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WeWorld Onlus M&E procedures in Nepal: the involvement of the local partners through the participatory approach.

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"WeWorld Onlus M&E procedures in Nepal: the involvement of the local partners through the participatory approach"

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Abstract

The thesis is the outcome of a four months internship spent in Kathmandu, working as M&E Officer for WeWorld Onlus. The main goal of the internship has been the introduction and first implementation of the new M&E system. The new system has been designed by an M&E expert and shared by the Headquarters in the form of guidelines to local branches of WeWorld, in the broader perspective of building a sound internal M&E system for the project that WeWorld develops in developing countries. The new guidelines designed not only an internal M&E for WeWorld but also an external one, intended for the main partners of WeWorld in Nepal.

The thesis will consists of an introduction and three main chapters: the introduction will present the context of Nepal, describe the environment in which WeWorld and the partners operates in, the challenges and the opportunity that a least developed country like Nepal poses, especially after the earthquake of 2015. The first chapter will focus on the M&E system and its features, the overview will start from a theoretical framework of the M&E based on NGO literature and manuals, paying a special attention to the role of indicators. The chapter will also focus on the previous M&E system adopted by WeWorld and the respective partners and the reason why the necessity of a new one becomes essential.

The second chapter will explain in details the characteristics and features of the new M&E system, describing the new tools and their functions. Ultimately, the third and last chapter represent the practical explanation of the methodology used to reach the objectives of this internship: the capacity building sessions and tutoring, the involvement of the partners with the participatory approach and assessment through questionnaires and specific surveys on M&E.

The final part of the thesis consists of conclusions, followed by suggestions for the next steps of WeWorld regarding the implementation of a sound internal M&E.

INTRODUCTION

Nepal: country overview

Figure 1 Source UNDP

The Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal

Nepal, officially known as the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, is a landlocked country between India and China, with a total population of 28,514,000. The whole territory is divided into fourteen administrative zones and 75 districts. The 14 administrative zones are grouped into five development regions: Eastern Development Region, Central Development Region, Western development Region, Mid-Western Development Region, Far-Western Development Region. The most developed and populated area in the country is the Central Development Region with Kathmandu as the most inhabited city and migration target for working purpose, having a square of 27,410 and a population of 9,656,985[1].

At local level, each district is headed by a Chief District Officer (CDO) responsible for maintaining the law and coordinating the work of public agencies of the Government in the area. Each district has several Village Development Committees (VDCs), where a higher public-government interaction and administration takes place in order to foster development actions and plans. Currently, there are 3157 village development

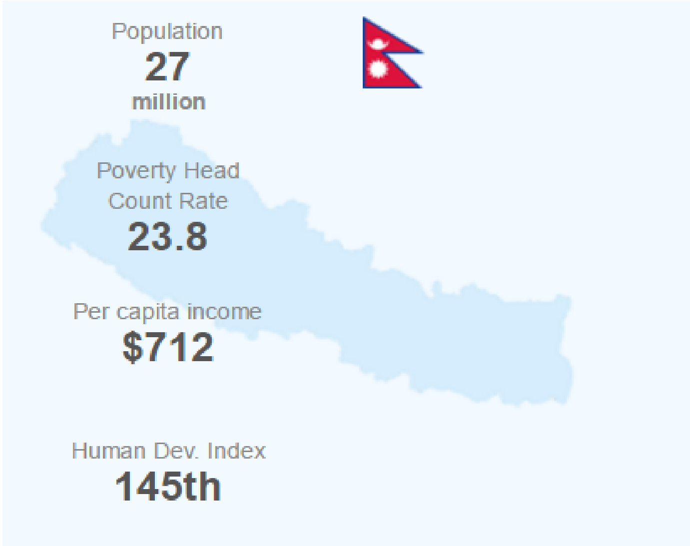
[1] Source: Government of Nepal, Central Bureau of Statistics

committees in Nepal and they represent a real and strong link between the communities and the public sector. The aim of this partnership takes the form of controlling and sharing the responsibilities in development actions, while ensuring proper use and distribution of state funds and a greater interaction between government officials, NGOs and agencies.

Nepal is characterized by slow economic growth, socioeconomic underdevelopment and a low level of human development[2]. The root causes of this underdevelopment lie in the fragile post conflict situation started in 1996 when the country faced a ten years armed conflict, which has brought poverty and inequality within the Nepali society and worsen the already present weakness of the State in terms of public services and welfare. The 2006 peace accord between the government and the rebels (the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist) ended the conflict and addressed and begun to assess the political problems. After the popular People's Movement of 2006 and the Constituent Assembly elections of 2008 and 2013, a new political system of a secular democratic republic state has been officially declared in Nepal's new constitution, promulgated in September 2015. The federal constitution reshaped the governance structure, and ensured fundamental social and economic rights for Nepali society.

Although considered as a low income country according to global ranking, Nepal is making solid progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and from the 2016, is deeply committed to engage in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda for Development. In this perspective Nepal, is one of only 15 countries globally and the only country from South Asia to be categorised as an “MDG Trailblazer”, meaning a country exceeding its expected trajectory for achieving the MDG’s the Government was aiming to target. According to data from

[2] According to UNDP definition, the HDI was created to emphasize that people and their capabilities should be the ultimate criteria for assessing the development of a country, not economic growth alone. The HDI can also be used to question national policy choices, asking how two countries with the same level of GNI per capita can end up with different human development outcomes. Specifically, the HDI is the geometric mean of normalized indices for each of three dimensions: life expectancy, education and income. The health dimension is assessed by life expectancy at birth, the education dimension is measured by mean of years of schooling for adults aged 25 years and more and expected years of schooling for children of school entering age. The standard of living dimension is measured by gross national income per capita. The HDI uses the logarithm of income, to reflect the diminishing importance of income with increasing GNI. The scores for the three HDI dimension indices are then aggregated into a composite index using geometric mean. The HDI simplifies and captures only part of what human development entails. It does not reflect on inequalities, poverty, human security, empowerment, etc. The HDRO offers the other composite indices as broader proxy on some of the key issues of human development, inequality, gender disparity and human poverty.



UNDP Data

UNDP, [3] Nepal has already achieved the targets for MDG 5a “Reduce maternal mortality by three quarters between 1990 and 2015 and MDG 6c “Halt and begin to reverse malaria”. But a lot needs to be done in terms of other, wider, MDG’s like the following: employment, universal primary education and sanitation, all targets which are assessed as only “potentially likely”.

The worse performance tough, is represented by the MDG 3 “Gender and women’s empowerment” which is assessed as “unlikely” and lacks of proper policies and committed political will. As regards to SDG’s, Nepal Planning Commission’s Report (2015). Nepal’s overall path for development has been highly affected by the huge and devastating earthquake occurred on the 25th April 2015 with aftershocks in May. According to national data, the country has suffered a loss estimated between $5 to 10 billion due to the damaged caused by the earthquake to human settlements, infrastructure and ancient archaeological sites and more than 8,000 people died. According to data[4], 1035 Village Development Committees and 60 Municipalities have been affected by the earthquake, 1 091 019 families have been affected and 645 798 families displaced [5]. Although many factors including poverty, income inequalities, and social exclusion, Nepal is one of the few countries with an impressive record of human development over the last twenty years. But having started from a very low base, Nepal is still a country with low human development status. According to UNDP data, the Human Development Index (HDI) score for Nepal was 0.458 in 2011, the second lowest ranking South Asian Association of Regional Co-operation (SAARC) country above Afghanistan. In 2014, Nepal has improved its human development index increased to 0.540 a value which is now ranked as the highest among the “Low Human Development” group of countries (above Pakistan and Afghanistan).

[3] Where Nepal stands in terms of achieving the MDGs, available at http://www.np.undp.org/content/nepal/en/home/post-2015/mdgoverview.html

[4] WHO Publication (May 2015), Humanitarian crisis after the Nepal earthquakes 2015

[5] (7 May 2015, Nepal Red Cross Society)

Economic figures

The economy of Nepal has grew steadily since 1950 through a program of five-year plans, has been able to head the path of economic development in its own way which is now full of challenges for this developing country. Despite the growth, the objective of reducing poverty has not been met mainly because the economy is deeply dependent on remittances and the means for the creation of a reliable and stable industrial production, which is the main driver of growth, are not yet met. Agriculture remains Nepal's principal economic activity, employing about 65% of the population and providing 34% of GDP tough only about 20% of the total area of the country is cultivable. another 40.7% is forested (covered by shurbs, pastureland & forest); most of the rest is mountainous. Rice and wheat are the main food crops. The lowland Terai region is the place where agricultural surplus is produced, part of which is going to supply the food-deficient hill areas.

From an expenditure perspective, Nepal’s economy is dominated by private consumption (fuelled by remittances), which averages at around 90 per cent of GDP (up to 91.1 per cent in 2013/14).

Figure 2 GDP composition
Source: globalEDGE.msu.edu

With regards to the international side of Nepal’s economy, it deeply relies on imports and this is definitely one of its greatest weaknesses. The country is ranked as the 112th largest importer worldwide[6]. During the last five years, the volume of imports have increased at an annualized rate of 16.6%, from $3.6 billion in 2009 to $ 7.75 billion in 2014. The value of imports reached the level of 7.75 billion. The most important product imported is refined petroleum which accounts for 13.6% of total imports follow with silver, accounting for 3.6%. Due to its geographical position, Nepal is heavily relying on imports of fuel from India, with more than 60% of the total imports

[6] The Observatory of Economic Complexity, data available at http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/profile/country/npl/#Imports

from India, followed by China with 15%. India is the first country also for exports, followed by the United States (8%) and China (3.9%).[7]

However, the main challenge in Nepal's economy remains structural and system-based and is informality. According to ILO, more than 70% [8]of the economically active population is involved in the informal economy. The vast majority of workers (agriculture) are informally employed with all the consequences of exploitation and lack of rights that could derived from this situation. Overall, Nepal's economy seems to have more weaknesses than strengths, as the following list briefly states:

Strengths:

- Private transfers sustaining household consumption, mainly remittances
- Strong services sector, particularly tourism
- Financial and technical support from India, China and Japan (see for example Earthquake relief)
- International solidarity

Weaknesses:

- Heavily dependent on the agricultural sector and vulnerable due to seasonality
- Isolation and difficulties of access to many of the country's regions
- Economy strongly affected by the earthquakes of April and May 2015
- Poor infrastructure, recurrent shortages of electricity and fuel
- Absence of a political consensus, leading to fear of worsening social and political tensions especially at the borders with India.

The Gross Domestic Product per capita (GDP) of the country is lower at \$694 per capita in 2013 but does not capture remittances, a huge source of income for Nepali people. GDP growth is around 5%, and debt is considered manageable. The country is classified by the World Bank as "low income" with a Gross National Income per capita[9] of \$730 in 2013 (\$ 2,260 in PPP equivalent to 200 Nepali Rupees)[10]. The value

[7] Idem

[8] http://www.ilo.org/kathmandu/areasofwork/informal-economy/lang--en/index.htm

[9] GNP and GDP both reflect the national output and income of an economy. The main difference is that GNP (Gross National Product) takes into account net income receipts from abroad. GDP (Gross Domestic Product) is a measure of national income / national output and national expenditure produce in a particular country.GNP = GDP + Net property income from abroad. This net income from abroad includes, dividends , interest and profit.
GNP includes the value of all goods and services produced by nationals whether in the country or not.

[10] Costs in local currency units are converted to international dollars using purchasing power parity (PPP) exchange rates. A PPP exchange rate is the number of units of a country's currency required to buy the same amounts of goods and services in the domestic market as U.S. dollar would buy in the United States. Exchange rate: 1 dollar =106.947 Nepali rupees.

results lower in comparison with the South Asia regional average value which is $1473 per capita.

Population transition and society

Nepali population is estimated to be of 27.4 million, according to last national census. In the past 40 years, it has more than doubled with a growth rate of 1.9% per annum despite of the dramatic change in fertility trend now stable at 2 children per women[11]. Looking at the age structure it is indeed a quite young population: 42% of the total population is under 18 years and 10.5% is under 5 years of age. Nepali population has faced any changes since the 60s, due to the increase of life expectancy, the dramatic decrease of fertility rate and the heavy migration occurred, mainly among young students moving abroad for studying purpose[12]. Life expectancy for males has increased from 54 years in 1990 to 67 years in 2011, and from 55 years to 69 years for females. Nepali society is highly different with regards to ethnicity.

According to the 2001 census in the country exist more than 103 diverse ethnic/caste groups, each with its own distinct language and culture, and 92 separate mother tongues[13]. To simplify, there are three main ethnicity ecosystems in Nepal: mountains, hills and Terai, around 17% of the whole population lives in Kathmandu. With regards to religion, the majority is Hindu (81%), 9% are Buddhist and 4% Muslim. The majority of the young population (36%) is distributed in the Central Development and about one tenth (10%) live in Far-Western Development Region. Despite the rapid reductions in absolute poverty, concentrations of poverty based on geography and ethnicity still remained in the country: 45% of people in the far western region of Nepal and 43% of hill Dalits[14] live below the poverty line. According to World Bank data, in Nepal is really difficult to define a middle class because "over 70% of Nepalese live on less than $2.50 a day and 90% on less than $4 a day". Nepali society has shows also an unequal distribution of income which results in a Gini coefficient[15] of 0,328[16] .

Demographically speaking, Nepal is in the middle of a demographic transition and this is due to the better situation in life expectancy, ultimately resulted in the increase of the population over 65 years old. As the demographic pyramid clearly shows, the young people represents the main percentage of the entire population also known as

[11] In 1960 the fertility rate of Nepali woman on average was 6, up to 2014 data, it has shown a dramatic decrease.
[12] United Nations Population Fund Nepal
[13] Central Bureau of Statistics - National Planning Commission Secretariat, Government of Nepal
[14] Dalits are the so called "untouchables" in Nepali caste system.
[15] The Gini coefficient = Area between Lorenz curve and diagonal Total area under diagonal
[16] Nepal Centre Bureau of Statistics, 2011

the "young bulge"[17] which will have further consequences in terms of future employment, making the Nepalese more available in the internal and abroad labour market.

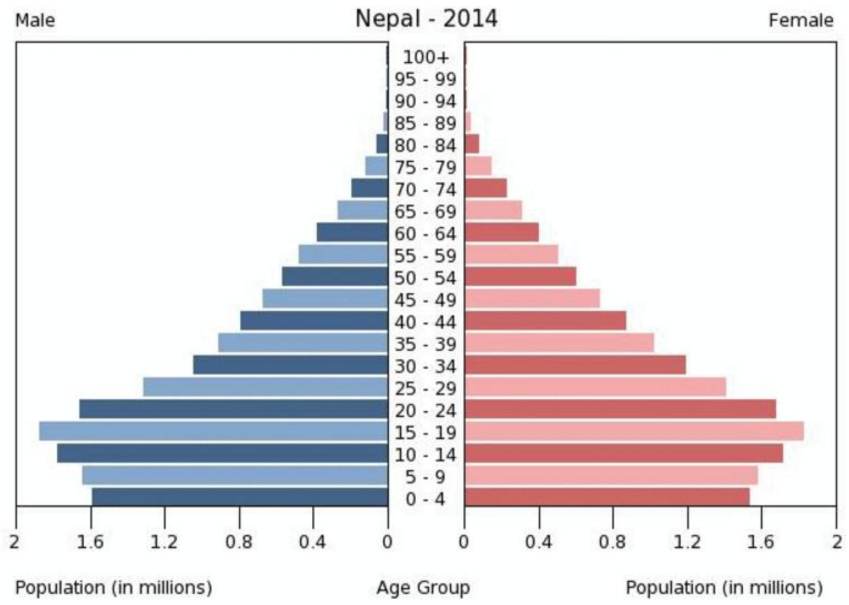


Figure 3 Population pyramid **source: CIA World Factbook**

With regards to poverty within society, Nepal has made amazing progress towards the decrease of absolute poverty from 42 percent in 1995 to 25 percent in 2010 and further to 23.8 percent in 2015[18]. However, poverty has a strong social dimension in Nepal given the caste system and the hierarchical social structure. Nowadays, the population estimated below the poverty line is reducing but there is still social stigma which persists as obstacle to the goal of ending poverty. In the perspective of the caste, in fact, everyone has its own place within society which is given by birth thus, there is no chance to change the status and everyone must accept the situation as it is. This system, which has deep roots into the Hindu religion and vision of humanity overall, ultimately results in strong discrimination in essential sectors such as education and health, with a lack a proper right's based approach.

Focus on Education in Nepal and on WeWorld approach

Education sector and schools are now at the core of the development strategies of Nepal. The national expenditure on education nowadays is reaching almost 4% of the public expenditure, a value which is foreseen to increase in the future, according to the

[17] Samir K.C. (2014) An age distribution story: reading into the population pyramid of Nepal, Asian population Studies
[18] Ministry of Finance, Government of Nepal, 2015

international commitment that the country has put on the top of political, even though quite unstable, agenda. In the country, the school system is divided into public and private, the latter rapidly increasing and replacing with high fees the modest and not up-to-date public schools. The situation of education worsens when it comes to rurala and remote areas, where most of the school are not well equipped and under resourced, teachers result to be overburden with too many children inside only few classrooms.

In 2011, the government of Nepal endorsed the directive to declare Schools, including schools buses, as “Zone of peace” (SZOP). The aim of this important directive is ensuring that all the schools remain a safe place even in difficult political circumstances, in which, unfortunately, local groups and rebels are targeting schools in order to compromise the right to education of the children. Such violent acts go against the basic principles of children’s right to education in a protective environment free from fear which is the main target of this Governmental initiative. Nepal is also a signatory to the Conventions on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and therefore has a commitment to ensure that every child be provided their basic rights to grow, to learn and to play in peace. This paragraph will focus on three main challenges which lie in the complex system of education in Nepal and at the core of WeWorld’s efforts: inclusiveness, child friendly schools, and out of school children (OOSC).

- **Inclusiveness** is an essential topic in a social system like Nepal, where caste still play a strong traditional role, despite having been legally banned in 1962. Nepal has about 20% of population still facing from oppressions and social exclusion based on hierarchical Hindu caste system. The forms of these oppressions are manifold; "untouchability" is the most outrageous one. According to caste system, Brahmins lie at the top, and Sudras, or Dalits, lie at the bottom of society and this is a “set in the stone” scheme. The people belonging to this communities are living a life full of barriers, marginalization, absolute poverty and, above all, caste discrimination. The education system in Nepal, unfortunately, reflect the society and is characterized by large disparities in primary and secondary school attendance. School attendance rates appear to be higher among upper caste Brahmins, boys, residents of urban areas, and children from wealthier families. The primary school net attendance rate[19] at the national level is 73.5%. Children from Brahman, Chhetri, and Newar households have the highest attendance values, between 86.8 and 93%, followed by the lowest one among Muslims (32.1%) and Tarai Dalits (37.5%)[20]. To deal with this topic,

[19] The net attendance ratio (NAR) is the percentage of the official primary school-age population that attends primary school. The primary NAR does not capture those students who have completed primary school and advanced to secondary school at an earlier age than the official age.

[20] World Bank, and Department For International Development (DFID). 2006. Unequal citizens: Gender, caste and ethnic exclusion in Nepal - Summary. Kathmandu: World Bank, Department For International Development.

Government of Nepal has set out The Nepal Education for All (NEFA)[21] programme with three primary objectives: (i) ensuring access and equity in primary education, (ii) enhancing quality and relevance of primary education, (iii) improving efficiency and institutional capacity. For the first objective the government has specifically committed to provide equal access to educational resources for all excluded groups especially girls, linguistic minorities, Dalits and Janajatis.

Inclusiveness in schools also strongly deals with children with disabilities (CWDs) who are facing real barriers to their right to education also due to the social stigma they undergo as cast-offs and bearers of their family sin. According to Human Rights Watch[22], no clear data are available in the country on the total number of children with disabilities and how many of them are out of school. Based on the government's conservative figures from a 2001 analysis, there are, at the very least, 207,000 children with disabilities in the country. Nepal recognizes the rights of children with disabilities and for this purpose it has ratified a number of international human rights treaties, including the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which states that children with disabilities are entitled to the same rights as other children, including the right to inclusive education. At national level, Nepal has produced the National Policy and Plan of action on disability (2006) providing protection and ensuring the rights of the estimated 3% of its population[23]. Unfortunately, the government's efforts for inclusive education do not appear to be serious due to the lack of clear plan for the integration of particularly intellectual or developmental disabilities, into mainstream schools.

- **Child friendly schools (CFSs):** According to the National framework definition, a child friendly school is defined as "A school that provides a learning environment suitable to the children. In such schools, environment for children is conducive to learning and their inherent potentials are developed."[24] The concept of child friendly school also focuses on the following objectives:

  - The entire learning process is child-friendly and the results of learning are of quality
  - Teachers have high quality ability, skills and ethics.
  - Teachers and pupils are adequately motivated for effective learning.
  - Vision and immediate programmes foster child-friendly environment by internalizing innovation, creativity and change.

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[21] Idem

[22] Human Rights Watch (2011) Futures Stolen: Barriers to Education for Children with Disabilities in Nepal

[23] Nepal Government Ministry for Women, Children and Social Welfare, National Policy and Plan on disability (2006) Singha Durbar, Kathmandu

[24] Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education Department of Education, National Framework for Child Friendly schools (2010)

- Educational and playing materials are adequate.
- Curricula and textbooks are adequately available in time.[25]

The innovative idea is built on 5 key dimensions that every school in Nepal should apply in order to meet the national standards and ensure the quality of education.

I. Inclusiveness: proactively inclusive to children with different abilities in terms of ethnic, cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic aspects.

II. Child centeredness: Academically effective and relevant to children's needs for life and livelihood knowledge and skills.

III. Health and protection: healthy and safe for, and protective of children's emotional, psychological, and physical well-being.

IV. Gender Responsiveness: Gender-responsive in creating environments and capacities fostering equality.

V. Democratic participation: Actively engaged with, and enabling of student, family, and community participation in all aspects of school policy, management and support to children. A school is considered child friendly if all of these elements are addressed.[26]

The next chapters of the thesis will focus on the national standards and indicators of performance for CFSs, since WeWorld projects are mainly based on improving the quality of education in Nepal through the enhancement of the situation and the equipment inside the classrooms of the schools targeted.

- **Out of school children (OOSC)**: Nepal has recognized primary education as a basic need for every child and is making efforts at national level in order to ensure equal access to all the children and achieve the goal of education for all (EFA). Despite national policies, there are still out of school children in Nepal, the majority lives in rural areas and villages, often difficult to reached. The causes of being out of school could be manifold, especially for girls. Many of the out of school children are adolescents who never had the opportunity to attend school or dropped out before achieving complete literacy or numeracy. Others are from the most marginalized communities, who face barriers, such as poverty, lack of parents' awareness of the importance of education. The overall profile and data for this category is summarized in the table below.

[25] Idem
[26] Department of Education and the National Environment and Health Study Centre (NSCEH) Report, (2010)

Profiles and characteristics of out-of-school children[2]

OUT OF SCHOOL

Dimension 1: Pre-school age children out of school	**Magnitude:** 22.3% of four-year-olds are not attending pre-primary education. **Where they are:** children in the Mountain (24.3% not attending pre-primary) and Terai (23.7%) eco belts; Terai has the highest number of four-year-olds out of school. **Characteristics:** children with disabilities; children whose mothers have no or low education; children from the poorest families; children in rural areas.
Dimension 2: Primary school age children out of school	**Magnitude:** between 0.57 million (Census 2011) and 0.74 million (MICS 2014) **Where they are:** Terai eco belt (65.1% of primary school age OOSC); children in the Central Development Region; children in Rautahat, Sarlahi, Mahottari, Dhanusha and Bara districts. **Characteristics:** Children from the poorest families, whose mothers did not complete primary education; children with disabilities; children who speak an ethnic-minority language; girls, particularly from Raute, Dom and Dolpo caste/ethnic groups; caste/ethnic groups with more than 45% out-of-school rate: Dom, Dolpo, Musahar, Natuwa, Dhunia, Halkhor, Bin; children engaged in child labour; migrant children.
Dimension 3: Lower secondary school age children out of school	**Magnitude:** between 0.10 million (MICS 2014) and 0.20 million (Census 2011) **Where they are:** Terai eco belt (78.6% of lower secondary school age OOSC); children in the Central Development Region; Rautahat, Sarlahi, Dhanusha, Mahottari and Bara districts; Village Development Committees, such as Katkuiya and Laxmanpur, where more than 60% are Dimension 3 OOSC. **Characteristics:** Children from the poorest families, whose mothers did not complete primary education; girls, particularly from Raute, Dom and Dolpo caste/ethnic groups; caste/ethnic groups with out-of-school rates more than 45%: Dom, Musahar, Natuwa; children with disabilities (30.6% of children aged 5-12 years are out of school); children engaged in child labour; migrant children; children who are forced into child marriage.

Figure 4

source UNICEF Nepal

The Government of Nepal is making every effort to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which is challenging unless strategic actions are taken forward. Hence, Government Policies and Strategies are in line with the International Framework ensuring the right to education of every child. It has been further reinforced in the Constitution of Nepal and the Government's commitment to free and compulsory education up to Grade 8 and free education up to Grade 12. Past experiences have shown that the education sector alone cannot tackle the diverse national issues in education, therefore promoting convergences and partnerships should be encouraged. We hope that the findings in this study will help bring all sectoral agencies together to achieve better results. We trust that this report will be useful for all levels, from policy makers to planners and implementers, who are reaching out to the most vulnerable groups of children in Nepal.

Chapter 1

1.The internship experience: overview and objectives

Title of the internship project: "“Introduction of We World new M&E procedures to key field staff and partners”

Period: 22-July-21 November 2016

Hosting organization: WeWorld Onlus Nepal

Supervisor: Marta Volpi, Country Representative

The internship's first objective has been the introduction, to partners and the key field staff, of a new M&E system completely new for WeWorld Nepal. The M&E system and its guidelines have been developed by and external consultant, Silvia Favaron, who followed the work of WeWorld through missions and meetings with local branches. Unfortunately, Nepal branch has not been included in such missions thus this experience has represented a real first time for the implementation of the M&E system. In order to portray an overall picture of the internship period, which could be defined as a real process, I would begin describing its four main stages:

a) the development of the knowledge about the new M&E system
b) the pre assessments and the transfer of M&E capacity and tools
c) the first implementation of M&E tools
d) the collection of data about the effective use of the tools

At first stage, my main task has been to analyse the guidelines manual and nine M&E tools which entailed both word and excel formats. Alongside with the analysis I had also the chance to assist the Programme department, namely the Project Manager, with the monitoring field visits, helping with the observation and the collection of data in remote areas of the country. The ultimate goal of this activity has been to understand and go in depth into the new procedures, in order to be able to transfer the knowledge to the internal staff and, later on, to partners. This work, which could be defined as a preparatory activity, has also been supported by the presence of the former Country Representative Mara Bernasconi and by the suggestion of the author of such guidelines, Silvia Favaron. The rest of the activity has been fully supported by the new Country Representative Marta Volpi, official supervisor during the period September-November.

The new M&E guidelines were composed not only of document aimed to explain the wider goal of the implementation of an M&E system, which will be specifically described in the next chapters, but also of explanation for each of the tools presenting their functions, the person in charge of the submission and the time frequency suggested. All these information will be objects of the next chapters.

The second stage of the internship has involved the scheduling of capacity building sessions to key field staff of WeWorld, namely the Programme Department and the four main partners involved in the projects. During this particular phase has been necessary the organization of a pre assessment of all the partners aimed to understand which level of knowledge about M&E procedures they owned and the tools that they were usually submitting to WeWorld. The pre assessments has been done through surveys and questionnaires specific focused on monitoring techniques and evaluation tools and the data will be presented in the last chapter of this thesis. The pre assessment activity has been useful not only for developing the capacity building sessions at proper level of preparation, but also to help WeWorld internal staff to be aware of the professional status of the partners towards M&E.

The third phase of the internship could be seen as the "result's phase". After the capacity building sessions, which lasted one month, the partners were required to start using the M&E tools and to submit their document to WeWorld. During this stage, my duty has been the "tutoring activity" meaning the correction, supervision monitoring the usage of such tools. From a professional point of view, the latter has definitely been the most interesting phase of the internship, which allowed me to explore the weaknesses and the strengths of the partners towards the new system, as well as the presence of a sound M&E culture within WeWorld. The supervision of partner's work has allowed me to shed light on the lacking of proper collected data and baseline, which is now at the core of WeWorld's work, on the path of a fully fledged M&E system. Unfortunately, due to the short period of the internship, has not been possible to see the complete system being adopted. Nevertheless, my activity in Nepal could be seen as an essential first step for building a sound M&E system within WeWorld.

The fourth and last stage of the internship focused the attention on surveys and questionnaires, aimed to test and collect a first result of the M&E capacity within WeWorld and partners. Internal staff and partners were both involved in this particular activity and the analysis of the answers has made possible to develop a solid framework about what they learnt through the M&E training sessions and their professional opinion about this topic.

Overall, I would surely define this experience as essential for my own interest in the internal procedures of an NGO; an experience that, even if has entailed the majority of the work at office and with partners, also allowed me to see the concrete realization of the activities, thanks to the field visits I assisted. From a professional perspective, given the knowledge on M&E that has been developed during the Master programme, the internship has enriched my skills in terms of **project cycle management**, focusing my attention on the monitoring methods and tools which are essential in order to track progress of the projects within an NGO.

Thanks to the analysis of tools and during the process of understanding about the importance of the **collection of data**, I developed a high level confidence in using the excel formats, where formulas updated continuously are able to track real progress of the projects. I also experienced that the M&E system is not universal and thus, needs to be adapted to each different activity and partner and, for this purpose, I had the chance to develop **partner-tailored tools** to facilitate the process of implementation. Alongside with the above mentioned topics, the constant relationship I had with the partners increased my awareness about the importance of a successful and trustworthy **collaboration** among local organizations and WeWorld: a core pillar, I would say, which is playing a key role in the whole development sector of Nepal.

1.2 WeWorld Onlus in Nepal: organization's overview and working approach

WeWorld Onlus [27], previously named as Intervita Onlus, is a non-confessional, non-political, independent Non-Governmental Organization cooperating for development in Italy and developing countries. It was established in Milan in 1999 and is working in 8 countries to ensure children's and women's rights all over the world. WeWorld Onlus strongly believes that improvement of children's life can be achieved only through a change and improvement of women's lives. The name of the organization aims to represent the relationship between "us" a community of 40,000 supporters in Italy and "the world" of over 800 thousand children, women and men who are the beneficiaries of WeWorld projects worldwide.

The mission of WeWorld is promote and defend children and women's rights in Italy and worldwide. WeWorld aims to help in concrete way children, women and local communities to encourage the change and social inclusion. WeWorld's vision is guaranteeing women and children's rights all over the world. WeWorld's working approach is based on six basic principles:

[27] WeWorld Onlus, Annual Report 2015

1) Need based approach: WeWorld respects and works as per the need of the children and women. WeWorld designs its projects based on the identified necessities of the children, women and communities.

2) Participatory approach: WeWorld strongly believes that the participation of beneficiaries and stakeholders in decision making process is essential. Therefore, WeWorld ensures the involvement of beneficiaries and stakeholders in its projects phases.

3) Right based approach: WeWorld respects the right of each individual. It implements projects with due respect to human rights and works to ensure the right of children and women to be recognized and guaranteed.

4) Sustainability: while implementing projects, WeWorld always considers the sustainability of the project interventions. WeWorld's ultimate goal is bringing the lasting and sustainable improvements in the lives of children and women across the world.

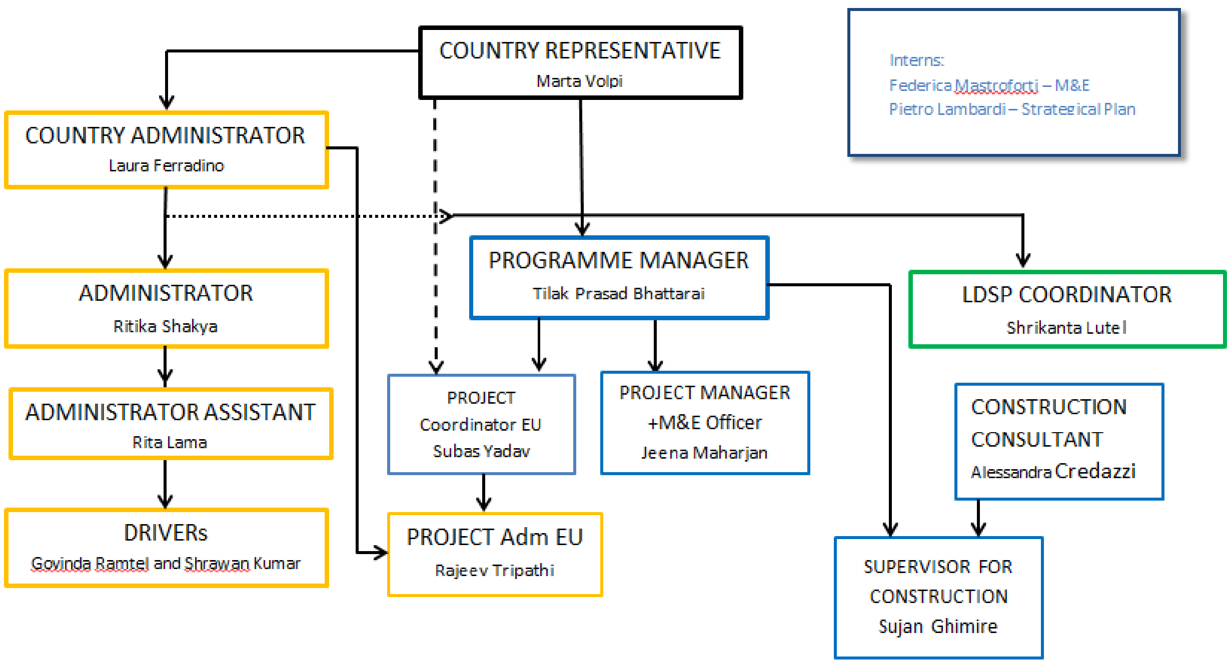
5) Advocacy: advocacy is another approach of WeWorld to influence law-makers and implementers. WeWorld wants to influence in decision making and policy making process in favor of children and women.

6) Sponsorship: through child sponsorship programme (LDS), WeWorld finances international cooperation projects in the countries it operates in.

The activity in Nepal started in 2010 in Kavrepalanchok and Kaski districts[28] to promote the access to quality education to every child. In 2012 WeWorld expanded its working area to Kathmandu and Sindhupalchok as well. After the devastating earthquake of the 25th of April 2015, WeWorld reviewed and revised its priorities and focused on emergency response from June to October 2015, with the support of implementing partners Global Action Nepal (GAN), Nangshal, Child Nepal (CN), Child Workers in Nepal (CWIN). Almost all the schools and houses were damaged in WeWorld's working areas and the children were in great need of extra support at home and to continue their study in schools. For this reason, WeWorld focused its intervention in schools to create a conducive environment to continue children's study and to ensure their right to education. To fight against this sympathetic situation,

[28] Kavrepalanchok District, a part of Province No. 3, is one of the seventy-five districts of Nepal, while Kaski District is a part of Province No. 4, one of the seventy-five districts of Nepal.

caused by the earthquake in Nepal, WeWorld also provided emergency food and non-food relief materials to the affected families. For the purpose of this thesis, and to have a better understanding of WeWorld internal structure, the following scheme aims to to portray the division of the tasks among the staff of WeWorld, elements useful for the next chapters focused on M&E activity.



At the time of the internship experience, the projects being implementing in Nepal were two:

1) "Improving Quality of education creating child friendly environment in community schools": This project is being implemented from October 2015 until 2019. It aims to ensure quality learning environment in 44 schools of 3 Village Development Committees namely Milche, Chyamrangbesi, Kavrenityachandeswor and two municipalities namely Dhulikhel and Panchkhal of Kavre district, in partnership with Nangshal Association Nepal. Building of community schools, WASH and drinking facilities are severely damaged by the earthquake occurred on 25th of April.

2) “Community Participation for Education and Child Protection”: From June 2016 WeWorld started a new project in partnership with CWIN, GAN and CN that will lasts in 2019 with the objective to create participatory management and good governance, child friendly physical infrastructure and joyful learning environment in 35 government schools in Sindhupalchowk and Kathmandu district of Nepal. Bhotechaur, Mahankal, Echok, Kuel VDCs and Melamchi Municipality in Sindhupalchowk and Tarkeshwor, Chandragiri, Shankharapur VDCs and Kathmandu Municipality in Kathmandu district are the working area of the project.

1.3 The participatory approach within WeWorld Onlus

The thesis will underline the use of participatory approach used by WeWorld Onlus towards implementing partners, in order to involve them in the use of Monitoring and Evaluation new procedures.WeWorld works with partners who are the real implementing agents of the projects, with the due support of the organization. An implementing partner is considered as “either an associate government or non government entity that supplements the works of a larger organization or agency, by helping to carry out institutional arrangements in line with the larger organizations’ goals and objectives”. Following this perspective, implementing partners are the doers of activities in local communities and they role appears to be fundamental in terms of accountability of the organization, which they represent during the implementation phase of the projects.

In Nepal, WeWorld works in partnership with four main local organization which strongly shared the mission of WeWorld: Child Nepal, Child Workers in Nepal, Nangshal Association and Global Action Nepal. According to the vision of WeWorld, is essential to define the nature of the partnership that can help to establish a genuinely responsive and sustainable development. The nature would entails not a dependency relation between the donor and the local organisation, but a real cooperation and the provision of support with the ultimate goal of enhance capacity building within the partners. This approach is the main reason why, during the sharing of new M&E procedures, the involvement of the partners through group training sessions and one to one sessions have been planned throughout the four months of the internship experience.

NGOs can play an important role in facilitating, supporting and leveraging these partnerships but it is necessary to build a solid relationship with them, not only as contractors but as real partners working together to realize the project’s ultimate goals.

Is only through an effective partnership, in fact, that the goals of the projects can be maximised. The ultimate goal of the supporting activities in M&E procedures is making the partners able to use the latter on their own, asking for support but not being dependent, developing their own M&E system which is essential in order to track progresses of the projects. The following chapters of the thesis will underline the situation of the partners before the introduction of the M&E procedures, their approach to this topic and their situation regarding the presence of the culture of M&E.

1.4 Fundamentals of M&E system in NGO's environment

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of development activities and projects provides government officials, development managers, and civil society with better means for learning from past experience, improving service delivery, planning and allocating resources, and demonstrating results as part of the essential accountability status to key stakeholders. The following table shows that, despite M&E are two phases of the project cycle management deeply connected, is necessary to underline the existing differences between the two.

	Monitoring	Evaluation
Function	**Project management**	**Learning &Accountability**
Project selection	**All projects should be monitored**	**Selective basis for projects of interest or concern to management**
Timing	**Continuously, all along the project duration**	**Specific moments of project cycle**
Responsibilities	**Carried out by project staff, Ngo staff and partners**	**Carried out by external or internal evaluators**
Focus	**Project's progresses and first results as per output**	**Focus on results and broader impact of the project**
Methods	**Emphasis on quantitative indicators and the collection of data**	**Emphasis on qualitative indicators at the impact level**
Reporting	**Straightforward presentation**	**Less standardised presentation**
Dissemination	**Limited to internal staff and direct users.**	**Wider diffusion, including public opinion**

A proper M&E activity should be carried out with the ultimate aim of filling the gaps between what the projects seems on the agreement and the reality of its actions, given by the implementation of activities and results. Monitoring is a management tool which helps the staff to follow the project's progress while helping the staff to identify possible problems and challenges in order to facilitate the corrective measures during the implementation of activities. Evaluation instead, is carried out with three main purpose: first of all, for **learning** purpose due to the fact that allows NGOs and stakeholders to learn from experience to plan for future more efficient interventions. Procedures on M&E should be well placed and observed within an NGO and contribute to shape the future policies of the organization and the project planning. Secondly, the evaluation phase aims to **empower** the capacities of local partners, NGO staff and beneficiaries to use the results as a learning tool for the future and to learn from their mistakes. Last but not least NGOs, gain **accountability**[29] through evaluation, not only towards donors but also with communities and the country context they are working in.

At the core of M&E activity, especially for the monitoring purpose, there is the collection of data. Gathering qualitative and quantitative data during the implementation of the project is essential in order not only to track progress and point out critical aspects, but with the ultimate goal of building a data storage useful for the evaluation purpose. This is the reason why M&E is defined like an inseparable combination of the two activities, due to the fact that the evaluation depends deeply on how the data have been collected during the implementation of the project and their quality in terms of measurement and reliability. The evaluation phase rely heavily on data generated through monitoring during the programme and project cycle, including, for example, baseline data, information on the programme or project implementation process and measurements of results.

The instruments used include different purpose, advantages and disadvantages, costs, skills, and time management.

- **Performance indicators**
- The logical framework approach
- Theory-based evaluation
- **Formal surveys**
- Rapid appraisal methods
- **Participatory methods** (e.g. interviews to beneficiaries, focus groups..)
- Public expenditure tracking surveys
- Cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analysis
- Impact evaluations

[29] CISP, COSV, COOPI, Intersos, Movimondo and DRN (2003), The monitoring and evaluation manual of the NGOs of the Forum Solint

This list is not intended to be comprehensive. However, the thesis will focus on three main approaches used by WeWorld highlighting their own features: performance Indicators, formal surveys and participatory approach.

a) **Performance indicators**: Within WeWorld this approach is definitely the preferred one. Performance indicators are measures of inputs, processes, outputs, outcomes, and impacts for development projects, programs, or strategies. When supported with sound data collection, indicators allow the development operators to track progress, demonstrate results, and adjust the project's activities according to new challenges the monitoring activity has shed light on. Participation of key stakeholders in defining indicators is important because they are then more likely to understand and use indicators for management decision-making. The role of indicators in the development sector entails advantages and disadvantages, such as:

ADVANTAGES

- Indicators represent an effective way to measure progress toward objectives of the project.
- They facilitate benchmarking comparisons between different organizational units, districts, and over time
- The can be set accordingly to what the project wants to measure, highlighting certain features or topic.
- If well-defined and jointly set with partners, they can constitute a sound base for future evaluation.
- Well defined indicators are also the best source to use when it comes to disseminate the information about the project towards different public audiences, through reports etc.

DISADVANTAGES

- Poorly defined indicators are not good measures of success.
- Tendency to define too many indicators, or those without accessible data sources, making system costly, impractical, and likely to be underutilized.
- Often a trade-off between picking the optimal or desired indicators and having to accept the indicators which can be measured using existing data.

According to the NGO manual[30], there are no universal principles about the characteristics of a good indicator but the "SMART" principles below can easily be the requirements to have reliable indicators:

- **S**pecific: indicators should have a link with the specific conditions of the project. For this reason they need to be defined with local partners together and according to local context and situation.
- **M**easurable: Indicator could be quantitative or qualitative. Quantitative are usually preferred, easier to manage because they allow statistical analysis of the data.
- **A**ttainable: the indicators should be kept simple and limited in number. A careful assessment of the data requested, their availability, the cost of their collection and treatment must be carried out before selecting the indicators.
- **R**elevant: indicators must be relevant to the management information needs of the people who will use data. Field staff may need particular indicators that are no relevant for the HQ or managers.
- **T**imely: the indicators need to be collected and reported at the right time to influence management decisions.

Alongside with the above mentioned characteristics, indicators must be differently set out for the levels of the Logical Framework as they need to satisfy different purpose for each of the latter. As the following table shows, the levels of Logical Framework require different types of indicators with a precise function for that particular level.

[30] The Monitoring and Evaluation Manual of the NGOs of the Forum Solint

Project objectives	Type of indicators	Nature of the indicators
Overall objective	Impact level e.g.: 50% decrease of dropout rate in public schools of the Kaski district of Nepal	Long term statistical evidence resulting at National sectoral level
Specific Objective	Outcome level e.g.: Equity in access to Basic Education System for Out Of School Children (OOSC)	Social and economic surveys, field visits, interviews, meetings, observation
Results	Output level e.g.:Child Friendly Environment is improved in 24 public schools, to enhance the equity in inclusion, participation and retention	Management records and progress reports
Activities	Process e.g.: Number of classrooms provided with carpeting, educational materials and blackboards.[31] Distribution of scholarship to vulnerable children.	Management records and financial account records
Inputs	Inputs	Financial account records

Source: The Monitoring and Evaluation Manual of the NGOs of the Forum Solint, p. 25

[31] Examples are taken from the following WeWorld Onlus project "Partnership for Equity and Access in Kapilbastu (PEAK)" Local CSOs promoting Equity and Quality in Early Childhood and Basic Education in Kapilbastu District, Nepal

Regarding the definition of monitoring, contrary to many definitions that see this process aimed at merely reviewing progress made in implementing actions or activities, the definition that this thesis will focuses on its further functions: the reviewing of progress against achieving goals. In other words, monitoring in is not only concerned with asking “Are we taking the actions we said we would take?” but also “Are we making progress on achieving the results that we said we wanted to achieve?”[32]. The difference between these two approaches is essential for further actions on M&E within an NGO. The first approach is much more limited and may focus the attention on the use of resources and tracking project’s activities. On the opposite, the second approach involves a furthers step: tracking strategies and actions being taken by partners and “figuring out what new strategies and actions need to be carried out to ensure progress towards the most important results”[33].

On the other side, the evaluation phase is a rigorous assessment of either completed or ongoing activities to determine until what extent the impact of the projects has been achieved. However, the aims of both monitoring and evaluation are very similar: to provide information that can help inform decisions, improve performance and achieve planned results. While monitoring provides real-time information required by management, evaluation provides more in-depth assessment.

Within the NGO’s environment, the M&E has increased its value, especially in the last decades, when the total amount of public aid and multilateral agencies increased. M&E became also an essential part of the NGOs system due to its added value and impact on development effectiveness. Given this, the attention for practical and concrete results achievements has been demanding and the donor’s community true concern about the real achievements in terms of development of the NGOs. The thesis will not discuss this still ongoing debate on measurable development impacts, but is essential to bear in mind that the increasing attention within NGOs and the consequent wider investment on M&E systems is also due to the fact that they are required, more than ever, to provide results in order to preserve their accountability and reliability to donors. Taking into account all the above mentioned reasons, it is essential for the NGOs to develop a strong M&E system within their procedures, preferably accounting precise roles to the staff on this regard with the aim of facilitating the division of the tasks between the roles involved in management of the projects. in the case of

[32] UNDP, ‘Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results’, Evaluation Office, New York, NY, 2002

[33] Idem

WeWorld in Nepal this has involved also the transfer of know how to local partners, topic that will be further discussed in the following paragraphs.

1.5 Why a new M&E system within WeWorld?

At the time of the internship, M&E was a completely new system for WeWorld Nepal. As a nongovernmental organization present in the country since 2010, the aim of WeWorld has been to establish a general system of monitoring and evaluation at various levels, from the Headquarter in Italy to countries in which WeWorld operates, currently 7. To set up this system, WW in recent years has taken advantage of expert consultants for M&E who have done specific mission in the seven countries WeWorld operates in. Unfortunately, Nepal has not been included in this mission plan. The objective of the consultancies has been aimed to support WW in the systematization of the general system of M&E and its tools, starting from the depth of those so far developed and their actual use in each country, ensuring two main objectives:

- The goal of harmonization, so that each country can benefit from the improvements made in the other, while maintaining the specificities of each;
- The need for introducing additional instruments, in particular within local branch offices and HQ.

The necessity to start up a proper M&E system came along with the growing number of projects in the country and with the decision to build partnership with public actor of the international cooperation, such as the European Union. The main goals of the introduction and implementation of the M&E procedures are of different nature and could be divided in external and internal:

External goals	Internal goals
Increasing accountability towards donors	Develop a storage of reliable data
Increasing the partner's responsibility towards project's achievements	Establish a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system within WeWorld branches
Supporting the partners to develop their own M&E culture	Adapt the M&E system to each context's needs
Dissemination of data through communication tools like Annual Reports	Promoting a global knowledge of ongoing activities by the whole WeWorld Team making each other member interchangeable.

The M&E system aimed to be consistent and coherent but also proposed diversified instruments depending on the country and context. In addition, countries that have received the following support missions, have benefited from the additions and improvements date from the trial in the previous countries or at the same time, in some local offices WW tools changes were made to meet specific needs or are We were introduced new ones.

1.6 Previous M&E system applied by WeWorld

Due to the extremely increasing number and size of NGOs in the last few years, Nepal necessitated a separate institutional body which, on behalf of the national government, deals with the entire NGO sector. For this latter purpose, the Social Welfare Council (SWC) has been established with the Social Welfare Act 2049. The Social Welfare Council [34] is a governmental body, responsible for the promotion, facilitation, co-ordination, monitoring and evaluation of the activities of the non-governmental social organizations in Nepal. Among its manifold activities, is also responsible for the extension of its supports to the government in the matters of developing the NGOs sector policies and programs of Nepal and implement them in a coordinated way.

The Council provides with frequent training needs, small grants and back-up supports to the local (national) NGOs affiliated to this. It is also in charge of the necessary environment to link up the local NGOs with the international NGOs and assist to develop partnership between them for the implementation of the activities. The council doesn't encourage the international NGOs, to go directly into implementation without taking the local NGOs as their implementing partners for reasons of sustainability, cost-effectiveness and genuine participation. With respect to the INGOs, the Council acts as a link between them and the government ministries and/or agencies. It provides the INGOs with needful guidance, administrative supports and facility arrangements such as obtaining work permit, visa and duty-free facilities including taxes on commodities, materials and equipment based on the prevailing laws and regulations of the HMG. For the purpose of recognizing the international NGOs in a more rational way and arrange the support services accordingly, the Council has classified INGOs into A, B and C groups on the basis of the three main indictors such

[34] SWC Information Bulletin - Social Welfare Council

as; 1) Volume of Funding, ii) INGOs conforming to the rules and regulations of the government and iii) Working directly or with local NGOs or user's group.

The effective use of the available resources to the targeted groups is the most concerned priority of the Social Welfare Council, which would be ensured through the process of periodical monitoring and evaluation activity. The Council has a specific division for Monitoring & Evaluation which records information about NGO and INGO activities. This division is responsible for conducting periodical monitoring and evolution of NGO/INGO activities and prepare reports on their activities. The Monitoring and Evaluation Division consists of information and statistics cell, which keeps the statistics of NGO & INGO concerned and makes the flow of information. Since 2011, WeWorld availed itself of this type of monitoring and evaluation system, deeply relying on SWC activity and mandate. Within WeWorld Onlus, the evaluation of the projects has always consisted in an evaluation activity carried out by the Social Welfare Council, usually one for the mid period and one made by the end of the project.

Regarding the monitoring activity, WeWorld, at the time of the internship, used to monitor the activities only through two tools: the reception of monthly narrative report submitted by local partners and the field visit reports. The first tool was submitted on monthly basis by each partner to the project manager and consisted in a description of the activities carried out, with date and place, with the possibility to choose among them and plan a monitoring visit when possible. All these appointment were not schedule in a formal way, meaning with specific form or sharing a work plan within WeWorld but only through phone calls and informal arrangements between the partners and WeWorld staff. After the visit, a visit form was filled up by the project manager and submitted to the Country Representative.

The latter form was a written record of the activity, with remarks from WeWorld staff and suggestion for improvements. The document was merely for internal usage and data storage and the suggestions were not supposed to be shared with the local partners. Summarizing, the monitoring activity was done through the observation method, without surveys to beneficiaries which should have been among the duties of the partners.

1.7 M&E adopted by local partners

Regarding the M&E system used by local partners, which will be called A,B,C,D for privacy purpose, it should be kept as premise that not all the partners were capacitated with a proper M&E structure inside their organization. This situation has been particularly difficult to be assessed and analyzed properly due to the lack of time and the risk of interfering with internal coordination of the partners. However, thanks to the methodology used during the training sessions on the new tools, has been possible to get a first glance of their way to collect data, managing the monitor activity and organizing field visits. The assessment has been done through questionnaires and open questions targeted on M&E techniques and methods used by each partner before the new procedures of M&E took place. These results will be used for this and future portraits of the partners. For the time being, an overview is needed in order to understand the status of the partners on M&E before the implementation of the new procedures. A brief summary of the structure of the pre assessment surveys is shown in the table below.

Questions	Purpose
a) Please list at least 3 of the Monitoring and Evaluation tools used by your organization in monitoring the projects and briefly describe their functions	The purpose of this question has been to assess the usage of the tools by the partners.
b) Please share some indicators regarding your project's implementation	Indicators has been at the core of the M&E sessions throughout the internship period. Baseline and indicators for activities were lacking and for this purpose the question was aimed to explore the type of indicators used by the partners.
c) Which methods your organization uses for collecting data for monitoring purpose? Please, briefly indicate for each choice timeframe, tool used (Excel, word document,) and person in charge.	The main challenge for the implementation of new M&E procedures has been the understanding of the methods used to collect data on the field. Information about the internal roles was not clear and this particular question was a key one, in order to understand how the partners collect the data during monitoring visits. The results have enable WeWorld in scheduling the support and ensure a proper collection of data during such visits on the field.
d) Why, according to your opinion, is worthwhile investing in M&E procedures?	This question aimed to explore the commitment of the partners for M&E and their opinion regarding such activity. Moreover, it investigated also the presence of an M&E culture within local partners.

1.8 Main Findings

Partner A. Partner A was using the MEAL approach as the main M&E procedure to monitor the activities of the project in partnership with WeWorld. In its case, the structure of the internal staff showed a lack of proper roles in charge exclusively of M&E activity. The latter responsibility was mainly a duty of the Project Manager and the MEAL officer appointed in the organization. Regarding the usage of specific tools for the M&E purpose, the partner listed three main techniques: the Logical framework, the focus group discussion (FGD) and the questionnaires. The first one was mainly used as a guide for indicators and planning activities, while the second one was done after the field visits in the following way: 6-8 community members were collected in a group in order to discuss about the activity just realized (for example, a training for teachers on child protection). The result of the focus group discussion was a questionnaire, properly filled by the members of the group with comments and suggestions regarding the activity. The questionnaires were mainly used a random method for monitoring purpose, without a fixed group and time, in order to assess the activities of the projects.

Regarding indicators, the partner A listed only indicators for the upper level of the Logical framework, namely the overall and specific objective (e.g. decrease in dropout rate, targeted schools have been declared as SZOP[35] by the end of the project, 50% increase in parent's visit to targeted schools). Less attention was paid for results and activities' indicators which have been developed together with WeWorld, throughout my internship period. The activity of setting indicators and revise baseline for the projects has been at the core of my duties in Nepal and will be the central part of the last chapter of this thesis.

Partner A was used to collect data using the method of Quality Benchmark (QBM)[36] when going into the field. After the collection, the data were formalized in excel sheet the "action plan tracker" or simpler "MEAL quality monitoring report" with the purpose of tracking progress of each activity and to record all the monitoring field visits done. At internal level, the MEAL officer was in charge of performing these activities, while the real collectors of data were the so called "social mobilizers" who usually go into the field, knowing communities and beneficiaries. The process of monitoring ends with the redaction of Quality Field visit report, a document jointly

[35] School as zone of peace
[36] Programme Quality Benchmarks were set at the beginning of the project and were based on MEAL standards for education.

prepared with the MEAL team and the social mobilizers. With regards to the opinion about the importance of investing on effective M&E, the partner showed a deep commitment explaining that the monitoring activity is essential in the development sector and improves the quality of the programme. From the internal perspective, put efforts in M&E activity helps also the staff to be more responsible towards the organization and helps to find critical points to better implement the activities.

Partner B. Partner B did not have any specific roles for M&E activity within the organization. Each person of the team was responsible for the monitoring of the project activities and, as a result, this has led to mutual horizontal responsibility between all the members of the team. Usually, external evaluators were hired for the purpose of evaluation. The organization used Results-Based Management (RBM)[37] as the main tool for M&E purpose. This use involved a constant control basically focused on indicators of results, as concrete outcome of the related activities of the project. As regards to the tools used, Partner B collected quantitative data through a self developed tool that, due to its complicated use, has not absolved its function regularly.

Regarding to indicators, as the partner above mentioned, Partner B was used to concentrate only on indicators of upper level and none of activities'. Some examples of the answers given were as follows: Increase in regular attendance in Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres of the target schools by 10 percent by the end of the project period, 75 percent of teachers in primary level are using audio-visual mediums as teaching methodology in each target schools by the end of the project.

Differently from the previous partner, B was using observation of schools and records of activities for M&E purpose. While the observation of schools were scheduled on weekly basis, the records were collected once in a month. With regards to the importance of M&E procedures within the organization, the partner showed a deep commitment and focused its attention on the level of achievement of results, the level which they always put a lot of efforts in, due to the use of RBM. The partner also underlined the added value of M&E procedures when it comes to effectiveness stating

[37] Results-based management is a strategic management approach. It is used with partners to plan, cost, implement, monitor and measure the changes from cooperation, rather than just the inputs provided or activities conducted. Using RBM, is possible to ensure that cash, supply and technical assistance contribute to a logical chain of results that increase in complexity and ambition as you rise up the chain: outputs, outcomes and impacts which are MD/MDG related national priorities. RBM depends on critical assumptions about the programme environment and risk assessments, clearly defined accountabilities and indicators for results, and performance monitoring and reporting. (United Nation Development Group- UNDG)

that “the procedures can act as a guiding tool for planning and making changes in the project”.

Partner C. Among all the four partners, Partner C could be defined as the most organized and responsible one, and these characteristics emerged since the pre assessment. Partner C was able to list more than 5 different methods which were currently used to conduct a solid M&E activity. The following were used within the organization:

- Quantitative Data Collection
- Analysis and interpretation
- Note keeping and records
- Checklist
- Surveys
- Sequential visual analysis
- Reporting

As per other partners’ results, the focus on indicators was dedicated to impact level were all the measurement were defined as per national standards or by the end of the project. One exception is worthwhile to be underlined: partner C was the only one to mention a mid-term results like “a two roomed school building in Pokharichaur School established by the end of the first year of project period.” Comparing to all others indicators, this one has been set for the first year meaning that has involved a more specific work of the programme department to divide the project’s results by year, in order to have a realistic strategy for the outcomes to be assessed.

According to partner C, M&E is very essential during the implementation phase of any project. Quoting directly the answer given: “In traditional ways of project implementation period, the M&E was not taken in consideration, thus, it is later found that the objectives were not met as it were set to. Later, M&E was introduced and implemented in project implementation process. It tracks every actions happened to achieve the planned goal or objectives whether the actions are right or not, appropriate of not and if yes, how much it is achieved.”

Partner D. The last partner was the only one having its own M&E unit composed by a combination of professional people from the programme department. The tools used by the organization were self developed like the M&E matrix based on project proposal and the households visits questionnaires. Among them, the so called “Child Tracking Card” is surely the most innovative for the monitoring purpose. The latter could be described as a tool which helps to monitor the life of the children beneficiaries, during the life of the project. The Child Tracking Card contains all the information about the child, his/her family and the situation before and after the project. The child tracking aims to track each child of the targeted villages (VDC). The partner compiles the profile of the child and put the child in three categories of vulnerability (slight, medium, high). For all these three categories the partner developed its own indicators and requirements. After the tracking is completed, the partners builds up a database in order to get the disaggregated information of each child in that village. The tracking is done every six months by the project staff and social mobilizers who work in the community. The information collected and the continuous monitoring of these particular children permits to have the situation under control and develop new support and strategies in case of need.

Regarding the indicators, comparing to the other three partners, this one was mentioning different types of indicators such as: Two schools reconstructed,102 ECD facilitators and 11 teachers able to make child friendly learning materials of 11 schools. All the indicators were set “by the end of the project”. Alongside with this, the partner showed a strong commitment to the new procedures, and to M&E in general underlining the “learning” component of the latter, which helps with the identification of the project’s weaknesses and tries to minimize mistakes. Another outcome which has been mentioned has been the increase in the capacity building of all the member on effective project management, which will finally ensure the quality of the whole project.

To summarize, all the four main partners had an M&E activity in process, tough not a well organized one. During the phase of pre assessment of the partners, some of them were completely new on the topic and they did not have specific roles inside the staff in charge of M&E procedure. Just two over four partners has a specific M&E approach, the MEAL and the RBM. Other partners were using their own developed tools made for the purpose of collecting data and tracking progress of the project. This overall situation has made the implementation of the new procedures easier for the partners which did not have none of the tools in place, harder for the ones already having their practice in process with the risk of overlapping or simply over burden the partner's duty of report towards WeWorld.

Chapter 2

2.1 The new M&E system: features and overview of the main tools

The following chapter will describe each of the tools of WeWorld M&E system, their functions and features. The presentation of the tools will be divided into three main parts: **planning**, **reporting** and **evaluation**. Those three stages represent the framework of the project cycle management into which the tools have been designed and used.

Planning phase

In this first stage of M&E, an active partner involvement is essential. The first step which enable the procedures to start is indeed the receipt, from the partners, of a **regular operational plan** according to the chosen timeframe for **reporting** (quarterly, half-yearly, etc.), where the activities are listed with more details and specific time of implementation. The output of this first documents is **WW monitoring plan**, a document where WW will indicate which activities aims to monitor and the person who will be in charge of this, facilitating also a division of the tasks among WW staff. In the case of Nepal, this particular tool was new and never used by the partners.

Tool 1. The partner operational plan

The partner operational plan is an extract of the project time schedule; its function is to receive from the partner more detailed and operational information for the reference period, so that WW can organise its own monitoring activity. The plan should include basic information on the activities that the partner intends to carry out on monthly basis. Among the activities of the plan, the duty of WW is to choose those to be visited and monitored, also according to the partner suggestions. The frequency of request of the operational plan to the partner varies from country to country; it is advisable to request it together with the periodic financial plan so that it is consistent with it. In the case of Nepal has been scheduled on monthly basis.

The responsible for the production of the operational plan is the partner and the WW Program Manager guarantees that it is produced and received, urging the partner if it doesn't provide it on time. In order to get a well defined operational plan, WW must understand the system of the partners, namely:

1) How they organise the work and the division of tasks for internal management, the coordination arrangements between different levels.

2) How information received from different sources is aggregated, a clear division of the roles must be in place.

3) How the partners plan and report (weekly, monthly, quarterly).This is a flexible factor but there is a strong need to put in place clear deadlines for the partners.

These information are usually hard to be gathered but they represent a key factor for M&E especially in the case of Nepal, where the latter has been a brand new procedure for WW.

Tool 2.WeWorld monitoring plan

The next step is the transition from the operational plan of each partner, where there is the identification of potential activities to be monitored, to a comprehensive WW monitoring plan, mandatory tool for all WW country offices. The tool function is to facilitate the planning of the project monitoring by WW personnel directly or indirectly involved in the M&E, such as the Country Representative and the Programme department. The WW project manager is responsible for the production of the WW monitoring plan and the first step is the choice of the activities to be monitored.

In the monitoring plan the activities to be monitored are divided between the staff, primarily the Programme department and the Country Representative, based on certain criteria: responsibilities and respective functions, tasks and other commitments in the current month, global knowledge of all the activities of each project. In addition, the objectives of the monitoring visit and the key elements to be analysed should be indicated. As the tool frequency, it is recommended a rough monitoring plan for each quarter of the calendar year, with a more specific detail for the immediately following month in order to facilitate the smooth planning of the internal management.

Reporting phase

Once the partner and project monitoring actions have been carried out, is essential to have a historical track of what has been achieved. The important is to systematize the information so that it is accessible in time and by different operators and can be used and processed as required. The full reporting system includes three tools:

1) **The monitoring mapping**: a tool created specifically to facilitate subsequent planning, through the principle of global knowledge of all project components by the whole team;

2) **The visit-meeting form:** it allows the circulation of information within the team and the systematic collection of relevant information and activities; it is filled in every field visit or monitoring meeting with the partner;
3) **The WW monitoring report:** for a structured communication at higher levels, information must be revised and summarized in a report where: critical aspects detected during the observation period are analysed; any adjustment or correction in the implementation of the project to be suggested to the partners during regular meetings are proposed; and activities to be implemented and monitored in the following period are identified.

To meet the need to have a single tool where collecting all the information related to what has been done in a reference period, it is advisable to adapt and develop the proposed tools (e.g. the mapping or the operational plan) using them as a database with hypertext links to specific documents that relate to the activities carried out (for example to the visit-meeting form containing detailed information). In the case of Nepal, only the first two tools have been adopted. Since the M&E has been started from July the monitoring report's use has been postponed to the period when there will be a sound and periodical monitoring activity to report about.

Tool 3.WeWorld monitoring mapping

The function of this tool is to facilitate subsequent analysis of the monitored issues in different months for each partner, through an immediate overview that facilitates the choice of the activities to be monitored later on. Its setting is based on each project results, macro-areas of analysis and components, trying to find possible similarities between what have been achieved by different partners. The mapping is used to understand, at a glance, what was monitored over time by WW staff, what was given more or less attention and importance and, therefore, re-prioritize and reallocate tasks. This tool is useful on a long-term observation time which allows highlighting the coverage of the different components.

Thanks to this tool, for example, is possible to have a wider coverage of the M&E activities and status, understanding immediately if a particular partner has not been visited enough and the attention dedicated to each of them in comparison. Already in this tool there is a transition from a single partner to an overview of WW program, although, at this level, it is still closely linked to the partner interventions.

Tool 4. Visit/meeting form

The function of this tool is to facilitate the collection and structured sharing of information gathered during field monitoring visits and other meetings with partners. This tool is particularly useful when there are more people dedicated to monitoring; in the case of Nepal the tool has involved the Programme Department, namely the project manager and me, as an assistant during the field visits. In the case of Nepal, the format already existed and was used for the same purpose but the new one slightly differed from the previous, being more specific and detailed.

The new format shows specific details for each activity selected from the partner operational plan and from the overall WW monitoring plan such as: who made the visit/meeting must be shown and, if different, who compiles the information, a space for suggestions and comments and deviations, a space for proposed corrections in case of need. The new format encourages freedom in writing and for this there is also an empty space to enter additional information that emerged during the visit/meeting, general comments or those on other components/activities that were not foreseen at the planning stage.

Tool 5. WeWorld monitoring report

The report tool function is to make a summary of the main issues raised during the field visits, but also during other moments of observation such as meetings; therefore, the partner monitoring visits findings are just one of the methods and sources of information to draft this report. In fact, its main function is to analyse; indeed, there shouldn't be a clear separation between the partner monitoring visit and other sources of information, but they should be harmonized one with each other. For this reason, in the report there should be a move from a frame based on activity to one based on the main project components, related to the level of results, encouraging reflection and reasoning that allows comparing those common to most projects and partners.

For Nepal, the use of this particular tool has been postponed since the monitoring activity did not provide enough information to write a report.

Tool 6. WeWorld program monitoring report

In a perspective of a transition from a "vision based on projects" to a wider "program vision", the necessity of a proper tool to summarize all the activities of the M&E become essential. For this purpose, the **WW program monitoring report**, aims to takes in account all the actions carried out by the country office over the period and highlight the progress and difficulties with respect to the annual plan and the three-year country office Strategy. In this report the project/partner monitoring is only a part, even though a very significant one.

The WW program monitoring report comes from the three-year Country Strategy tool and its annual operational plan, documents which are defined by the Country Representative in accordance with the Geographical Desk Officer and validated by the International Cooperation Division (ICD) Director. The report frequency can be every three months, so that the semester coincides with the mid-year review, or quarterly, in correspondence with the WW project/partner monitoring report. The person in charge of the compilation is the Country Representative and the main recipient is the Geographical Desk Officer. The tool will be introduced in the course of 2016 and it will become compulsory in 2017. It allows a structured communication between the CO (the CRep) and the HQ (the GDO) and an effective monitoring of the progress of the Country Strategy.

Evaluation phase

The evaluation phase contains three tools:

1) Partner ex ante evaluation grid
2) Partner ongoing evaluation form
3) End of the project form

Despite the fact that these tools should not be proper partner organisational management analysis tools, as the guidelines were indicating, in Nepal this was not the case. In the specific context in fact, it was essential to implement for the first time the ongoing evaluation form in order to build a storage of data about the partners and their evolution during time. The results of the ongoing evaluation of the partners will be presented in the final chapter of this thesis, as an important feedback from the internal staff of WW towards each one of the 4 partners, also reflecting the commitment to the M&E activity.

Tool 7. Partner ex ante evaluation grid

This grid is a support tool for the analysis of the partner that takes into account: modes of operation and governance, level of structuring, management and planning skills, financial autonomy, areas of intervention, etc. Its function is to help WW in the decision to enter or not in partnership with a new organization and, if so, in the definition of contractual matters to be adopted (WW's, partner's or mixed procedures; frequency and amount of instalments, frequency of reporting, etc.). The choice of the different contract options will depend on the level of autonomy and structuring found in the partner and the level of risk that WW intends to assume on the basis of tactical and strategic considerations.

The tool provides very useful information to guide the partner capacity building by WW, and more in general, to establish WW degree of investment in the partnership. The ex ante evaluation grid is compulsory for each partner WW wants to create a relation with. It is filled in one-off before signing the contract with the partner and is updated at any renewal. The person in charge of the compilation is the Project manager, under the supervision of the Country Representative.

Tool 8. Partner ongoing evaluation form

The partner ongoing evaluation form is an internal document of WW. The main function is to trace the historic evolution of the partner analysis, especially useful in case of change of WW personnel and handover, like occurred in Nepal at the time of the internship. The format consists of an Excel worksheet used for a purely qualitative evaluation through the assignment of a value scale (1: bad - 5: excellent) on two main areas: the partner capacity and the partnership with WW; these are divided, in turn, into multiple lines/areas of analysis.

The suggested frequency is half-yearly, but it can vary according to need; for example, with a partner with whom there are problems or WW wants to end the collaboration, the form can be used with greater frequency to have a parallel documentation supporting the decisions taken. The person in charge of the compilation is the CRep who involves the various functions: the Country Administrator (CA), the PgM, etc., according to the specific features of different sections. In the case of Nepal the latter form has been quite useful in order to identify courses for their capacity building.

Tool 9.End of project form

This tool is used in the closing phase of each project. Its function is to provide a structured end of project evaluation (internal evaluation), that allows systematising the information about the results achieved by the projects and to highlight/share any "Best Practices" and "Lessons Learnt". This form is a tool that can also be used to formulate recommendations with respect to the continuation of collaboration with a given partner. It is also useful to project results, Best Practices, Lessons Learnt communication within WW and the Head Quarters.

The form is mandatory and the format (Annex 08) incorporates the European Union guidelines for the project result-oriented monitoring (ROM) and some elements of the partner ongoing evaluation form. It is divided into four main areas of analysis: Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability and Partnership. Each of these areas of analysis is in turn composed of various indicators, which together allow building a global evaluation of the macro areas of analysis. As for the partner ongoing evaluation form, a value scale (1: bad - 5: excellent) is used and the final result is given by the average formula.

Tool 10. Project monitoring tool

The last documents is definitely at the core of the whole M&E system and the one that in Nepal has been the most challenging one in terms of implementation. The latter is developed by the logical framework of the project, in Excel format; in addition to the standard columns of the logical framework, there are several additional columns that, on the one hand make possible to describe the overall project monitoring plan and on the other hand to systematically gather the information necessary to measure the indicators. The function of the monitoring tool is essential due to the fact that helps the partner to regularly reflect on all the levels of the intervention logic; by frequently sending it to WW, it can be used as a tool for structured and regular communication on the project state of progress.

In the case of Nepal, the partners were used to develop their own tool for monitoring and for tracking progress of the project. The previous tools were lacking of two main things: the baseline and proper indicators. The last chapter will focus deeply on this particular gap which is now being filled by the use of this new tool. The latter, if properly filled, facilitates the partner's work, as it is consistent with the indicators measurement requirements contained in the reports and the presence of formulas make the value automatically calculated. The possibility to send the monitoring tool to WW more frequently, for example monthly, strengthens the capacity of the CO, and in particular the WW PgM, to interact in a more structured and regular manner with partners, intervening in a prompter way, if necessary. The joint reflection on all levels of the intervention logic, including results and objectives, facilitates WW support even on these aspects, avoiding it to come too late, if an effective system for gathering information to measure the related indicators has not been set up since the beginning.

The monitoring tool consists of **two parts** and involves a work on multiple levels. The first part deals with the **project monitoring plan (A)** and it must be set up by the partner when the logical framework is produced, during the project design phase. The second part constitutes the **real monitoring tool (B)** because it includes a monitoring matrix that contains formulas and is set up by the WW project manager at the project start.

A. The Monitoring plan

The first level is made by the analysis of indicators from the operational point of view of data collection, to encourage a greater level of their appropriation and use for monitoring purposes. This helps to choose the most significant indicators, if they are too many, and to make them more easily measurable. Therefore, the tool requires an initial analysis work done by the partner that afterwards facilitates the subsequent filling of the periodic reports. Unlike the standard logical framework model, generally recognised at the international level, activity indicators[38] (instead of the means) and the related sources of verification (instead of the costs) are also required. Together with the columns of the logical framework, the additional ones should be filled in for the indicators of all levels of the intervention logic (objectives, expected results and activities).

Subsequently, the partners have to illustrate for each indicator the essential elements of their own data collection and analysis system to measure the indicators. As explained in the introduction to the partner M&E system, there are some steps required for setting-up a monitoring plan and limits in it often concern aspects which are more connected with the project implementation system and the partner institutional structure. On the basis of the monitoring plan, actual changes in the partner management structure should be introduced to facilitate monitoring, but also the project implementation itself.

[38] At level of activities process indicators have to be identified; they measure what happens during the implementation of activities through the transformation of inputs into outputs. They can be defined as the link between the activities and the results, as they are usually referred to as a set of achievement of milestones taken from a plan of activities with the available resources; therefore, they illustrate the steps that lead to the achievement of results. E.g. number of training/meetings/seminars made, number of schools built, tons of food aid distributed, etc.

Standard logical framework columns:

Intervention logic

- **General Objective:** positive change of a whole situation, in the long term, at a sector or national level, to which a project contributes. It is usually achieved through a combined effort of several actors and/or projects;
- **Specific Objective**: what it is expected to achieve from the project realisation, using the time and resources available. A project usually involves one Specific Objective only;
- **Expected Results**: they represent the product of the realization of the Activities and are concrete and tangible. Each result is related to at least one Activity;
- **Activities**: specific actions that have to be realized in order to obtain a Result, thus helping in achieving an Objective;
- **Objectively Verifiable Indicators** - *also for the activities* -: measure a situation that takes place when a Result or the Specific Objective has been achieved. They should be formulated in terms of quantity, quality and time;
- **Sources of Verification** - *also for the activities* -: statistics, donors' studies, research carried out within the project area, project reports or other sources of information necessary to obtain relevant data;
- **Pre-conditions:** preliminary favourable conditions failing which the project is surely destined to fail. They should be carefully verified before the project starts;
- **Assumption:** favourable hypothesis or conditions failing which the achievement of Results and Objectives as well as the success of a project can be jeopardized and which fall outside its direct control;

Additional columns:

The following columns are filled in from a perspective of project design, in the project writing phase, but at the same time they contain useful elements to clarify the data collection and analysis system for the subsequent project monitoring; they can be updated and enriched during the project start-up phase or even later:

- **Indicator description**: a possible short explanation of the indicator or of its measuring modality, if necessary because not clear or self-evident;
- **Responsible for monitoring**: the Responsible, within the project staff for data collection and analysis for measuring each indicator;
- **Monitoring actions and their timeframe**: actions required, monitoring tools and methods used as well as timeframe for data collection and analysis; it is not

demanded to describe the implementation of the activities in details, but what is needed to measure indicators;

- **Additional resources for monitoring**: to identify if there are any extra resources needed specifically for measuring the indicator or if they are the same used for implementation of the project activities;
- **Critical issues in data collection and analysis**: possible problems in measuring the indicators or in data collection and analysis or other aspects that must be taken into account; it can also be compiled at the project start-up;
- **Baseline value**: the number value of the indicator in case it is a change from an X value (base-line) to an Y value (Total expected); to enter only if the indicator is built in this way; e.g. dropout rate in the school moving from 15% to 5%;
- **Total expected** : number value/target of the indicator which is expected to achieve;

B. The Project monitoring tool

The second part is the heart of the proper monitoring tool, set for the periodic filling. It contains a matrix with formulas that allow automatically calculating the state of progress in numerical and percentage terms for each indicator against the Total expected (defined in the monitoring plan). At the project start, the WW PgM copies and pastes the final logical framework of the partner set for monitoring (therefore including columns of the standard logical framework and additional ones of the monitoring plan) in the model document arranged for the monitoring tool (Annex 09); in the latter, in addition to the columns previously described, the matrix with the formulas is also inserted. At this point, the WW PgM performs a series of steps to ensure that the formulas can work (see below, the final paragraph on the formulas for the PgM).

Formulas are activated by inserting the letter C (cumulative) or P (progressive) indicating the method of calculation, called type that depends on the nature/how the indicator is set; the choice between one or the other type has to be defined by the partner for each level of the intervention logic (activities, results and objectives) with the support of WW PgM, once the monitoring tool is set-up. The formulas are hidden and protected by a password. The most complicated part of the tool is certainly the understanding of the concept of progressive and cumulative and the fact that there are formulas included for which the password protection needs to be kept in order to prevent them being mistakenly deleted by the partner. If data are not correctly entered, or if there are merged cells, the formulas do not work; if the protection is removed, errors can come out, which then discourage the use of the tool by the partner. It is, therefore, important that WW staff keeps the protection of the password.

The following are the additional columns that closely relate to the monitoring tool and that are set-up in continuity with those described previously:

- Type of indicator: it is based on the mechanism for measuring the value of the indicator for each monitoring period and therefore to calculate the total:
  - *C-cumulative*: this is the rule; when it's possible to identify the value of each monitoring period, to enter this value.
    - ✓ the total is the sum of the value of each monitoring period
  - *P-progressive*: when it is not possible or too difficult to measure the value of each monitoring period (fluctuation, %, average, etc.), to enter directly the total achieved up to that moment
    - ✓ the total is equivalent to the value of the last monitoring period
- TOTAL achieved - *automatically calculated* -: this is the total value of the indicator calculated by the formulas in absolute terms, which can be a whole number or percentage according to the nature of the indicator;
- % (Percentage) of TOT achieved - *automatically calculated* -: this value compares the total achieved against the base line value; it allows an immediate visualization of the level of achievement in the measurement of the indicators;
- Year/previous sheet: in this column to enter the total achieved in an already filled-in sheet, in case the project includes more than 12 standard periods;
- 1 month-12 month- *indicator measuring columns* -: the other additional columns are a standard number of columns (12) that must be filled in during the project life and which correspond to months. If wished, the respective designation on the top row can be changed. It is important that all these columns together with the base line value and the total expected and achieved have the same format (whole number or percentage) according to the nature of the indicator.

As explained above, the monitoring tool is provided for a year. In case a project has more than one year and the tool is filled-in on a monthly basis, the partner, with the support of the WW PgM, creates a monitoring tool spreadsheet for each year[39]. Once the first year filling is completed, the next sheet will be used (for example, for the second year, and the label sheet can be renamed consequently). In the column Year/ previous sheet for each indicator the total achieved so far will be entered, in order to allow ongoing measurement of the indicators throughout the whole life of the project;

[39] This can be done already at the beginning of the project by preparing a base sheet which will be left empty; then it will simply be copied and pasted as a new sheet in the Excel folder, as many times as the years or extension periods.

in fact, the formulas that calculate the total and the % of the TOT achieved take account of the column Year/previous sheet, so that they continue to measure the total value achieved for the whole life of the project, using a new sheet only for ease. The same happens in case an extension is granted; a new specific sheet will be filled in only for the months of the extension (with the same mechanism explained above); once the extension is over, a new sheet for the subsequent year will be filled in.

Chapter 3

3.1 The involvement of the four local partners: the capacity building activity

"Setting up an M&E system is more than just building a spreadsheet or database"
(USAID Guidelines on M&E)

In Nepal, foreign NGOs are not allowed to implement directly their project, they are required to engage with local partners and organization, as per law provision:

"20. Priority to Local Organization: 1. Any International Social Organization shall take Social Organization as its counterpart to implement the project, to the extent of availability, and carry out work accordingly, in selection Counterpart Organization, priority shall be given to local organization.[40]"

The respect of this particular rule in the development sector means that each organization has to deal primarily with local partners, with their own internal management and, especially, with different methods of work and implementation of activities. In the case of WeWorld, the NGO was dealing with four main partners and developing a new relation with a new one for a project funded by the European Union. My task as an intern, in charge of activate a first implementation of the M&E procedures, consisted in organizing training sessions for the local organizations working in partnership with WeWorld with the aim to present the new system and make them aware of the new tools' usage and frequency.

With this purpose I developed a full day capacity building sessions, and later on, I proceed with the scheduling of one to one sessions about the project monitoring tool, the most important one that the partners needed to be trained about, in order to track progresses of the running projects. The capacity building activity involved two main parts: a theoretical part and a practical one. In the first one I presented the new M&E principles in theory, the goals and the main tools. The second part has been dedicated to practice together the project development tool, saving time for questions and doubts which could have been raised by the each one of the partners.

[40] Social Welfare Rules, 2049 (1993). The Social Welfare Council is responsible for the promotion, facilitation, co-ordination, monitoring and evaluation of the activities of the non-governmental social organizations in Nepal. It is also responsible for the extension of its supports to the government in the matters of developing the NGO sector policies and programs of the nation and implement them in a co-ordinate way. The Council provides with frequent training needs, small grants and back-up supports to the local (national) NGOs affiliated to this. It also create necessary environment to link up the local NGOs with the international NGOs and assist to develop partnership between them for the implementation of the activities.

During the meeting, specifically throughout the theoretical part, many questions has been raised about the importance of the M&E in development projects, the necessity of collecting data in the right way and the essential need to use them as sources of information for reports and external communication activity. On the top of the concerns, the issue of accountability has also been underlined as the main benefit that results from a good M&E system. Accountability as a concept, can be multidimensional and involves different actors. With regards to NGOs, being accountable means to be reliable to donors, society, beneficiaries and national authorities as main stakeholders. This latter topic has been at the core of the partners' capacity building sessions due to the key role that accountability plays in the development sector, even more in a context like Nepal, where the funds used for post earthquake reconstruction should be well managed and transparent.[41]

3.2. The focus on process indicators

The capacity building session on M&E showed the deep commitment of the partners towards the use of the new monitoring tools and, in particular, the analysis of indicators for activities. Within WeWorld and among its partners, the documents submitted for monitoring purpose such as narrative reports and work plans did not provide any indicators for activities, just "inputs".

The capacity building has focused on three major topics: the use of **process indicators**, the **definition of each indicator**, the collection of **baseline**.

First of all, process indicators describe the important processes that contribute to the achievement of the outcomes. Example of such indicators are the quality of trainings, assessment and needs assessment. These are indicators of merit, and as such do not guarantee the achievement of outcomes. The process indicators highlight things that the development operators do that are expected to lead to desirable outcomes and which can be observed and described with numbers and figures.

Where the outcome indicators suggest performance in below the level expected, process indicators should then be revised and used diagnostically to understand the reasons. The process indicators can also be useful for the development of

[41] All WeWorld's projects involved two main components: a hard and a soft component. With the hard component we refer to reconstruction activities, mainly school building and classrooms highly damaged due to the massive earthquake that hit Nepal in April 2015. The soft component of the projects involves other activities such as trainings, capacity building sessions, distribution of educational items aimed to create a more child friendly environment in public schools.

recommendations for improvement. For the specific topics, such as education & child friendly schools, WeWorld is working in Nepal, process indicators were mainly about the expected outcomes of the trainings to the teachers, the increased awareness of the children about their rights, the increased participation of the parents to school management and so on and so forth. It is essential to remember that process and output indicators are different. The process indicators in fact are used to monitor the number and types of activities carried out. Common example are the following:

- Number of teachers trained on Disaster Preparedness

- Number and type of educational materials distributed

- Number of parents signed up to Child Rights trainings

Differently, output indicators are mainly used to evaluate whether or not the activity achieved the intended objectives or results. Following the examples above:

-Number of teachers that completed the emergency proof successfully

-Number of classrooms that are equipped with new educational materials

-Increased presence of parents in Child Rights trainings

In the case of Nepal, namely during the revision of the project's documents adding the right indicators, it has been important to fill the column called "indicator description" when possible, with national definition given officially by the Government of Nepal. For example, when picking indicators like "a half of the targeted schools are defined child friendly" has been essential to describe as follows the concept of "child friendly school" in Nepal, given the National Framework:

"*A school that provides a learning environment suitable to the children is a child-friendly school. In such schools, environment for children is conducive to learning and their inherent potentials are developed. Furthermore, in these schools:*

• *Children receive a safe and healthy environment, physically, mentally and emotionally.*

• *Children's aptitude, capacity and level are respected and provision is made for necessary environment and curriculum for their learning accordingly.*

• *Teachers bear the full responsibility for assessing the learner's achievement in terms of learning.*

• *Children are encouraged to enrol in school without any discrimination on grounds of their caste/ethnicity, sex, financial status, physical and mental frailty, and are treated without discrimination both within and outside school.*

• In addition to children's education, special attention is paid to their health and security needs.

• Children, parents and communities take part actively in policy making, planning, implementation and evaluation of activities in the schools.

• All types of physical, corporal and mental punishment are prohibited, and constant efforts are made to protect children from abuse and harm."[42]

The possibility to describe the indicators given national standards and criteria, permits not only to all the partners to have the same benchmark to be reached but also WeWorld to easily monitor indicators and their achievements clearly and in-line with Government strategy. The latter has been possible mainly with indicators at impact or outcome level, while for outputs and activities the description has been more troubled since it was relying only on partner's implementation methods for activities and, more specifically, their own way of collecting data. In the box are some examples of the challenges that have been raised during the capacity building session.

[42] Government of Nepal, National Framework on Child Friendly School for Quality Education (2010)

Example 1. To achieve the result "Improved hygiene and nutritional food habits of students" the activity of "trainings on nutritional needs for the mothers" has been planned. In the column of indicators' description, a clear explanation about the process indicators was missing, an explanation that could have answered the following question: how the trainings will be conducted, on which topic, with which tools and techniques? These lacking information made the connection between the activity and the result unclear, while the proper function of the trainings should have been to, ultimately, increase awareness about healthy food habits among students. Without a proper description of the indicators for the activity is not possible to figure it out how the latter should be connected with the output desired. ***Solution****: the indicator description has been corrected and figure it out working closely with the partner, WeWorld Programme Department and the Country Representative and resulted in a detailed description of the topics that should have been covered during the trainings (nutritional facts, the junk food, the consequences of unhealthy food) and the means of verification of the preparedness of the mothers on healthy food habits (tests, assessment and group discussions).*
Example 2.At impact level, the description of the indicator (by the end of the project: "At least 80% of primary level teachers of targeted schools are applying child friendly teaching methodologies (MGML, EGR,CAS[43], Active Teaching Learning)" has been formulated differently as per project proposal, giving description of the single techniques' requirements provided by national authorities with a proper checklist for each of the child friendly methods. ***Solution:*** *the provisions of the Government of Nepal regarding the requirements for each one of the listed methodologies have been added to the indicator description part. The latter served as a point of reference to evaluate if the techniques resulted to be well applied by the teachers.*

The capacity building session and the following meetings with different partners have shed light on the lacking of baseline data. The latter are critical in order to track progresses of the projects and for monitoring activity, due to the fact that is against a baseline value that the progresses are measured. With the exception of the building reconstructions which have been clearly assessed during the post earthquake period, other baseline data (e.g. the number of out of school children, the parents and teachers participation to school management, the increased use of child friendly methodologies

[43] Multi grade Multi Level methodology, Early Grade Reading, Continuous Assessment System are all techniques mentioned in the National Framework for Child Friendly Schools in Nepal.

in the targeted schools) have not been properly assessed at the beginning of the project. Among the challenges, the baseline surely constituted the hardest one for three main reasons:

1) The lack of baseline data required an additional effort by WeWorld and the partner's staff, during the implementation of the projects, to fill the gap of the assessments and collecting proper data while implementing activities.
2) The data collected during ongoing projects might not reflect the reality, due to the postponed collection. (E.g. the number of OOSC could vary from a year to another, school could not have midterm data to provide to partners and they resulted in waiting for the next school year's availability).
3) The amount of data gathered needed to be updated in the new tool for M&E such as the project monitoring tool. (PMT)

3.3 The use of the Project Monitoring Tool (PMT)

After the capacity building session, specific time for practicing together the PMT has been scheduled. The partners were required to fill the tool with their own data and submit it to the Country Representative and the Programme Department in order to start the use of just one tool to be updated throughout the project's duration. My task as an intern, has been to follow each of the partner in the first use of the PMT (tutoring), correct the mistakes and inaccuracies, increasing their awareness and commitment on how important the M&E activity is.

Overall, all the partners showed high commitment and engagement to the use of the tool. As mentioned before, the most important topics to cover were the definition of the indicators for activities to make them measurable and feasible to monitor. The tool itself has been used and understood in a proper manner: the new columns have been well-managed and helped the partners to be more specific about three main areas:

1) The monitoring activity planned
2) The roles within the staff in charge of M&E
3) The connection within the indicators planned and their feasibility in terms of collecting data

The main goal of the revision of the tools has been to provide the partners and WeWorld with a unique monitoring tool, to be updated throughout the project's duration and able to track progresses thanks to the formulas. The latter activities has been done through the organization of one to one sessions with the partners. This approach, which involved each of the partner's Project managers and M&E officers, allowed not only a fruitful relation with the partners regarding the M&E but also a moment of **professional exchange, sharing of the problems in collecting data and a cooperative follow up**. The ultimate goal of the implementation of M&E procedures, in fact, is to make the partners able to conduct their own M&E and **not** to provide them with a system imposed by WeWorld. The latter was also an approach that the Country Representative shared with all WeWorld staff, underlining the importance of **supporting and helping** the partners, avoiding substituting them in the M&E procedures. In the four months, the main goal and first step has been to conform all the partners' tool in a unique one, the PMT. An important achievement, since before the new M&E guidelines all the partners were using different tools for reporting and record all the results. As a result, the follow up of the activities by WeWorld had to be targeted to each of the partner's tool choice, ending up in a slowdown of the monitoring process, at the expense of the overall project plan and objectives.

At the end of the internship, all the project monitoring tools have been corrected and shared with the Country Representative, in order to update all the Programme Department about the state of art of M&E, before my departure. The first step of the M&E, necessary to start a proper monitoring activity, had been fully set and is going to be at full capacity by the end of February.

3.4 The culture of M&E: results from the partner's surveys

With the purpose of testing the level of M&E culture among partners and internal staff after the first implantation of the procedures, a survey has been submitted in the last month of the internship. The questions were open and aimed to collect suggestions for WeWorld's next step and for a future country strategy. Moreover, the qualitative information collected by the partners allowed WeWorld to build a first data storage about the methods used for M&E and suggestions for the future actions. The partners' survey has been divided into three main areas:

Part 1. Open questions about M&E framework

Part 2. Multiple choice questions about goals and objectives of WeWorld's M&E procedures

Part 3. Suggestions for future policies about M&E within WeWorld

Questions **Part 1**	**Overall answers of the partners**
1) Monitoring and Evaluation procedures are essential in order to track progresses of the projects. To what extent to do you agree and why? **(Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree)** **Values assigned: 1-5**	AVERAGE[44]: 4.5
2) Culture for M&E refers to the presence of policies and strategies within the organization to promote M&E functions. To what extent you consider this culture to be present inside your organization? Kindly justify your answer in the comment box. **Part 2.**	AVERAGE: 4.75
3) WeWorld uses the participatory approach in sharing the M&E procedures with the partners which entails the training on the new tools and the support in the appropriate usage of the latter. What is your opinion in WeWorld's strategy of sharing the M&E procedures? To what extent you consider it effective? Kindly justify your answer in the comment box.	Regarding the participatory approach all the partners were positive towards it. They defined it as an effective and fruitful approach which enabled them to understand the process and the main goals of the M&E. In addition to positive answers, all the partners added recommendations that would make the sharing more effective: - Appoint a focal person for M&E within WeWorld and each of the partner organization -WeWorld is suggested to take part to the first couple of M&E implementation in order to start the process in the right way
4) According to you, which other techniques (indicate also more than one) could be effective in sharing the tools with your organization? Kindly justify your choice in the box below. **a) One to one training sessions** **b) External trainings on M&E** **c) E-learning platform** **d) Others**	Partner A: one to one session Partner B: a, b ,c should be integrated Partner C: External trainings on M&E is considered the most effective one Partner D: one to one session and external trainings on M&E

[44] The average is calculated over the four partners' assigned marks for each question.

5) In M&E activity is useful to set indicators together with the partners. To what extent do you think a meeting should be set, after the signing of the project agreement, in order to set common indicators? **Part 3.**	AVERAGE: 4.75
6) Speaking about effective M&E, it is essential to share the same tools and build up coordination with WeWorld. To what extent do you agree or disagree?	AVERAGE: 4.5
7) If you agree/strongly agree with the sentence above mentioned could you list at least two effective ways to coordinate on M&E system?	Partner A: the M&E system should be coordinated together with WeWorld and a focal person should be appointed. Partner B: conduction of proper field visits and meeting with WeWorld to present progress on M&E and status of the latter. Partner C: N/A Partner D: coordination with WeWorld during the M&E and setting up quarterly meeting to discuss properly the outcomes of M&E and tools as per need.

3.5 Results from internal staff's survey

Regarding the internal staff, this survey has been adapted to the Programme Department's needs and submitted to the Programme Manager and the Project Manager. The feedback could be summarized in the following areas which should be developed for further steps on M&E:

1) The importance for a **sound M&E system** is well- accepted and underlined as a key factor for WeWorld's projects and goals.

2) **Culture of M&E within WeWorld:** Despite that, from the internal point of view the culture for M&E within WeWorld is slightly present. Due to the fact that WeWorld is gradually developing the system but, according to Programme Department, without proper strategies at place. Nevertheless, the leadership is

working hard to implement the system but as international NGO, WeWorld must develop **adequate policies and framework** to make the M&E applicable.

3) According to Programme Department, the culture of M&E within the partners is moderately present but, in comparison with the one present in WeWorld, is stronger. Some partners already had their own system (like MEAL or RBM) and therefore is necessary for WeWorld to develop its own and **specific and internal** M&E system.

4) **Participatory approach:** As underlined by the Programme Department's answers, the essential thing is to build up an **internal M&E.** Only if WeWorld has a sound system, in fact, can properly support the partners. The rationale behind this answer is that first of all, WeWorld needs to develop its own capacity on M&E and later on, it will be able to help the partners and supported them with the process.

5) **Techniques used:** Regarding the techniques to share the M&E with partners, internal and external training are the most preferred one. In addition to these, **coaching and mentoring** are also considered highly effective tools for this purpose and to boost capacity development. The Department has also underlined the importance of working together with the partners, which can sharpen their knowledge and skills. The e-learning option has also been taken into consideration, but only for selective staff of partners.

6) **Indicators setting:** regarding the indicators, the Programme Department expressed an important point: is not useful to set indicators after the project has been signed. On the contrary, that moment is a very important part of the project development. WeWorld could meet afterwards, if there are some problem on common understanding, but by process it must be done during project development namely during the development of logical framework.

7) **Suggestion for further steps**: according to the Programme Department, in order to follow up the implementation of a successful M&E system is important to schedule **regular meetings** with the partners, also **mix team meetings** which involve the M&E specific staff of both WeWorld and partners. The jointly review of the M&E system is important and for this reason the coordinated work is a critical factor of success.

Conclusions

At the end of this internship period, and given the results of the capacity building sessions and the close work with WeWorld partners, I am able to draw conclusions at two main levels: **internally**, meaning within WeWorld and **externally**, meaning from the point of view of the partnership.

Internally speaking, the M&E procedures represented a system totally new for the office in Nepal and for its partners. The approach of WeWorld was not aimed to impose the system towards partners but to make them able to understand the motivation and the goals of such procedures. Within an NGO like WeWorld, which given the law provision of Nepal, needs to work closely with local organizations, it is essential to establish a true coordination with the partners, working side by side to achieve the goals. For this latter purpose, a participatory approach on M&E has been applied and continued, after the duration of the internship.

Obviously, four months were not an adequate time to implement the system at full capacity, due to the fact that project's activities to be monitored might not be conducted on time or they might even be postponed due to political circumstances because of the political situation in Nepal[45]. Despite the time factor, some important conclusion have been raised and within WeWorld, a new awareness about the M&E is now taking space.

First of all, it became clear that there are preliminary and complementary areas of action and support that must be addressed with partners **before** treating issues related the M&E system. In the context of Nepal, became important to work with partners both at the **macro** level (lobbying and advocacy and strategic approaches) and at **micro** level (in particular with partners that require a proximity accompaniment that needs a lot of effort, especially in terms of time). For the latter purpose, WeWorld's local staff must be supported in both respects from the one expatriate. Therefore it is important to have figures of expatriate workers, including junior, where the skills are not found locally or can be complementary. Given the circumstances in Nepal,the implementation of the new procedures has not been possible without proceeding with pre assessment of the partners, mainly aimed to test their background on M&E. The

[45] In Nepal, political activists (namely Maoist) and protesters use the school as a weapon against the Government. They usually call for strikes and many schools remain therefore empty or, more specifically, they attack private schools during demonstrations by the use of hand made explosive devices (e.g. pressure cooker). The latter is one of the reason why the school have been declared as "Zones of Peace" with a national directive endorsed by the Government of Nepal.

latter has represented a truly important activity in order to better know the partners, but also required adequate time and efforts in order to collect all the information in a proper way.

Secondly, in order to successfully share the new procedures with the partners, is essential to build up a strong coordination and cooperation on the topic. This means that **regular meetings** should be set quarterly for a follow up on M&E and to collect first midterm results of the projects. The partners should see the meetings as a regular appointment to attend compulsorily, where it can share the problems in implementing the activities, the collection of data or doubts on the use of the tools related with the M&E procedures. These meetings should been thus seen not only as a moment to "present results" but also, in a more broader way, as time for better coordination, cooperation in monitoring the activities, with the ultimate goals of **make the project evaluable in the longer term**. In addition, those meetings could serve as opportunity to better coordinate the internal staff of WeWorld, understanding the priorities and activities to monitor.

A third conclusion at internal level is about the **follow up** and the next steps that WeWorld in Nepal needs to plan. For the follow up purpose, **a focal M&E person** should be appointed within WeWorld, avoiding an overload of work only over the Programme Department, namely the Project Manager. In order to build up a strong internal M&E system, the roles should be newly designed and properly managed, also including this particular task. In a broader perspective of Programme design, the country strategy now also needs to include the M&E system among priorities and requires a new investment of resources by WeWorld.

Externally speaking, investing in good and fruitful partnership is surely at the core of WeWorld strategy. After the four months internship, I had the chance to develop a wider idea about the partners, not only based on M&E, which has led me to draw at least three main conclusions.

To begin with, partners were in need of participatory approach on M&E. The latter could not be implemented in a "top-bottom" perspective but only through real coordination and cooperation together with the partners. The latter activity has meant a lot of time and efforts spent on the understanding of the new procedures, the usage of the new tools and the adequate methods for collecting data. The **participatory approach**, which has involved them one by one, taking into account their doubts, questions and different way of working, revealed itself as essential in the perspective of a positive and efficient partnership. The continuous work side by side, the efforts to set up regular meetings and to coordinate the activities to monitor have been a first step for a stronger M&E system within WeWorld Nepal. The support of the partners has been at the core of the implementation of the new M&E system and, if followed up properly, will be fruitful in the longer term.

Second conclusion is deeply linked with the first one. Since partnership with local organization is unavoidable in Nepal, the partners need to be chosen properly, and the internal M&E system does have specific documents to evaluate and monitor also the partners. In a longer period perspective, WeWorld needs to accurate use the tools at its disposal to track the partners ongoing work and, as now the M&E is a priority, also their commitment to develop a specific system and to share with WeWorld the achievements.

Third and last conclusion about the partnership is the following: their commitment is essential but they also need to be supported in the implementation of activities and, in some cases, being guided in order to set feasible goals and achievements. This is part of the cooperation between WeWorld and the partners although this does not mean that the NGO should substitute the work of the local organizations. In this particular case of M&E, the key word is **"synergy**" a concept that involves collaboration and mutual support between WeWorld and its partners in Nepal, especially in the further M&E system the synergy would play a key role and will represent a guarantee of success.

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