Monitoring & Evaluation Manual

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Introduction

1. Introduction

Rural Educational Activities for Development (READ) is a civil society non-profit organization working for the cause of the most vulnerable Dalit, Tribal, Women and Children since 1993. It was started with a group of likeminded individual to address the issues of women and children since its inception, gradually it undertaken need assessments with community participation and introduced an innovative program implementation approach to address the significant thematic issues to bring difference.

The overall aim of this manual is to establish common structures and standards across the READ organization that governs the application of effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems with a view to maximizing the benefits from READ's interventions.

More specifically, this manual aims to:

- Demonstrate READ's commitment to monitoring and evaluating its work and using the results to drive performance and impact.

- Set out minimum requirements, principles to be respected, as well as roles and responsibilities.

- Provide an overview of and basic introduction to M&E at READ, with additional tools referenced to provide further guidance and information.

All READ staff must comply with this manual and therefore they constitute its primary audience. However, this manual is also aimed at external stakeholders such as donors, READ Members, partners and users, to provide information on READ standards and procedures. Hence this manual plays an important role in delivering READ accountability and transparency on M&E.

For quality intervention and Result Based implementation READ adopted Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) mechanism developing M&E manual with a sequence of process involving management team, senior staff, community leaders. To develop the manual following sequence of process followed at internal level such as:-

- Workshop on Result Based Management focused on M&E (4 days)

- Internal meeting with core staff including management team and field staff (3 times)

- Community meeting at village level to share the concept for participation in M&E process

- M&E manual development workshop (3 days)

This Manual attempts to

- Introduce key concepts;

- Present simple, clear procedures, with a checklist of the process, timing and costs of building participatory programme M&E for READ

- This manual emphasizes: the development of the overall M&E system, in relation to the Organizational Strategic Plan;

- It focuses on thematic   components because they are essential in order for READ's intervention priorities.

2. READ's Definition of Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring

Monitoring is the continuous collection and analysis of information used by management and partners to

determine progress on the implementation of activities, achievement of objectives and use of resources. Monitoring can happen at several levels, including local, regional, and global as well as at project and programme level.

Evaluation

Evaluation Evaluations are formal READ activities that provide evidence of the achievement of results and institutional performance. Evaluation is a periodic and systematic assessment, as impartial as possible, of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of an activity in the context of stated objectives. Evaluations can focus on different READ activities, including programmes, projects, policies and organizational units. Evaluations should provide credible, reliable and useful information, enabling timely incorporation of findings, recommendations and lessons learned into relevant decision-making processes.

3. Purpose of Monitoring & Evaluation

- **Learning and Improvement**

    M&E activities help to understand why, and the extent to which, intended and unintended results are achieved, and their impact on stakeholders. It is therefore an important agent of change through the provision of useful feedback and a commitment to act on that feedback, thereby driving organizational learning. Furthermore, as a learning tool, M&E adds to READ's body of knowledge with respect to best practices in monitoring, evaluation and conservation.

- **Accountability**

    M&E plays a crucial role in accountability. READ is answerable to its Members, partners, donors and users on whether its policies, programmes and projects are having the intended results. READ also needs to demonstrate that resources are used efficiently and effectively. The M&E process, together with the required documentation that accompanies it, holds READ staff and contracted implementing partners responsible for their performance. High quality M&E builds Members, donors, users and partners confidence in READ.

- **Evidence-Based Management**

    The results of M&E activities are an important input to the decision-making process within IUCN and affect a range of management processes, including risk and performance management and decisions to change, expand or contract programmes.

M&E systems are designed and needed to meet specific needs of the organization and the project. it is required to address the needs of all participating institutions and target communities. M&E is an essential tool for the organization to track progress of implementation.

It support for
- To make day-to-day decision about the programme
- To provide an ongoing picture of progress
- To maintain expected standard in terms of quality, effectiveness and efficiency of project work
- To make sure resources are used effectively
- To develop work plans
- To identify problems and find solutions at an early stage
- To identify new emerging opportunities
- To provide records of events
- To help the staff feel their work has a definite purpose
- To review adequacy of budget allocations
- To ensure institutional capacity
- To ensure timely implementation
- To track progress towards achieving stated objectives

To Be Accountable to Community
- Information to show how their problems, as they perceive them, are being addressed
- To know what is happening to them and what is likely to happen to them in future
- To show that the project is working in the most effective manner
- Information to show that resources are being used optimally.
- To enable the community participants to comment about the quality of work

Risks in collecting information for M&E READ realizes
There is always a danger of collecting too much information on every detail of a program. The problem associated with this are:-
- If too much data is collected it may not be measured or recorded accurately
- There is lack of time to analyze or use the large amounts of information collected
- If large amounts of information are being collected regularly from the same community they may resent it.
- If information is too detailed it may be difficult to identify important trends
- It may consume all resources leaving none for analysis and interpretation of data
- May result in irrelevant data collection

Hence READ adopted simple pragmatic and user friendly. This ensures that large resources are not required to operationalize the process. Use of computer technology is one concrete option to make M&E system effective, efficient and cost effective.

Another key issue for successful and optimal functioning of the M&E system realized that the extent to which donor or senior staff plays its role in providing feedback to the implementer or field staff respectively based on the monitoring reports. If there is no timely exchange of feedback based on the monitoring report, this gradually affect the motivation and level of conviction and commitment regarding the value of the M&E system.

4. The Key Type of Monitoring and Evaluation
There are many different types of M&E, and some may be more appropriate and useful depending on the activity being evaluated. However, READ's M&E work generally falls in one of the categories below.

Monitoring
Monitoring is a management tool to improve organisational delivery and performance. At READ monitoring is almost always undertaken internally (including by project staff), although it is not unusual at the project level for donors to undertake monitoring of their own. READ's organisation-wide monitoring and reporting efforts focus on the below.

- **Programme Monitoring**
  Programme monitoring measures the contribution of an READ programme or region to the achievement of READ's Global Programme results through a set of result and impact indicators. Every READ programme and region reports on an annual basis on implementation progress and delivery of results. This is aggregated into an annual Programme Report, shared with READ's main partners. Impact results are collected every four years and are presented in the Final Programme Report at the end of the inter-sessional period.

- **Project Portfolio Monitoring**
  This measures the health, performance and risks associated with a programme portfolio, including growth/decline, reliance on unsecured income, cost recovery and risks associated with project implementation. READ programmes and regions report on a quarterly basis against agreed risk indicators.

- **Project Monitoring**
  This type of monitoring is measures and reports on the implementation progress of a project while it is being implemented. The format and deadlines for reporting are typically determined by the project donor and reporting is often against a logical framework and set of indicators agreed at the start of the project.

Evaluation

Evaluations can be commissioned internally or externally, and implemented by internal or external teams, or mixed teams. The main types of evaluation carried out at READ are:

- **Project Evaluations**
  These cover projects, which are time-bound sets of activities aimed at delivering a set of agreed conservation and human wellbeing results. A project rests within a programme unit or region and contributes to the intended results of that programme. A project evaluation will assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of the project. Project evaluations are undertaken as agreed with the project's donor(s), normally at the mid-term of the project schedule and at its phasing out.

- **Programme Evaluations**
  This type of evaluation covers READ's local and regional thematic programmes, and includes the work of the READ Commissions where appropriate. Programme evaluation again assesses relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of the programme. READ defines, internally, a series of programme level evaluations of strategic importance, normally reviewing organizational units or other topics of strategic importance.

- **Strategic Reviews**
  These address the organizational performance of READ as a whole or of its regional offices, global thematic programmes or Commissions. READ practices a form of review called organizational assessment, intended to assess any unit in terms of its organizational performance, organizational capacity, organizational motivation and external environment. READ undertakes one or two Strategic Reviews a year. The Executive Secretary and the main READ framework partners jointly commission an External Strategic Review of READ as per the need, which assesses organizational performance as a whole.

- **Policy Evaluations**
  These assess the results of READ's policy influencing efforts and the implementation of READ Resolutions and Recommendations. Most READ evaluations include a policy evaluation aspect.

5. Criteria and Guiding Principle

All READ M&E activities must respect the criteria and guiding principles below to ensure that M&E activities contribute to the READ Programme and the goals of the organisation. Other concerns such as financial viability, equity, gender and poverty are equally important and should be explored as necessary.

- **Monitoring criteria**

  In line with RBM, information collected through monitoring needs to comply with the following so-called SMART criteria and be:

  (S)pecific - The information captured measures what it is supposed to measure. In other words, the data collected clearly and directly relates to the achievement of an objective and not to any other objective. If the information collected is specific, it can tell us whether the change we seek to create is happening or not.

  (M)easurable – Before starting monitoring, staff must make sure that the information required can be practically collected using measurable indicators.

  (A)chievable – Any changes measured must be feasible in the given time-frame.

  (R)elevant – Monitoring results must make a contribution to selected priorities, i.e. they must fit with the READ Programme and where possible READ results indicators must be included in monitoring.

  (T)ime-bound – Monitoring is not open-ended but allows change to be tracked at the desired frequency for a set period.

- **Evaluation criteria**

  In general, READ evaluations explore the five major criteria outlined below. Not all of the criteria need to be systematically reviewed in all cases as READ may make modifications to ensure the criteria fit the specific nature of the evaluation. In all cases, an READ evaluation must first consider all five criteria and decide which ones are the most important given the context. READ evaluation reports must explicitly state the criteria used in the evaluation.

  Relevance – To what extent is the policy, programme, project or organizational unit contributing to the strategic direction of READ and/or its Members and partners? Is it appropriate in the context of its environment?

  Effectiveness – To what extent is the policy, programme, project, or organizational unit meeting its objectives and performing well?

  Efficiency – To what extent is the policy, programme, project or organizational unit using its resources cost-effectively? Does the quality and quantity of results achieved justify the resources invested? Are there more cost-effective methods of achieving the same result?

  Impact – What are the positive, negative, primary, secondary and long-term effects of an intervention directly, indirectly, intended or unintended? In other words, what difference has the activity made?

  Sustainability – Is the enabling environment within which the policy, programme, project or

organizational unit operates supportive to its continuity? To what extent will the activities and outputs be maintained after development support is withdrawn?

6. Monitoring and evaluation principles
All READ M&E work must adhere to the principles set out below.

- **Results-Oriented Accountability**
  M&E must focus on the extent to which the work of READ contributes to policy, programme, and overall objectives of the Union. A results-oriented accountability regime recognizes that there are a number of approaches to obtain results. It provides the flexibility for managers to use their insights and creativity to obtain the results desired. Similarly, a results-oriented system supports a management and governance system that provides guidance to managers, and requires information from managers about performance and learning. System controls for accountability for inputs are primarily left to internal audit.

- **Improving Planning and Delivery**
  M&E activities must provide useful findings and recommendations. Those under consideration should see M&E as an asset aimed at improving results and thereby strengthening the organization. Sustained involvement in, and ownership of, M&E processes contributes to better planning, decision-making and strategy formulation at all levels.

- **Quality Control**
  M&E involves the systematic integration of a wide assortment of knowledge and information related to a set of questions posed. As a result of gathering, analyzing and making judgments, READ staff and their stakeholders make important decisions related to the quality of their work at the policy, programme, project and organizational level.

- **Supporting an Evaluation Culture**
  M&E is most effective when it forms part of an organization's culture – a way of thinking and a way of acting. Concretely, M&E is seen as an important part of all READ staff responsibilities. As such, READ's incentive systems need to support learning about and appropriately using M&E. All staff should see the M&E process as a tool that can help them improve their work and their results.

- **Working in Partnership**
  M&E often involves multiple stakeholders. Those affected by the outcome of M&E work have a right to be involved in the process. Stakeholders should be actively involved in all aspects of the evaluation process. Such involvement will make evaluations better understood, promote contributions and acceptance, and will increase the likelihood of use.

- **Transparency**
  The transparency of the M&E process is an important aspect of ensuring that M&E information is extensively used by managers, and the Management committee. Clear communication with stakeholders concerning the purpose of the monitoring and/or evaluation work, the key questions and intended uses of the results of the M&E process, along with standards for the design, data collection and analysis will maximize the transparency of the M&E process.

- **Access**
  READ makes M&E results publicly accessible. All final reports, as well as management

responses where available, are uploaded on the READ website. Findings and lessons learned will be disseminated as appropriate and in accordance with READ's aspiration to be seen as a leader in M&E and in the spirit of collaboration.

- **Ethics**
  M&E shall provide due regard for the welfare, beliefs, and customs of those involved or affected, avoiding conflict of interest. Stakeholder rights and interests shall be respected, particularly with regard to respecting culture and customs, fundamental values, the right to or not to participate, and ensuring confidentiality of individual stakeholders.

  Ethical M&E requires that management and/or commissioners of M&E work remain open to the findings and do not allow vested interests to interfere. It also involves ensuring that READ carefully considers whether a monitoring and/or evaluation process is the appropriate tool to address the questions and issues raised about any policy, programme, project or organizational unit, or if some other process is more suitable such as an audit or performance appraisal.

  External evaluators must receive a copy of this policy as an appendix to their contract and adhere to it. Internal evaluators will, in addition, adhere strictly to the READ Code of Conduct and Professional Ethics for the organisation (henceforth 'READ Code of Conduct'). If wrongdoing is uncovered or suspected in M&E activities, reporting should follow the procedures for reporting ethical misconduct as outlined in the READ Code of Conduct.

  Impartiality M&E processes should be complete and fair in their examination and record the strengths and weaknesses of the policy, programme, project or organizational unit under consideration. As much as possible, M&E procedures should guard against distortion caused by personal feelings and biases of any party to the evaluation.

- **Independence**
  M&E processes are expected to truthfully and honestly describe successes and shortcomings. The M&E function should therefore be independent to ensure credibility and maximize benefits. Independence contributes to impartial M&E and ensures that the ability of those carrying out M&E to provide credible reports and advice is not compromised. However, as defined above, there is a difference in the need for independence for monitoring and evaluation, respectively. Monitoring is an integrated part of management and therefore must be under the authority of the Executive Secretary. When it comes to evaluation, independence is achieved where evaluation is independent from managers responsible for programme design, management and implementation, or organizational processes. The evaluation function shall be separate from READ's management and report to General and governing body. Management influence over terms of reference, selection of evaluators and scope of evaluations shall be limited. The Head of the PME Unit may propose to the Council any measure that he or she believes is necessary to ensure evaluation independence. While a high degree of independence is desirable, it does not mean all M&E should be external but rather that the principle of independence must be respected. Independence should not prevent the M&E function from enjoying a close working relationship with management and the programme functions to ensure maximum organizational learning and improved organizational practices as well as capacity building of staff on M&E.

- **Credibility**
  READ is committed to ensuring that M&E is carried out according to a high quality of accepted standards in the professional field and based on reliable data and observations. The

use of these standards by READ managers is reviewed on a regular basis, and progress towards improving the quality of READ's evaluations is reported on an annual basis.
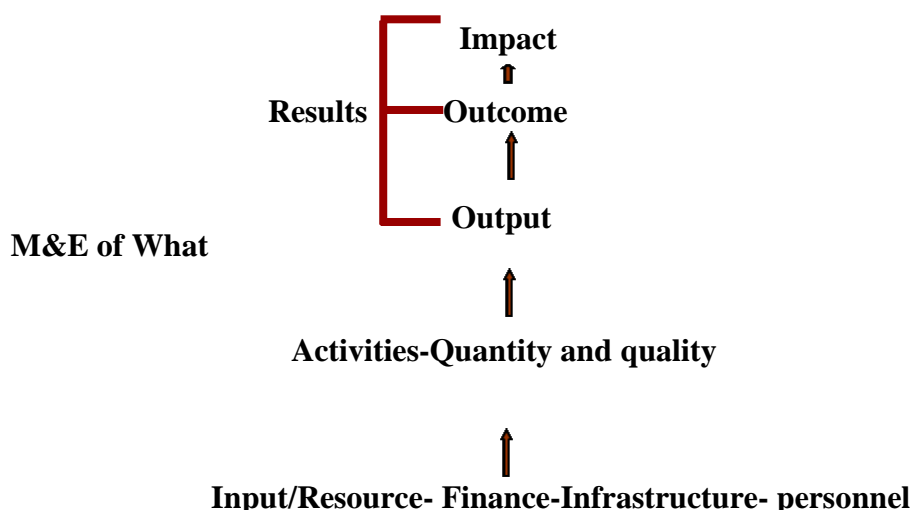
Improving the quality of evaluations in READ is a critical aspect of the credibility of its evaluation work.

- **Utility**
  M&E must serve the information needs of intended users. There is no point in engaging in M&E unless it is seen as useful and used in decision-making and programme improvement. Assessments of the extent to which evaluations are used in READ form part of regular reporting on evaluation in READ.

7. **Qualities for M&E**
   - Understanding on the project goal, objectives and activities.
   - Trust on the capacity of people implementing the project.
   - Attitude towards providing suggestions rather than decisions.
   - Impartial
   - Ability and patience to understand and analyze all aspects of the project.
   - Ability to conduct M&E in a participatory manner and use of other tools.
   - Non-judgmental
   - Sensitivity towards local culture and gender
   - Ability to facilitate
   - Good listener/speaker

Results — **Impact**
⬆
Outcome
⬆
Output

M&E of What

⬆

Activities-Quantity and quality

⬆

Input/Resource- Finance-Infrastructure- personnel

Methods for M&E
- Observation
- Group Discussion
- Rating and ranking exercise
- Interview/Questionnaire/Schedule
- Study of records
- Comparison of photographs before and after
- PRA – time line, time trend (before and after situation), SWOT analysis

Process of M&E

Pre :-
- Decide aspects for monitoring
- What information has to be collected
- From where/whom
- How will we collect : deciding the methods and tools
- How frequently & when
- Who will collect the required information.

During :-
- Collection of information
- Informing the community
- Creating informal environment
- Interaction with the community
- Applying the data collection format

Post :-
- Compiling the information
- Analyzing the information
- Draw learning's and make decisions
- Communicate decisions
- Monitoring implementation of decisions.

Steps to Conduct M&E

Collect data/ information
- Compilation and presentation of data / information
- Analyze the data and find out success, failure, strengths and weakness and changes in outside situation
- Identify learning / Make decisions
- Document learning and decisions and communicate to the concerned persons
- Monitor the implementation of learning and decisions and the monitoring system

Types of Data Collection

- **On site means:** where Monitoring takes place in the site or field is called as onsite Monitoring.
- **MIS based means**: the data collected from the field are sent to the office where it is made compilation which is easy to communicate with the community as well as Donor Agency. After clarification on Onsite based Monitoring he made understand on the topic, steps to conduct Monitoring and design the Monitoring system. So the followings are the steps to design Monitoring.

Steps to conduct	Steps to Design
Collect data / Information	Decide what information to collect: What Decide and Design what method and tool to be used for collecting the information: how Decide who will collect information: by Whom
Compilation and presentation of Data/ Information	Decide what tool to use to compile the data Decide who will compile information Decide and design format for presentation of data report
Analyses the data and find out Success, failure, Strength, weakness and changes in out side situation	Decide who will analyze the data Decide and design format/guideline for analysis and presentation of analysis
Identify learning/make decision	Decide who will identify learning, make decision, Decide how will the learning be identified and decision be made
Document Learning and decisions, Communicate the concerned persons	Decide who will document and communicate Decide the format frame work and the methods to communicate
Monitor the implementations of Learning and Decisions and the Monitoring System	Decide method and tool for monitoring of the monitoring system and monitor the implementation of decision.

Learning and Decision

Learning is nothing but strategy through which different tools is used and measure the components of the projects
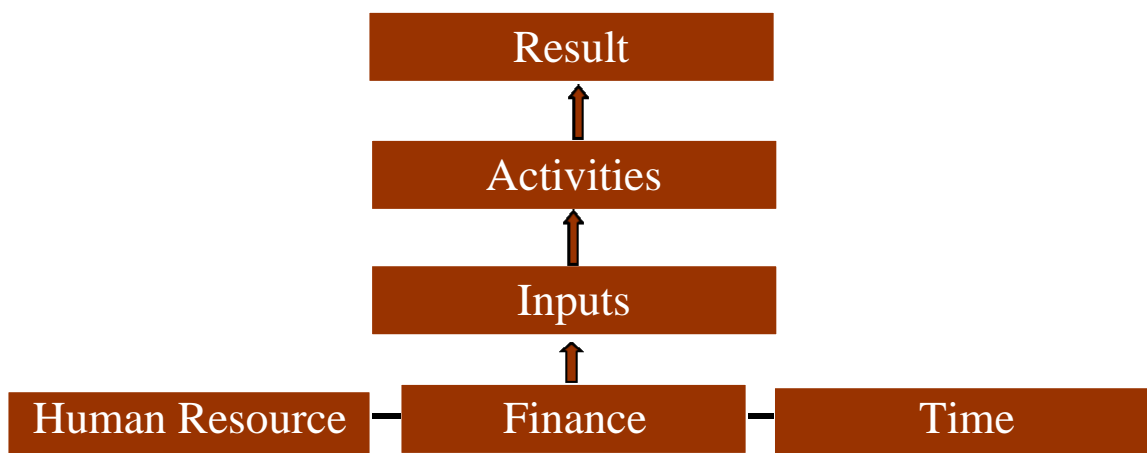
Performance Indicator

Performance of the Project are measured based on activities and results using measurement indicators.

Project Performance

Activities	Result
Indicator	Indicator

Preparing for Monitoring

Some of the key preparatory requirements for monitoring are:-

Defining key indicators for external monitoring focusing on both process and results.

Indicators for completed activities and results

Indicators related to surveys and consultations

Indicators for livelihood restoration, housing, health (outcome)

Indicators on participation, gender aspects and participation of vulnerable groups.

Budget and adequacy of funds

Frequency of reporting

Monthly/ Quarterly Progress report

Quarterly financial report

Annual Report

Annual financial audit

Mid- term Evaluation Report

Final Report

Institutional Capacity

Staff

Skills & core Competencies

Field office logistics

Timeline

The timeline is fixed as per the project needs and in requirement.

Criteria for Output & Outcome

- Output result statements are during project period/immediate result of the activities
  Outcome results are formed by the end of the project which is consisting of all the output. e.g.
  Activity: 2 work shop on entrepreneurship development for women leaders

  Result statement may be
  - 200 women will know about the entrepreneurship development
  - 200 women will start mobilizing IGP
  - 200 women will initiate IGP

Preparation of Monitoring Question (quantitative/qualitative)
(in case of qualitative indicator the indicator will recognized as %)

Education	
Results: 1500 children improved learning level at elementary education	
Quantitative indicator	**Questions**
# of children able to read and write alphabet, word, sentence and paragraph	How many children able to read and write alphabet, word, sentence and paragraph
# of children able to count and write numbers 0-99	How many children able to count an write numbers 0-99
# of children able to do addition, subtraction, multiplication and division	How many children able to do addition, subtraction, multiplication and division
Health	
Results: Increase institutional safe delivery	
# of institutional delivery realized	How many mothers had institutional delivery
# of mothers and child accessed health services during and after delivery	How many mother and child accessed health services during and after delivery
# of mothers accessed financial benefit under the schemes	How many mothers accessed financial benefit under the schemes
Livelihood and Governance	
Results: Increased accessed to food and social security schemes	
# of eligible person accessed PDS	How many eligible person accessed PDS
# of eligible persons accessed pension	How many eligible persons accessed pension
Child Rights and protection	
Result: Reduced corporal punishment at pre-primary and primary school	
# of school reported no harm to child	How many school reported no harm to child
# of children reported no beating and scolding by teachers	How many children reported no beating and scolding by teachers

Quantitative monitoring result assessment

Indicators	Project target	annual target	Quarterly achievement	Half-yearly achievement	Yearly achievement	Reason for variation in target	Project achievement	Plan for next month/ quarter/six-month
No. of forest protection committee have been formed with recognized by the forest department	40	20						

Qualitative monitoring result assessment

Result	Indicators	Parameters		Response
150 children improved learning level at elementary education	Reading and writing	• Not at all read and write - • Read but not write- • Read and write -	0 1 2	02
	Count and write numbers 0-99	• Not at all count - • Can count but not write • Count and write	0 - 1 - 2	01
	Do addition, subtraction multiplication and division with 3 digit	• Not at all do any of these - • Addition and subtraction with 2 digit • Do all with 3 digit	0 - 1 - 2	01
Total Marks				03
Grade				II

Grading: 0 – Poor, -1– Good, 2– very good, 3– excellent