AHS4118S Monitoring Disability in Society Postgraduate Diploma Course.

Description of Monitoring Steps within a Project Cycle with a Logical Model Template.

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Introduction

Article 27 of the United Nation Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities UNCRPD (UN, 2006) highlights the right of persons with disabilities to employment on an equal basis with others and to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in an open and inclusive labour market under just and fair conditions. Article 30 of the UNCRPD (UN, 2006), clearly states children with disabilities have the right to equal access to play, recreation and leisure and sporting activities including those in the school system (Alkazi, 2002). However, within the school environment children with disabilities often face many barriers in accessing their rights to sports, recreation and play. This is due to schools' lack of clear policies of inclusion for allowing students with disabilities to fully participate in above stated activities, and the coaches' insufficient skills on how to adapt sports and arts activities for learners with disabilities. Despite this, schools have the responsibility and obligation of making such cultural activities accessible to all children regardless of their disabilities and research has elaborated that partaking in extra-curricular activities in sports, arts and culture like drama, dance, and competitive sports increases youth (including those with disabilities)' opportunities for accessing sustainable livelihoods opportunities within their communities.

This assignment paper consists of six (6) sections. Firstly, it will describe the monitoring steps within the project cycle. Secondly, it will give a brief description of the visions and missions of Mpumalanga Department of Education (MDE), Inkanyiso Special School and Mogoditshane Senior Secondary School. Thirdly, it consists of a Logic Model for monitoring the livelihoods development of disabled youth. Fourthly, it highlights indicators on participation and universal accessibility. Fifthly, it will discuss and critique the International Classification of Functioning (ICF) framework and the Washington Group 6 Questions. Lastly, it will reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the Logic Model as a project management tool to monitor disability inclusion to monitor the implementation of both Articles of the UNCRPD.

Monitoring steps within the project cycle

Monitoring refers to the systematic and continuous collection, analysis and use of information for management control and decision-making by stakeholders within the organisation. *Center for Disability Research* and *Policy*, *University of Sydney* (*2014, p5*), states that, the monitoring process supports the development and sustainability of community-based programs and helps them grow and be recognised as a positive force in changing disabled people's lives for the better. It involves partaking in a number of steps to determine if the activities that an organisation is involved in are in line with its overall goal and actually achieve what it set out to do in order to improve people's lives.

Step 1: Prepare for Collaboration

Development work involves cross cutting themes, thus in communities there are people equally committed to goals similar to ours or working on projects similar to ours from different dimensions. *Center for Disability Research* and *Policy*, *University of Sydney* (*2014*), refers to such people as 'stakeholders' due to their vested interest in the success of the program in achieving its goal. Furthermore, it makes a case for project coordinators to meet with all stakeholders likely to be negatively or positively affected by the outcomes of the project for what is called a stakeholder analysis. Whereby information will be collected from these stakeholders on how the organisation can best meet their needs as it dispenses its mandate. Ensuring that the said stakeholders are interested, well versed in the project and are capable of representing other beneficiaries and their families cannot be stressed enough. So as to ensure that the workshops and services provided by the project are truly participatory and inclusive in nature as stipulated by the principles of community based rehabilitation. Which is concerned with eliminating barriers and environmental factors that impede on people with disabilities' social participation in the community (i.e. sports, arts and recreation) and subsequent sustainable livelihoods activities. For example within the context of our project, the Special Education Department as the lead initiators of the project, we identified all the various stakeholders who might be;

i. Affected by the project like parents and youth with disabilities in the school who are just as concerned with the limited sustainable livelihoods opportunities for youth with disabilities in our community and country,
ii. Useful and sometimes conflicting partners in the redress of this problem within the school, community and country at large. Such as the Guidance and Counselling Department, teachers, school administrators and other

external government departments like the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture to see how we can collaborate to improve the situation of youth with disabilities from our different ends.

Step 2: Design Information

The second step of monitoring is centred on five exercises. These exercises are specifically meant to clarify the purpose of the project undertaken to the project's stakeholder. As well as propel a motivation for the collection of the data from them. In relation to monitoring for Article 27 and 30 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD, 2006), the workshop could explain the relationship between the two articles and their importance in realising better outcomes for youth with disabilities (It will explain why is the information needed and how will it be used?). For example in our project, all stakeholders within the school community like administrators, teachers and extra- curriculum activities coaches and learners with disability were sensitised on Article 27 and 30 of the UNCRPD by the special education staff. How sports, arts and recreation act as a vehicle for the rehabilitation and social integration of disabled youth in the community, assist them to gain skills relevant to the job market such as team work and showcases their abilities and talents without making disability the focal point (Walsh, 2015) were elucidated. And everyone then explored how we can restructure the services we provide to harness the stated benefits for the improvement of youth with disabilities livelihoods options.

Step 3: Develop a Monitoring Plan

Depending on the organisations' needs, it is important to clarify how monitoring will fit in the day to day processes. A monitoring plan describes the steps needed to make monitoring a reality and elaborates on who will carry them out (*Center for Disability Research* and *Policy*, *University of Sydney*, *2014*), It is important to document the agreements and intentions reached during the course of the stakeholder meetings as these will be used in creating a monitoring plan. For instance, for the first time in the special education department we created a organisational chart specific to our department, elaborating each staff member's responsibilities with regards to mapping our progress in relation to the project goal. We have also introduced weekly reports by each staff member on our challenges and victories that we discuss and amend together.

The University of Sydney's Monitoring Manual and Menu (2014) explicitly states the importance of incorporating monitoring into the organisations' daily activities. It asserts the importance of not to making monitoring a big or ceremonial affair and proliferates a monitoring approach that encourages people to constantly ask themselves how they can better improve their service delivery in discharging their mandates. This step involves assigning people roles, training them to know what is expected and providing them with the skills they will need during the implementation of the project. It also involves deciding on data collection systems, the resources needed and the nature of the information to be collected (*Center for Disability Research* and *Policy*, *University of Sydney*, *2014*). Lastly, it also involves testing the monitoring plan in order to see how functional and accessible it would be in real life.

Step 4: Undertake Monitoring Activities

According to the *Center for Disability Research* and *Policy*, *University of Sydney* (*2014*), flexibility is of chief importance in monitoring exercises and project management as it allows for amendments as the plan progresses. For instance, it involves determining whether staff and other stakeholders need more training, access to resources, or information as well as asking beneficiaries to realise the value of monitoring. In the case of our project, we realised that some stakeholders though enthusiastic to contribute to the project, lacked certain skills and strategies that would allow them to be inclusive of youth with disabilities in their service delivery approach. For example, the sport coaching staff and physical education teachers, as a result workshops on the strategies and best practices were designed by the special education department. But with the clear understanding that we will learn and adapt our approaches along the way as we receive feedback from each other and the beneficiaries.

Step 5: Analyse and Use Information

Information collected first hand from stakeholders and beneficiaries during workshops is an important currency in project monitoring. Especially, if the information collected is relevant to the project and utilises the information as planned in ways that help (*Center for Disability Research* and *Policy*, *University of Sydney*, *2014*).Consequently, the fifth step in project monitoring involves giving feedback on the answers to the key questions suggested by the stakeholders in step two/ the design information stage. The feedback can be formal or

informal, using avenues like newspaper articles, community forums, spoken and short written reports.

Step 6: Review Monitoring Activities and the Monitoring Plan

The final stage of monitoring involves looking back on all the steps taken such as designing the information and carrying out the monitoring activities amongst others. It is a process done by all the stakeholders involved in the monitoring process from the onset, and it is meant to improve the project's monitoring activities and monitoring plans. The focal question being, "are we achieving what we set out to achieve in the first place". Whereby, the information from the review is then used to decide on areas that need to be amended in order to improve our monitoring exercises.

All in all monitoring is a fairly flexible process that needs to be embedded in the day to day functions of a project, and breeds a culture of accountability. Most importantly it is about learning as we go, from our mistakes and victories so as to maximise the benefits to the people we serve.

Visions of the different organisations and project goals

The vision of MDE is *Advancing Excellence in Education Provision*. On its mission, MDE commits to work with its stakeholders to promote effective teaching and learning through good governance, effective management and leadership (www.mpumalanga.gov.za/education). Similarly, Inkanyiso's vision is to *"Turn around poverty, ignorance and illiteracy in our community into hope, knowledge and self-reliance so s to allow an individual to be competent in life"*. On its mission, it aims to develop a culture of lifelong learning and to train the disabled child in such a way that they become marketable in the business world (Inkanyiso School for LSEN, Pamphlet, 2015). Correspondingly, Mogoditshane Senior Secondary School's vision is to produce an *"Educated and globally competitive Human Resources"* (Mogoditshane Senior Secondary School Poster, 2015). This basically translates the school's dedication to producing learners who possess quality and relevant education and training that is globally competitive with world standards. Furthermore, it promotes disability inclusion and enable learners to participate positively in mainstream society. Overall, all three visions of the organisations aim to make them effective

and to deliver equality and quality education which will accommodate the diverse needs of leaners with disabilities.

The project goal for MDE, Inkanyiso Special School and Mogoditshane Senior Secondary is: ***To support and create a platform within the school environment for disabled youth to access employment and to fully exploit their talents in sports, arts and culture in order to improve their participation in sustainable livelihoods activities.***

The project objectives are:

- Cultivate and showcase youth with disabilities' skills, talents and abilities in sports, arts and culture extra curricular activities within the school environment.
- Make sporting,arts and recreational activities' venues and content as accessible as possible for disabled youth within the school community.
- Increase numbers of learners with disabilities who qualify for post-secondary schools.
- Provide skills development programmes to disabled youth.

Logic Model Template

A Logic Model is "a plausible and sensible model of how the program will work under certain conditions to solve identified problems" Bickman (1987) in McLaughlin and Jordan (1999).

For our Logic Model Template, see attached Annexure A.

Universal accessibility

Universal design is a design of products services and environments to be usable by all people to the greatest extent possible without the need for personal adaptation or special provision. Furthermore, it was introduced as an approach to integrate accessibility features into all products and more into physical environment" (http://udafrica.com).

According to Fransolet (2015), there are seven (7) principles of universal design and these are discussed below:

- Equitable use

“The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.” All three organisations ensure that there is a good infrastructure in terms of accessibility in Special, Full Service and Mainstream Schools. Furthermore, Inclusive Education addresses equality as it believes that there should be equality in opportunities regardless of disability.

- Flexibility in use

“The design should accommodate a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.” In our case, schools conduct inspections to check if there are learners that may require some assistive devices such as wheelchairs, special desks, audio, Braille etc. so that it will be easy for those learners to cope in classrooms.

- Simple intuitive use

“Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.” In our case, this can mean computer keyboards can be structured in a way that they enable a person with moderate impairment to use a computer effectively. Other teaching materials are written sign language and translated in two or more official languages to accommodate all persons.

- Perceptible information

“The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.” This principle is used in our schools by having charts of different types of disabilities on the noticeboards, we also do enrichment to the staff so that they will able to identify different types of disabilities and also do awareness campaigns to the community through various media platforms.

- Tolerance for error

This principle relates to correcting a person in an event of an inappropriate selection. In most Special Schools, computers are equipped to accommodate for this principle and they assist learners with special needs to fully access the right to education.

- Low physical effort

“The design can be used efficiently, comfortably, and with a minimum of fatigue.” Special Schools for learners with disabilities have been designed in a way that it is comfortable for learners to use without much effort. Furthermore, physically accessibility in terms of ramps,

bathrooms in the hostels and school, furniture and other things in classrooms and laboratories in the schools have been made wheelchair friendly.

- Size and space for approach and use

"Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of the user's body size, posture, or mobility. A flexible work area designed for use by employees who are left- or right-handed and have a variety of other physical characteristics and abilities is an example of applying this principle." Our work areas and classrooms have enough space and accommodate learners using wheelchairs and also the number of learners in the classroom also help with open space as each class accommodate less than 8 learners in those who are severe disabled and less than 15 to the mild or moderate disabled.

In monitoring disability in the mainstream society, activities, services, documentation and information are indicators for access (Fransolet (2015), the above principles have highlighted their presence in the different organisations.

Discussion and critique of the ICF and the Washington Group 6 Questions as tools to collect data to disaggregate for disability

Bickenbach (2011:08) argue that the International Classification of Functioning (ICF) "provides both a model of functioning and disability and a set of classifications for describing these phenomena as outcomes of an interaction between an underlying health condition (disease, disorder or injury) and the full range of environmental factors (physical, human-built, social and attitudinal) and personal factors."

Based on the above, we can see that one of the benefits of the ICF is that it integrates both the medical and social features of an individual's health condition. It incorporates all the features of an individual's life instead of focusing on the diagnosis. This means that it also focuses on the functioning of a person with disabilities because living with a disability does not restrict an individual from functioning in society. For example, the ICF allows professionals such as occupational therapists, physiotherapists, community based rehabilitation (CBR) workers, teachers and social workers working in the field of disability to be able to work with learners with disabilities in a way that it allows them to see that there is more to each learner than their disability and that being disabled will not exclude a learner from accessing education and performing daily activities and functioning abilities. Therefore, by noticing their

functioning abilities, it will be easier for these professionals from training learners with disabilities functioning skills.

On the other hand, Helander (2003) provides a critical review of the ICF. He argues that the ICF is time consuming and complex to apply. This is an indication that for those professionals who are not well trained, it can be hard for them to use it in the monitoring process of disability. Secondly, he argues that it focuses more on the negative aspects of a person with disabilities instead of including the positive aspects as well.

The ICF can play a major role in the monitoring process since it has been proven to be valid and reliable (Bickenbach, 2011). This means that the final results of the monitoring process can be regarded as accurate and can be used to bring about changes and in our case these changes include being able to secure employment and participation in sports and arts.

According to the United Nation (UN) website (www.un.org), the Washington Group 6 Questions consists of the following questions:

1. Do you have difficulty seeing, even if wearing glasses?
2. Do you have difficulty hearing, even if using a hearing aid?
3. Do you have difficulty walking or climbing steps?
4. Do you have difficulty remembering or concentrating?
5. Do you have difficulty (with self-care such as) washing all over or dressing?
6. Using your usual (customary) language, do you have difficulty communicating, for example understanding or being understood?

Furthermore, these questions were developed because “disability represents a complex process and is not a single and static state. As a result, the Washington Group want to address the issue of whether PWD participate to the same extent as non-disabled persons in activities such as education, employment or family.” This is an indication that the questions are focused on functioning and how to improve the quality of life in PWD. The same applies with the ICF. Through the use of both monitoring tools in this project, we can identify that young people with disabilities are able to function and participate in the different spheres mentioned above. Instead of looking at what they cannot do as a result of their disabilities, we will look at what they can achieve and how they can be integrated in the mainstream society.

Strengths and weaknesses of the Logic Model as a project management tool in monitoring disability inclusion

Strengths

Amongst the several benefits of using the Logic Model as a project management tool, McLaughlin and Jordan (1999) highlighted that it promotes the sharing of ideas, team building and communication. With regard to monitoring the implementation of Article 27, this would mean that all the parties i.e. teachers and stakeholders such as Department of Social Development, Health and Further Education and Training (FET) colleges involved in the inclusion of disabled youth in skills development and employment opportunities will share ideas on how this broad goal can be achieved. There will also be communication amongst them. Another benefit that McLaughlin and Jordan (1999) highlighted was that the Logic Model is helpful in designing or improving the programme and identifying other projects which will be necessary to achieve the main goal and in our case this goal is to promote the inclusion of disabled youth in skills development and employment opportunities.

Furthermore, Gamel-McCormick (2011) proposes that the Logic Model allows an increase and better understanding of the programme. Secondly, it facilitates consensus building within organisations and external stakeholders involved (build a larger collaboration). Lastly, it helps project managers to identify aspects which need to be improved in the programme.

Weaknesses

In spite of its strengths, we should note that there are still several weaknesses and shortcomings of the Logic Model. Hummelbrunner (2010) suggests that differences amongst stakeholders are likely to exist. As mentioned previously that our stakeholders include FET College and various government departments such as Department of Labour and Public Works, therefore there are likely to be difference as both departments have different core visions. Furthermore, Hummelbrunner (2010) suggests that power imbalances and low trust are likely to exist as there are different stakeholders and human resources involved in the project which at the end of the day, it is hard to find who is accountable for the project.

Gamel-McCormick (2011) also highlights the weaknesses of the Logic Model. Firstly, she argues that the Logic Model can be manipulated to display end results where there are none. Secondly, it can include unnecessary information. Thirdly, it can include incorrect conclusions. Lastly, there can be confusions on the part of the stakeholders involved in the

project. For instance, on our project, we might highlight that 80% of disabled youth have secured employment while as a matter of fact, only 40% have secured employment.

Regardless of its weaknesses, as a group monitoring the inclusion of disabled youth in the labour market, sports, recreation and play, we see the logic model in a positive way because it will allow all 3 organisations together with their stakeholders to recognise the skills and abilities of youth with disabilities. It will indicate that youth with disabilities can and should be employed in the labour market to perform any job that they are qualified to do instead of being forced to work in sectors that focus only on their disabilities. Furthermore, it will indicate that disabled youth can participate sports, recreation and play and that all barriers preventing them from inclusion should be removed. Lastly, our argument is that through the consultation and involvement of the different stakeholders in the project, there would be way of how the project goal can be achieved.

Conclusion

Young people with disabilities face stigma both socially and in the employment sector. Therefore, we should create opportunities for them so that they are able to develop skills and potential and that they are able to enter the labour market. As a group monitoring the inclusion of disabled youth, we believe that these individuals have the right to a place in the mainstream society, education, work, recreation and social inclusion. Through this project, we will create and increase awareness in society that the disabled youth should be integrated in the community for sustainable development and alleviating poverty. The project objectives are examples of how this can be done.

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