Certificate Course

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning for Development Professionals

About the Course

As the six-year countdown to achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) commences, there is an urgent need to enhance developmental outcomes and strengthen Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) systems at both organizational and national levels. Recognizing the wealth of MEL expertise in the Global South, Sambodhi has developed the online certificate course **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning for Development Professionals (MEL4DP)** to fill the gap in practitioner-driven knowledge exchange. This course aims to provide conceptual clarity on MEL through a practitioner's lens, equipping participants with the essential knowledge and practical skills to effectively plan, conduct, and manage M&E activities that foster continuous learning and program improvement.

By contextualizing existing MEL frameworks and approaches with case studies and examples from the Global South, the course encourages participants to build critical perspectives on various aspects of MEL theory and practice. Additionally, it promotes cross-sectoral and cross-disciplinary dialogues, drawing on insights from diverse sectors and disciplines. Ultimately, MEL4DP creates a vibrant space for peer learning, collective thinking, and networking, specifically designed for early and mid-career development professionals eager to enhance their skills and impact in the field.

Duration:
November 16, 2024 – March 15, 2025

Level of Effort:
6 hours per week

Modality:
Online with live-classroom sessions and group assignments

Language:
English

Requirements:
Access to laptop and internet

Total Seats: 30

Course Fee and Scholarships
- ₹ 66,000 (including GST)
- Limited complete and partial scholarships available for candidates on a merit-cum-means basis
- Discounts on course fees in case of institutional sponsorships, group enrolments, and for participants from grassroot organizations

Last date to apply: November 15, 2024

The course seeks to:

- Provide conceptual clarity on MEL through a **practitioner's lens,**

- Equip participants with the knowledge and practical skills to **plan, conduct, and manage effective M&E** of programs and foster **continuous learning and program improvement,**

- **Contextualize** the application of existing MEL frameworks and approaches in a Global South context

- Build **critical perspectives** on various aspects of MEL practice and theory,

- Develop cross-sectoral and cross-disciplinary perspective to approach unique problems from a **multi-dimensional perspective**

- Create a space for **peer learning, collective thinking, and networking** for early-career development professionals.

This 17-weeks course is part of Sambodhi's commitment to enhance the knowledge, skills, and dialogue of the larger evaluation ecosystem.

Sambodhi is driven by data action. We collect and analyze high-quality data using cutting-edge technology and harvest it to inspire policy change, maximize impact, and transform lives. We collaborate with data advocates, policy experts, governments, philanthropies, civil societies, and the public to reshape how we work with data to make processes and policies more responsive to the people they affect.

Central to our philosophy of data action is creating trust and co-ownership of data by democratizing it and building the capacities of professionals and communities to access, analyze and use that data for policy development.

Course highlights:

- **Practitioners' lens:** Developed and facilitated by industry experts and seasoned practitioners.

- **Multi-sectoral perspective:** Uses frameworks, case studies, real-world examples, and data sets from different sectors.

- **Weekend learning for working professionals:** Tailored for early to mid-career women policy professionals with weekend classes.

Course Andragogy

Designed by development professionals, this course is rooted in practice and embedded in experiences of the Global South. Following the principles of adult learning, the course will use:

- Participatory tools,
- Experiential learning with a 'learning by doing' approach,
- Interactive lectures and case-studies, and
- Reflective group discussions and structured group assignments.

Participants will be divided into groups at the beginning of the course. Each group will work on a unique case study from a sector of their interest (e.g., education, livelihoods, and public health). Learnings from each module will be applied to the case studies and group activities in the virtual classroom.

At the end of the course, each group will present an MEL plan for their case study. In the process, the course will foster peer learning, collaboration, and cross-sectoral dialogue.

Requirements for Course Completion

Sambodhi will provide a certificate to the participants upon successful completion of the course. This would entail:

- 50% classroom attendance,
- Active class participation,
- A minimum 50% score on module-wise assessments, and
- Submission and assessment of final project work.

Course Structure and Intended Learning Outcomes

The course consists of **8 modules** spread over **17 weeks.** Each module consists of rich classroom discussions and case studies to help build the necessary perspectives and skills to carry out a MEL project.

By the end of this course, participants will be able to:

- Differentiate between Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning, and gain a nuanced understanding of MEL vocabulary, contextualize **MEL in Program Cycles,** and define pathways of change using **Theory of Change approaches**,
- Gain an understanding of different **monitoring typologies,** use publicly available datasets for monitoring, and **construct interactive monitoring** dashboards,
- Define and **utilize different evaluation approaches, frameworks, and designs** and Keep pace with **contemporary trends in evaluations,**
- Practically **implement an evaluation** by developing an understanding of Evaluation Cycles, Implementation, Designs, Methods, and Tools, and
- **Harvest learnings** from evaluations, and utilize them for continuous program improvement.

The course will also offer the participants' practical skills in Quantitative Data Analysis and Visualization & Storytelling. The course will conclude with a seminar where participants will present their respective case study-based projects.

> **Each week, there will be 3 hours of online classes (on Saturdays) by course facilitators and an hour of self-paced reading, assignments, or project work.**

Modular learning outcomes:

Module 1: Introduction to Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning — 1 week

Introduction

The first module introduces participants to the essential concepts of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) in development programs. It highlights the evolution of evaluation, the significance of the Global South perspective, and the role of data in shaping policies and program design. This module sets the stage for understanding MEL's impact on decision-making and program effectiveness.

Topics:

- Explain the distinction between monitoring, evaluation, research, and learning,
- Describe the role of MEL in policymaking and program design, and
- Explain the evolution of MEL as a practice in Global South.

Module 2: Overview of MEL Frameworks
1 week

Introduction

This module provides an in-depth overview of key Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) frameworks, including Logical Frameworks, Results-Based Management, and Theory of Change. Participants will explore how MEL fits within the project cycle and gain a solid understanding of core MEL terminology. Through practical examples and group work, this module equips learners to critically apply these frameworks to address developmental challenges and enhance program evaluation.

Topics:

- Introduction to Monitoring Frameworks
- Key MEL Terms and Types
- Frameworks in Development Practice

Module 3: Public Datasets
1 week

Introduction

This module introduces participants to the use of public datasets for program monitoring and evaluation, focusing on the role of administrative and public intent data. Participants will explore how these datasets, combined with dashboards, can be leveraged for tracking program outcomes, monitoring key indicators, and conducting impact evaluations. With practical examples and hands-on activities, the module equips participants with the skills to develop real-time monitoring systems and create data-driven reports using public datasets.

Topics:

- Public Datasets for Monitoring
- Concurrent Monitoring Plans
- Building Monitoring Dashboards

Module 4: Contexts of Monitoring and Evaluation
1 week

Introduction

This module delves into the complex socio-cultural and power dynamics that influence Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) practices. It explores how stakeholder groups are shaped by these contexts and the importance of incorporating gender, equity, and intersectionality perspectives into evaluation cycles. Participants will learn to design gender-responsive evaluations, develop inclusive frameworks, and apply equity-driven approaches, ensuring that M&E practices are both contextually relevant and socially conscious.

Topics:

- Power and Socio-Cultural Influences on M&E
- Gender, Equity, and Intersectionality in M&E
- Engendering an Inclusive Evaluation Cycle

Module 5: Evaluation Approaches and Frameworks
1 week

Introduction

This module provides a comprehensive overview of various evaluation approaches and frameworks, enabling participants to understand their application in different contexts. Emphasizing the development of evaluation questions, participants will learn to differentiate between methods, approaches, designs, and frameworks. The module also explores key evaluation criteria, including the OECD-DAC framework, while comparing its strengths and limitations with other evaluation approaches such as Theory-Based, Participatory, and Realist Evaluation. Through this module, learners will gain insights into how to select the most appropriate evaluation approach based on specific program needs and objectives.

Topics:

- Crafting Evaluation Questions
- Methods vs. Approaches in Evaluation
- OECD-DAC Criteria and Comparisons

Module 6: Quantitative Evaluation Design
2 weeks

Introduction

This module focuses on equipping participants with the knowledge and skills to understand and apply various research designs in evaluation contexts. Participants will explore the necessity of different research designs, including causal (experimental and quasi-experimental), descriptive (cross-sectional and longitudinal), and non-experimental approaches. The module also emphasizes practical applications through group work, fostering collaboration and critical thinking in the design and execution of research studies. Additionally, an introduction to qualitative research will provide a comprehensive understanding of how qualitative methods and thematic analysis complement quantitative evaluation efforts

Topics:

- Understanding Evaluation Designs
- Causal and Descriptive Research Designs
- Introduction to Qualitative Methods

Module 7: Doing Evaluation: Data Collection, Methods, Sampling, and Analytics and Data Collection Ethics

4 weeks

Introduction

This module provides a comprehensive exploration of the critical components of evaluation practice. Participants will learn about various research designs, data collection methods, and the principles of effective questionnaire design. Emphasizing both qualitative and quantitative approaches, the module covers sampling techniques and descriptive statistics, alongside the ethical considerations necessary for responsible data collection. Through group exercises and practical applications, learners will gain hands-on experience in using statistical software like SPSS and STATA, enhancing their analytical skills for data-driven decision-making.

Topics:

- Designing Effective Questionnaires
- Sampling Techniques and Statistics
- Data Ethics and Software Tools (SPSS, STATA)

Module 8: Learning and Utilization of Evaluation

2 weeks

Introduction

This module serves as a capstone for the course, emphasizing the critical role of learning in Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) practices. Participants will explore how evaluation insights can drive program improvement and inform actionable recommendations. The module also covers effective reporting and communication strategies to ensure evaluation findings reach relevant stakeholders, including project participants. Through this module, learners will develop the skills necessary to optimize learning and facilitate the dissemination of evaluation results, fostering a culture of continuous improvement within their organizations.

Topics:

- Actionable Recommendations from Evaluations
- M&E for Program Improvement
- Effective Reporting and Communication

Who Can Apply?

- Young and emerging evaluators and early-career development professionals
- Persons of all nationalities
- Persons with 1-6 years of relevant experience

º Professionals seeking to build skills in MEL, set up MEL systems within organizations, or mark a career transition to MEL.

º Professionals with experience in development – working across consulting firms, think tanks, research firms, government departments, impact investing firms, NGOs, and donor organizations will find this course helpful.

How to Apply?

If you meet the eligibility criteria and are willing to commit adequate time to this course, please apply by filling out the form by **November 15, 2024:**

Link: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd0i2Ue_y8UYyln1UUIHpBy0fbMbiXBTspw3KJkiBw4gbn-3Q/viewform

Note: Since this is a facilitated course with group assignments and classroom discussions; students are expected to engage with the course actively to gain the most out of it.

Scholarship And Fees

The total program fee is ₹ 66,000 (including GST). To enhance access to the course, especially for early-career professionals, we will offer:

- **Complete and partial scholarships** to a few participants (request for a scholarship must be specified in the application form),
- Discounts in case of any **institutional sponsorship** and **group enrollments,** and
- Discounts to participants working with **grassroot organizations** in the Global South.

Course Facilitators

The course will be anchored by senior professionals from Sambodhi with expertise in different aspects of MEL.

Rajib Nandi

Vice President – Knowledge Management & Capacity Development

Expertise: Gender Transformative Evaluation, Work and Labour

Rajib is the Chairperson of the Community of Evaluators South Asia (CoE-SA), has over 26 years of experience implementing impact evaluation.

Tathagata Dasgupta

Senior Consultant – Sambodhi Capacity Learning Institute

Expertise: Rural Development, Health, Nutrition, Water and Sanitation

Tathagata, a Senior Consultant at Sambodhi Capacity and Learning Institute, has 28 years of expertise in development research and monitoring, leading over 200 large-scale projects across health, nutrition, and rural development. He was also a visiting Faculty in North Point University (India Counterpart)

Vikas Choudhry

Senior Vice President – Public Health Practice, Sambodhi

Expertise: Epidemiology, health systems, sexual and reproductive health of youth

Vikas is a social epidemiologist with over 10 years of expertise in strengthening health systems and youth-focused reproductive health, promoting sexual and reproductive health, and the rights of young people.

Shikha Rana

Assistant Vice President – Research, Sambodhi

Expertise: Maternal health, social norms, women's empowerment, nutrition, WASH, social impact studies, and coalition building.

Shikha is a social impact researcher with over eight years of expertise in maternal health, social norms, women's empowerment, nutrition, and WASH. She excels in data-driven decision-making and coalition building in global development

Pooja Pandey

Manager – Capacity Building, Sambodhi

Expertise: Education, Child rights, inclusion, policy engagement, capacity building, and advocacy.

Pooja is a researcher cum practitioner with six years of experience in education, child rights and governance. Her expertise includes mixed-methods research, policy engagement, capacity building, and advocacy on education policy issues.
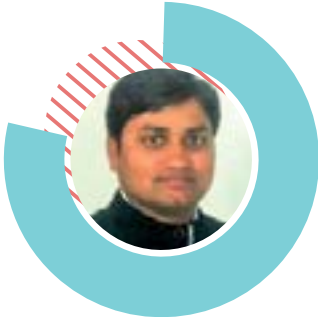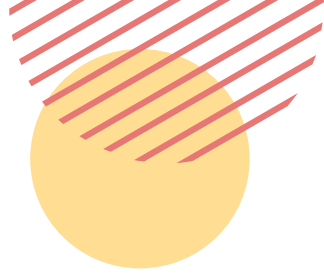
Anuradha Katyal

Deputy Vice President – Public Health Practices, Sambodhi

Expertise: Health systems, impact evaluation, primary care, urban health, health service delivery, and knowledge management.

Anuradha is a public health professional and quantitative researcher with over 14 years' expertise in health systems research, health financing, impact evaluation, primary care, and urban health. She holds advanced degrees in healthcare management and data science and is passionate about leveraging national surveys for policy impact.
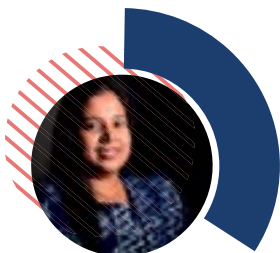
This training course is beyond my expectations. These tools and methodology & principles have opened my eyes to how to be effective and ethical! Honestly speaking I wanted to be a Researcher but, due to a lack of knowledge and guidance it was difficult for me (I was thinking) but, after attending the course I really found the path that how I have to initiate. Thanks, Sambodhi, and their amazing teacher/ trainer(s). Looking forward to putting all those learning things into my professional and personal practices. Thanks again!

Abhinav Pandey
Associate Sector Lead- HCL Foundation

MEL4DP Program has immensely helped me in getting clarity on MEL through a clear practical lens. The course taught me various aspects of MEL practice and theory and dashboard making by drawing examples from different case studies. I strongly recommend this course to beginner and mid-level professionals interested in monitoring and evaluation. A big thank you to Sambodhi and my mentors for providing me with a scholarship to pursue this course.
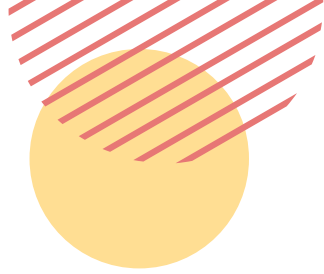
Hashir P.V
Centre for Research in Schemes and Policies

I have been a development practitioner for six years. I, however, felt the need to understand the "change" that was coming from the immense work we all were doing. I switched my career to M&E in sambodhi. We were offered a course that was so deep yet easy to understand the gist, which was bliss to a professional like me from the field. Right from the history of monitoring and evaluation to all the techniques and technicalities, this course is a complete package for any professional wanting to get into the domain of M&E. This course also offers some learning while doing which is great and easy to cope with regular office work.

Abha
Senior Research Manager- Sambodhi

It was my pleasure to be enrolled in this course. This is the first professional training conducted on M&E after my graduation in Economics. I was assigned to the unit of M&E but was interested in getting professional training to perform my duty well. I was just Googling for M&E materials, then I came across your brochure. I was skeptical because I thought the call for application was a scam, but later on I applied. Now I am really happy with my decision because I have gained concepts and practical skills in M&E which I am using for my professional growth.
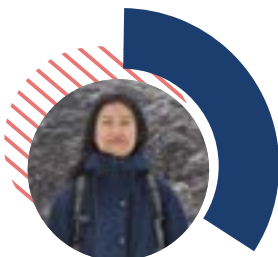
Thanks a lot Sambodhi for organizing such training.

Talking about facilitators- I have attended classes of Dr. Akashi, Dr. Rajib, and Vijay. They are real professors. They have love and interest in impacting others with their knowledge. They don't get tired or annoyed from repeated questions. They are highly skilled and knowledgeable.

Peter Mazedi
Ministry of Agriculture and Food security
South Sudan

I highly recommend the MEL4DP course as it provides a great learning experience. The case studies and group sessions also allow one to view MEL issues from various points of view and facilitate networking.

Petronella Magadzire
Social scientist

The diverse experts from the field and the hands-on activity in this course makes this a comprehensive course perfect for aspiring professionals to learn more about MEL and use it to strengthen evidence-based decision making for their programmes/projects. The SAMBODHI team also ensures a conducive learning environment through continuous support provided to all participants.

Ugyen Samdrup Lhamo
Program, Bhutan Center for Media & Democracy, Civil Society Organisations

Contact Us

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