to clean the bay side regularly. Sanitation workers are cleaning the drains sometimes, when before they never came into the area. There have been numerous arguments with the sanitation workers for just dumping all the garbage in front of the dump. Community members have offered to help them empty their wheelbarrows into the dump and now community members are keeping an eye on the sanitation workers and go to find out what is happening when the truck doesn't come. We've also built a dump and we now have water boots to clean the drains”.

3. You will probably have to develop a new check list for the next part of the project which becomes the community's next check list & plan of action. Formalise it again by writing down the objectives and sharing them.

Participatory Monitoring - Maintaining the Baths & Toilets in Rose Place what we need to do

One of the short term goals for dealing with the maintenance issue was to raise funds to buy the necessary materials for keeping the facilities clean & to pay someone a small token amount every month for looking after the facilities. The community organised a big fun-fair and bloco. Having done this, in a post mortem meeting of the fund-raising event some of the ladies came up with the next stages to be completed. These are the new short term goals or check list. They said they need:-

- “Continuous awareness & education for maintaining the facilities. We should place signs and little reminders here, there and everywhere which are waterproof and permanent”
- “Once a month there should be a general community clean-up and total assessment of the facilities, looking at anything broken and following it up”
- “We still need to make a decision officially about who is going to be the overseer, how much we are going to pay and when”
- “We need to make the rules & regulations for the up-keep of the facilities
 - the locking systems
 - how it should be cleaned
 - penalties for misuse
 - rules for use

Step Four - Participatory Evaluation - What changes have people noticed?

Aim: To encourage people to reflect on the impact of the project in their community

1. Make a note of people's feedback - again try to use their words. What is their assessment of the project? What is going well, what is not going so well, what are their major concerns? Use this information as a learning tool for the community and the Fo/ department, for the way forward.
2. Ask different community members what changes they have seen since the project started in the community. How are people feeling? Are things different? What are the benefits of the project so far? You may want to do this in a meeting setting as well as by talking to people individually. At this stage you will be getting qualitative data from community members.
3. To capture *the detail* and *essence* in the community write down what they say in their own words either whilst talking to them, or afterwards. In this way the wealth of information is not lost and it can be used for documentation of the project for the department, *and for the community*. Much of this information will reveal the impact the project is having on the community.
4. Use this information in the community to check its validity and to see if there is agreement. Do other people feel the same way?

Participatory Evaluation: Seeing changes in Rose Place - "I change plenty man"

The words of a 16 year old youth

"After I leave home I leave home to get liberty.... you see ah a youth man I started to do things my own way. I went out to a bloco all night and them kinda thing and how I didn't working I dey sitting at home. When I had a shilling or a few dollar I started to play cards to make more money with them down in the gulf."

"Yeh the project made a difference to me. I used to play cards and gamble but then instead, I helped with the clean-up and then I decided to stop all this stupidness and start cleaning up."

"I stopped it because I had to show my respect to my father and mother. I know I could do something better than that (gambling) and do something constructive to the community. I could contribute and wouldn't leave without anything and people would remember me for contributing."

"Outside ah told plenty people when they try talking to my face (putting me down) because we're from Bottom Town I put them in their place. Ah tell them I help contribute to my community and I clean for my community while you don't, so don't come to me with all this. You don't practise what you preach. They can't react they gotta dig it."

"This make me feel confident in my community and it affected me in other ways too. It made my time useful. Now I don't gamble I can do other things. It is how you choose to live you live. The almighty gave us life we have to live life ourselves. It's

up to us. If you want to change you can. You gotta believe in yourself there are plenty people with worse problems than me.”

“I don’t smoke (ganja). I used to talk to the boys when they were smoking. They were smoking because they see people smoking it’s not a habit but something to follow. But they didn’t know the importance of it, how it can be bad for your health so I talked to them about it blocking up their lungs and Keron (a small 15 year old boy) he stopped smoking in April. He knows the health problems now.”

Participatory Evaluation Reveals Community Felt Changes in Rose Place

“There is less fighting recently. Maybe because people are communicating more.”

“Michigan is now starting to help. He’s coming to me for the water boots” and I saw him on Saturday get the boots and a shovel. Krab has got through to him and he seems to be doing it regularly.

“He’s going to Church now up in Old Montrose maybe because he feels better.”
“In truth there is less fighting and Mitchigan has opened up his little stall again.”

“I was really appalled because I haven’t seen so many people in a long while on bay sand. People had stopped going but now with the clean-ups and the sanitation workers are cleaning the bay sand it is better back there. That makes all the difference.”

“We’ve got to get the project going otherwise things are going to get negative because we had the fund-raiser and nothing is happening now. We now need visible results. I want to see the toilets finished by Carnival.”

“Well the project is not finished yet. But people are trying to keep it clean. They are trying to do better. The fund-raiser was an effort to get things in place. We are holding meetings though. We still need more people to take an interest. People are telling others not to throw rubbish away and don’t do that. Krab is trying to help but he needs more help. We haven’t really started looking at getting the kids to practise good hygiene yet. I would like to see the kids use pictures to express what they would like to see in Rose Place”

“It’s cleaner now. The bay sand and gutter ah lookin cleaner now”

“The gutter on bay side is freer now. People are digging out the sand”

“People dump the garbage in the right place”

Participatory Evaluation Reveals Community Felt Changes in Rose Place

“People are now cleaning before they weren’t interested and if you said something they would cuss you, now some of the men like Mitchigan and Krab are taking responsibility for cleaning. Before it was iust Mark”

“well I mean now there are garbage drums and the dump and people are keeping the place clean I call that plenty changes we haven’t had that before. That’s plenty changes. People are making sure the area outside their gates is clean”

“Look they are sending some ladies from sanitation down regularly to clean the bay sand and since the last argument if sanitation can’t come they send a message. The driver comes down to say we can’t make it today. They are now asking us to help them empty the wheelbarrow and we give them a hand. You know the sanitation worker I cussed, he’s my best friend now, he comes and sees me in the market”

“we need sign boards around the community saying keep Rose Place clean. We need continuous awareness and education placing signs and little reminders here, there and everywhere which are waterproof.”

“ The other day four little kids were playing with cutlasses and the kids were cussing. People came and stopped them fighting everyone came out and gave real opposition. You’re finding more discussion now, people are reacting to change and the teaching. A lot of the negative forces are pulling back.”

“I think people might be more tolerant. People long time ago used to close the door when they heard bacchanal. They didn’t want to say behave yourself. Now they are calling out stop the war. People comes out more and they speak more. People are sleeping much easier now.”

“ You have to make them see to believe. With the ladies them, you got them to do what in 50 years they haven’t done. You motivated those women.”

“But you will not see that security and protection of the facilities until they see them in place. You see before it wasn’t a problem to them not having toilets now it comes like a problem to them. We had four bathrooms and you left us with two. You told us we’d put in toilets but they still haven’t come. I want those toilets before Carnival.”

Step Five - PM&E *for* the community: Creating local ownership

Aim: To ensure that the local community is able to share, and have a record of, its own self-assessment with which they can compare progress and changes over time.

1. Try and make sure the community has a record of its self-assessments and thoughts on a project. This is part of the process of handing over control and giving them responsibility. Their assessments are easily forgotten, and changes are soon taken for granted. It is important for them to see that their input is valuable and useful. It can be interesting for the community to have an overall picture of where they have come from and where they are going. It can also be useful to look back at a later stage - several years down the line perhaps. They can see if the changes are still relevant; whether there have been further improvements; or whether the changes have regressed. This information can be used by the community to take further/corrective action.
2. There are several different methods that can be used for this for example photos, tape recorder and a radio interview, a video made by the community, art work by the children depicting the changes, short skits. This is where the facilitator can really experiment to make the process empowering for the community.

PM&E for Local Ownership

Recording the Community Progress in Rose Place - Making a Photo Story

Throughout the project, photos have been taken of the different stages. A cheap, easily available scrap book has been made into a photo album to tell the story of the project so far in chronological order. Photos have been stuck in by community members. Children and adults have written in their comments to explain what is happening.

In many cases, there are photos which can be compared - before and after photos. Some photos show the problem. Other photos show the solution. The visual difference has a strong impact and generates a lot of comments.

Newspaper articles, radio announcements (which community members helped write), as well as their goals and feedback have also gone into the book, giving a very good overview of everything that has been taking place.

It is something that has generated a lot of interest because it is attractive, tangible and very immediate and accessible - and it is the community's!

PM&E in the Yearly Cycle

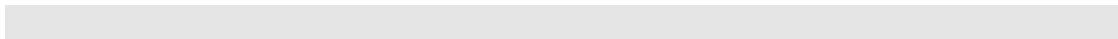
II. Recommendations

1. The annual National Consultation continues. Efforts could focus on ensuring that Field Officers receive a simple written report on the community feedback, and that a departmental discussion is held regarding *its content*. Recommendations can be drawn from the departmental discussions so that this can feed into the departmental planning process.
2. A more *formalised* emphasis is placed on preparing participants for the National Consultation. This could include a series of consultations leading up to the National Consultation which take the same format in terms of information needed as the National Consultation. Again this information could feed into the planning sessions.
3. At the community level, PM&E is integrated into projects with emphasis on establishing success criteria and goals. Participatory monitoring is carried out on a monthly basis - what we have done and what we still need to do. (The six monthly monitoring forms could be used for this.)
4. Participatory evaluation - community feedback looking at progress and changes - is carried out every three months by Field Officers.
5. Biannual feedback sessions are held with vocational trainers. Biannual feedback sessions are also held with vocational trainees.

Concepts in PM&E

Differences between Conventional Evaluation & Participatory Evaluation		
Who	External Experts	Community Members project staff, facilitator
What	Predetermined indicators of success, principally cost and production output	People identify their own indicators of success
How	Focus on “scientific objectivity” distancing of evaluators from other participants; uniform, complex procedures; delayed limited access to results	Self-evaluation; simple methods adapted to local culture; open, immediate sharing of results through local involvement in evaluation processes
When	Usually upon completion; sometimes also midterm	Merging of monitoring and evaluation, hence frequent small evaluations
Why	Accountability, usually summative, to determine if funding continues	To empower local people to initiate, control and take corrective action

Source: 1993 Participatory Evaluation: Tools for managing Change in Water and Sanitation, Narayan D, World Bank Technical Paper 207



PM&E around a Particular Event or Problem

Union Island

The Union Island Easter Festival - Easterval, has traditionally been an economically important time for the island, attracting large numbers of tourists. However, it is generally felt throughout the Union community that the standard of the festival has been in decline over the last few years.

In an effort to try and get people talking to each other and to get the festival off the ground, it was decided to bring in **PM&E as a way of trying to alleviate some of the problems, build consensus and move the process of organising the festival forward.**

PM&E linked to a single event

This involved setting up several meetings with the various groups taking part in the activities and bringing them all together to discuss. As a start, through group discussion, we focused on what people thought should be the aims and objectives of the festival. This generated a list of 15 objectives. However, in recognition of the limited time, and the need to set realistic, achievable objectives, it was decided to focus on only three objectives to be met this year. **These were chosen as it was felt these reflected the main concerns of the Unionites.** These were :-

- financial transparency
- commitment to produce an audited report soon after the event
- commitment to take stock of the festival after the event to make recommendations for next year

The idea was to then look at each of these issues in greater detail to see what steps were needed to put them into action. This generated a check list of short term goals. With regard to financial transparency the following concrete steps were discussed

- an accounting group of 7 people is set up drawing on the accounting students and teachers at the school
- pre budgets from groups are presented before events with the help of the accounting group
- proper set forms are used for taking in the funds
- MC announces the gross takings of the night before
- an audited report is published within a week of Easter

Results

With regard to the three main broad objectives, the only one that was fully realised was carrying out a post mortem. With regard to financial transparency only some of the objectives were met. The most important one - an audited report - was only partially completed and this revealed that the Easterval Committee had gone bust.

This however, generated a closer examination of the events and revealed that whilst the Queenshow brought in a lot of money at the gates, it also cost the committee a huge amount so that they spent outside their means. It was the reason for the festival not making a profit.

People realised from this that there is an urgent need to reassess expenditure if the festival is to produce a profit again. It was felt that a whole process of discussion and planning was needed to bring Easterval back on track. It was felt that this process had to start now and not be left until a month before Easterval as was the case this year.

This then led into a discussion about the aims and objectives of Easterval again. Consensus was reached on three broad aims which can be used as the criteria for judging the success of Easterval. People said that :-

- “Easter must be a cultural and sporting event bringing out the unique culture of Union Island. (It mustn’t just be entertainment.)”
- “A project or programme must be identified and made public on which proceeds are to be spent”
- “To ensure the survival of cultural event, efforts must be made for full participation at all levels to foster community spirit/unity.”
-

The idea is now to take each of these objectives and see what needs to be done to put them into action through group discussion producing subsets of goals and success criteria. PM&E therefore becomes an integral part of the planning. It provides focus with goals to aim for, but it also provides something against which to monitor progress. In each case, the criteria for success are determined by the local community members.

Reflections on Cultural Wakes
PM&E at the departmental level - Looking at the Quality of our Work

PM&E is being used at the departmental level as a capacity building tool. It can help examine the quality of the work of the CDD in a participatory way and integrate the process of monitoring and evaluation at the departmental level. With PM&E, the department:-

- 1. Defines where it wants to go (what is it hoping to achieve - the purpose)**
- 2. Clarifies it's success criteria for that particular activity (what kind of output/impact is expected)**
- 3. Discusses how it is going to achieve these (producing action plans)**
- 4. Assesses whether it has been successful (lessons to be learnt)**
- 5. Establishes new goals and success criteria (planning tools)**

Through group discussion Field Officers agreed on the following:-

1. Aims and Objectives of Wakes

- To facilitate through popular theatre and other art forms expression by the community of its needs, problems and solutions
- To sensitise the community to an issue affecting a community
- To encourage broader participation in CDD activities
- To foster community cohesion and a sense of togetherness
- To maintain the cultural heritage
- To act as an educational tool

2. Indicators of success

In order to achieve the above, the Field Officers examined a number of issues that they felt were important for a successful wake and produced a check list of goals.

- The wake deals with the issues/theme
- The issues are repeated throughout
- The MC is sensitised to the issues
- The emotional climate is good with positive audience response and participation
- The initial impact is good
- The setting is conducive and has a positive impact on the community
- There is a smooth flow of activities without long waits and interruptions
- The quality of the sound system is good

3. Achieving these Goals

The Field Officers discuss how to put the above into action producing a set of objectives for action. This can be a useful tool to guide their own preparation in the field. They may want to focus on certain indicators only. They may want further discussion of what they mean by 'good impact' etc.

4. Participatory assessment

After the next wake the Field Officers return to this check list in order to have a frank assessment.

A similar process has to be undertaken at the field level in order to capture the community's own vision of success.

Qualitative Aspects of Participation

This simple form could be used to reflect on participation for all projects undertaken

Aspects of Participation (Questions)	Summary description of participation in the project
<p><u>1. Impetus to participate</u> At whose initiative do community members participate? At community members'/leaders' ? At community member's own? At CDD staff?</p>	
<p><u>2. Motivation for participation</u> What incentives do community members have for participation? Status/community esteem? Personal benefit? Community benefit? Other?</p>	
<p><u>3. Status of people participating</u> Who is participating? What are the characteristics of the people participating? Local leaders/people of influence/ordinary person? Job status (formal, petty trading, informal) Income status (high/low/unemployed)? Sex (male/female) Age (young/old) Education (educated/functionally illiterate) Residence (established/transient) Land status (house owner/tenant/squatter) Organisation (organised group/unorganised)</p>	
<p><u>4. Quality of participation</u> What activities are people participating in? Decision-making/organising/labour Describe the kinds of activities people participate in to determine number and range of major and minor activities</p>	
<p><u>5. Effective power with participation</u> What decisions are people involved in? Who is deciding what and who is controlling what? (see 3 for status of people) No power = no control over decisions & resources Some power = some control over decisions & resources Extensive power = control over decisions & all resources</p>	

Adapted from Cohen and Uphoff 1977

PM&E and Vocational Training

A simple form could be used for PM&E which would carry out a survey of the trainees when they join the course, while they are in the course and after the course - producing a simple trace history. I would also recommend biannual feedback sessions with all vocational trainers and with course participants.

At the beginning of the course

Aspects of Participation (Questions)	Summary description of participation in vocational training
<p><u>1. Impetus to participate</u> At whose initiative did participant join the course? parent/ relative? other person? his/her own?</p>	
<p><u>2. Motivation for participation</u> What incentives does the participant have for participation? why did the participant join the course? what are the participants expectations?</p>	
<p><u>3. Status of people participating</u> What are the characteristics of the people participating? Age (young/old) Sex (male/female) Education (primary/secondary/other) Status before joining - employed/unemployed Residence (near/far from training centre)</p>	
<p><u>4. Likes and dislikes of course</u> What activities does the participant enjoy in the course? What activities does the participant dislike?</p>	
<p><u>5. Changes to the course</u> Does the participant have any recommendations?</p>	
<p><u>6. After the course</u> What is the participant doing now? What impact has the course had on the participant? Was the course useful? How?</p>	

Start, Stumble, Self Correct, Share

PM&E is one of a family of approaches for reversing centralisation, standardisation and top-down development. PM&E enables and empowers the poor to do more of their own analysis, to take command of their lives and resources and to improve their well-being as they define it.

The core of good PM&E is our own behaviour and attitudes. It involves:

- being self-aware and self-critical
- embracing error
- handing over the stick
- sitting, listening and learning
- improvising, inventing and adapting
- using our own best judgement at all times

So we can ask who lectures, who holds the stick, whose finger wags? Whose knowledge, analysis and priorities count?

Ours? Theirs, as we assume them to be? Or theirs and they freely express them?

Good PM&E is empowering, not extractive.

Good PM&E makes mistakes, learns from them and so is self-improving

Good PM&E spreads and improves on its own

So start. Do not wait. Get on with it. Relax. Try things. Learn by doing. Experiment. Ask: what went well? What went badly? What can we learn? How can we do better? How can we help others to do better? Have a go. Why not?

Adapted from Robert Chambers on PRA and applied to PM&E, 1992