



M&E House Update

December 2018

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At M&E House *Buka Hatene*, we provide technical and advisory services to the Australian Embassy in Timor-Leste and their implementing partners (IPs) to collect and use credible information to improve Australia's development program. We work with individuals and organisations to establish and use fit-for-purpose monitoring and evaluation systems. We aim to strengthen skills, boost motivation, and build systems to interpret program information to enable improved decision making. In this update, we present some of our recent highlights, and provide an update on M&E House plans for early 2019.

Our reach to stakeholders in 2018:

200 Participants	54% IPs 18% DFAT 29% other stakeholders	40 Events	814 Participation Episodes
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Our team:

In 2018 we welcomed several new members to the M&E House team. Our full team in-country from April 2018 has been: Louise Maher (Team Leader); Myra Navarro-Mukii (M&E Specialist); Erin Passmore, Matthew Will, Alberto Correia, Detaviana Freitas (M&E Advisors); Gaspar Viegas (M&E Officer), and Carla Carrascalão-Gomes and Ivo Borges da Costa Rosario (Program Coordination).

In December 2018 we will farewell Myra. Myra has been a valued member of the team since M&E House's inception, and will be greatly missed! We wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

Photo: The M&E House team



Building a whole of aid performance management system

In 2018 M&E House has supported the Australian Embassy to develop an effective whole-of-program adaptive performance management system, and transform monitoring, evaluation and learning capacity for improved aid effectiveness.

A whole-of-program performance assessment framework (PAF) has been developed, with shared outcomes and indicators for more integrated reporting across programs. The PAF sets out three strategic themes– economy, people and society; nine outcomes under these themes, and 21 indicators to assess performance. We launched the PAF in March 2018, and collected 2017 and half 2018 PAF data from the eight investment partners. The results report for 2017 aggregates data from all implementing partners to assess performance across the development program as a whole.

The PAF includes qualitative indicators. A new method 'Stories of Significant Change' was developed. This involves partners collecting evidence from multiple sources to develop a narrative story of an instance of change. These stories are validated by an independent panel. Twenty-seven stories were collected and verified in 2018, and have been useful in program performance management, reporting, and communication.

An Information Management System is in development to collect, verify and visualise PAF data and other M&E information to support strategic decision-making and performance management by ensuring evidence is available in a reliable, timely and useful manner.

Other elements also help to build a stronger performance management system: strategic reviews on cross-sectoral issues, improved M&E plans, adaptive practice, and improved reporting. Evaluation capacity building is focused on improving foundational capabilities, changing mind-sets, and building motivation. Together, these approaches contribute to a stronger performance management system to ensure information is available for decision makers.

The following reviews can be found on our website (www.meh.tl):

- Timor-Leste Workforce Development Strategic Review
- Review of Australia's Contribution to Private Sector Development in Timor-Leste

Photo: PAF Review and Reflection workshop, August 2018



Evaluation Capacity Building

M&E House is currently implementing the **Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting, Learning and Adaptation (MERLA) Training**, a bespoke program to build M&E capacity among Embassy staff and their implementing partners. The MERLA Training has been structured to develop participants' capacity across five competency areas.

MERLA Training is being delivered in three face-to-face training modules. Block 1 (4 days) took place in August 2018 with 41 participants, and provided an introduction to MERLA, covering program logic and design, development of monitoring evaluation and learning plans (MELPs), generating evidence, and using evidence for reporting, learning and adaptation. Block 2 (3.5 days) took place in October with 36 participants and explored these topics in more detail, with participants working on case studies from their own programs. Block 3 will take place in February 2019, and will focus on data collection, analysis and reporting.

Participants are mostly reporting improved confidence and competency against the five competency areas (data below is for IP participants):

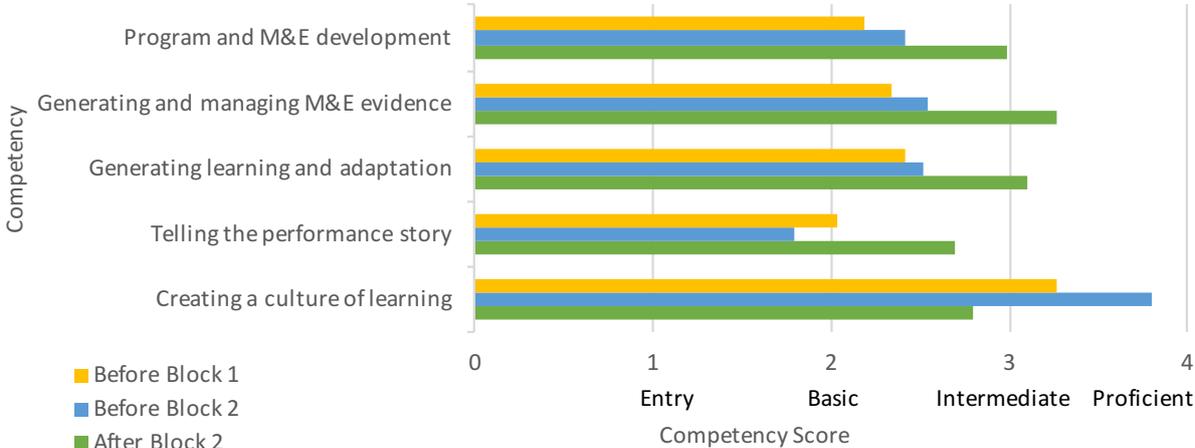


Photo: MERLA Block 1 training participants, August 2018



We also delivered a one day MERLA for Managers Workshop, and have continued to host our regular M&E Community of Practice events. Recent topics have included IPs sharing their stories of significant change and research findings, and disability inclusive M&E.

Supporting improved M&E systems with investment partners

We provide technical support to develop and use lean monitoring, evaluation and learning systems. In the last year, M&E House has worked closely with the Workforce Development Program Timor-Leste (WDPTL) to strengthen their M&E systems, and we recently developed a Story of Significant Change (SSC) for Improved MERLA Systems about this work.

Previously, WDPTL had a theory of change and M&E plan that did not adequately reflect the three components of their program, and some staff were not aware of what data they needed to collect. Further, there was some potential to strengthen reports to focus more on outcomes achieved as a result of their activities. M&E House support to WDPTL included facilitating several workshops and providing technical assistance to WDPTL to revise their theory of change and MELP, and facilitating a Learning Dialogue for WDPTL to reflect on their progress towards end of program outcomes.

As a result, WDPTL now have a clear theory of change that reflect all three program components, a leaner M&E Plan, and more focused data collection. The process of revising the theory of change and MELP also gave staff a better understanding of M&E and their data collection responsibilities. These changes have led to improved reporting that is more evidence-based and outcome-focused. The WDPTL team told us *“Everyone is more aware of the data collection and what is needed for M&E. The data collection is much more focused. The staff are more aware of the need to capture data and evidence”*. An independent panel reviewed this SSC and considered the story to be a highly significant instance of improved IP MERLA systems.

In addition to the work with WDPTL, we have also facilitated workshops and provided technical advice to develop theories of change and monitoring, evaluation, and learning plans for GfD, Nabilan, PHD and R4D-SP, and facilitated learning dialogues for GfD, Nabilan, PHD and R4D-SP.

Our plans for January to March 2019

- Launch the new Management Information System for PAF data collection
- Collect and provide PAF 2018 data for the Aid Program Performance Report
- Conduct Block 3 of MERLA
- Undertake the 2019 M&E Stocktake
- Commence planning for 2019 strategic reviews
- Liaise with IPs to determine how we can further support the implementation of MERLA systems

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For more information please visit www.meh.tl



Australian Government

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Clear Horizon