EVALUATIONS IN MSF:
What’s in it for my project?

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MSF commitments to learning & accountability

- Chantilly principles (1996)
- MSF OC's strategies
Questions to the audience

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From which country are you joining the webinar today?

Have you ever been involved in a project evaluation?
  - yes/no

If yes, in what capacity?
  - (co)evaluator
  - supporting for data collection
  - commissioner
  - team member of the project being evaluated
  - key informant interviewee
  - other
What is evaluation?
The definition of evaluation

Evaluation is a process of determining the value of something: merit, worth, or significance.

It is the assessment of the design or strategy, implementation and results of health interventions against established MSF or international standards, humanitarian principles, MSF policy and country strategy

(MSF’s Manual on Evaluation; available on www.evaluation.msf.org)

An evaluation produces judgement.
MSF evaluands

- Medical operations (projects or parts of projects)
- Emergency responses
- Strategies
- Thematic areas
- Departments, Country Missions
Why do we evaluate?

...towards a framework for learning and accountability
Purpose of MSF evaluations - examples

- to use the lessons learnt [...] for adaptation of the strategy for future interventions aimed at reducing morbidity & mortality due to cholera outbreaks.

- to reflect transversally on the experience of implementing digital health promotion in a variety of contexts and capitalising on this experience [...] to strengthen MSF's accountability, contribute to institutional learning, and inform future decisions regarding the conduct and transfer of trauma project management to local actors.
How do we evaluate?
The Logic of Evaluation: Why do evaluations make judgements?

- Essentially a **comparative exercise** between ‘what is’ and ‘what should be’
- Compared against available **norms and standards** (MSF guidelines, Sphere, frameworks for what ‘good’ looks like)
- Often based on ‘normative’ **criteria of value** (DAC/ALNAP)
- Make a **judgement** about how ‘good’ something is, **in order to understand what works, for who, under what circumstances**. (i.e. learning)
Evaluation questions and criteria

❖ Five to seven high level questions (plus sub questions)
❖ Responding to the evaluation purpose
❖ Invoking criteria of value (implicit or explicit)
❖ Free from bias
❖ Evaluative?

Different types of questions
• What could be done to make the project more effective? (Action oriented)
  • In what ways is the project effective? (Descriptive)
  • How effective is the project? (Evaluative)

Example questions
1. Is the project addressing the real needs? (relevance)
2. How was a needs assessment done? Was it updated along with the changing context? (appropriateness)
3. Have project objectives been achieved? (effectiveness)
4. Were project activities adequately coordinated with other actors? (coordination)
5. Were things done with minimum resources possible? (efficiency)
6. What difference did the project make? (impact)

Asking the right questions is key; needs collaboration between project team and the evaluation units!
When to evaluate

Timing depends on the evaluation purpose and use

- ex-ante (based on forecasts)
- real-time (feeding back directly)
- mid-term (formative)
- final (summative)
- ex-post (after the fact)

Never too early and never too late!

Evaluations should be aligned with MSF planning cycles

- think about how the results will be used
- don’t rush the preparation phase
- allow sufficient time for evaluation implementation
- ensure availability of stakeholders
What is the evaluation process?
The 6-step process

**STEP 1 – scoping**
deciding what to evaluate and why

**STEP 2 – preparation**
selecting, contracting, onboarding the evaluation team

**STEP 3 – inception**
elaborating the evaluation plan and data collection instruments

**STEP 4 – data collection & analysis**
collecting data needed to answer evaluation questions

**STEP 5 – report writing**
reporting evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations

**STEP 6 – dissemination & use**
sharing evaluation results; facilitating their use
Where evaluation data comes from

Primary data
- Routine monitoring data
- Project documents
- Primarily quantitative

Secondary data
- Literature
- Interviews
- Focus groups
- Observation
- Surveys
- Primarily qualitative

Mixed method and pragmatic

Pragmatic
- What data is needed to answer the questions?
- What data already exists?
- What additional data needs to be collected?
- What is feasible in terms of cost, time, access?

Mixed methods
- Secondary data can be used to fill gaps in primary data or explain what the data tells us! (Mixed Methods)

Triangulation
- Multiple sources/methods can also be used to check validity of findings (Triangulation)
Who conducts the evaluation?
Competences

- **evaluation competency**
  - evaluation designs
  - data collection & analysis
  - listening & facilitation

- **subject specific**
  - expertise in specific thematic areas

- **context**
  - the specific country or region,
    organizational context

- Team or individuals
- External, internal and mixed
- MSF experience or without
Roles and responsibilities

- scoping advice, selection of evaluation approach
- select the evaluation team
- liaison between all evaluation stakeholders
- contribute as (co)evaluators
- share evaluation findings
- facilitate evaluations’ uptake
- check evaluations against quality standards

MSF EVALUATION UNITS
How to take the best out of an evaluation?
Making evaluation findings known

Learning from evaluation findings

Learning from the evaluation process

Influencing high-level decision making

Influencing project strategies & implementation plans

Evaluation use
Who should be driving the evaluation use?

- the initially defined intended users (e.g. project being evaluated, commissioners, senior management)
- VEU & SEU can support the uptake process
YOU can be involved in many different ways!

- Requesting an evaluation
- Supporting
- Consulting during data collection phase
- Consulting during evaluation findings validation
- Learning from a completed evaluation
- Sharing evaluation findings
Resources

Website (IEG): Repository of evaluation reports

IEG Evaluation Manual

Sharepoint SEU

Sharepoint VEU
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THANK YOU!
Question to the audience

If you would like to dig deeper into a specific topic concerning evaluations, what would that be?

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Q&A
From which country are you joining the webinar today?
Have you ever been involved in a project evaluation?

- Yes: 54%
- No: 46%
If yes, in what capacity? (select all that apply)

- (co)evaluator: 13%
- Supporting for data collection: 21%
- Commissioner: 7%
- Team member of the project being evaluated: 30%
- Key informant interviewee: 17%
- Other: 13%
If you would like to dig deeper into a specific topic concerning evaluations, what would that be?