

Advancing the State of Routine Health Information Worldwide



MEASURE Evaluation Fact sheet RHINO: Routine Health Information Network

At MEASURE Evaluation, we know that improved analysis and use of data lead to better health program decision making and, ultimately, improved health outcomes. This fact sheet introduces one of the innovative toolsets created for monitoring and evaluating public health interventions.

MEASURE Evaluation is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) through Cooperative Agreement GPO-A-00-03-00003-00 and is implemented by the Carolina Population Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partnership with Constella Futures, John Snow, Inc., ORC Macro, and Tulane University.

To learn more about MEASURE Evaluation and our current activities, visit us on the Web at www.cpc.unc.edu/measure.



Overview: Reliable health information is a key component of an efficient health system. However, availability and use of relevant and quality health information for evidence-based decision making is problematic in most developing countries.

Health information systems can be classified into two categories: routine and non-routine. Routine health information systems (RHIS) are, traditionally, part and parcel of the local service delivery system. These systems document ongoing health care provision, morbidity, births, deaths, administration, financing, and, increasingly, community-level public health actions. Routine health information (RHI) is derived at regular intervals of a year or less through mechanisms developed to meet predictable information needs.

In 2001, MEASURE Evaluation, with support from the World Bank, WHO, and John Snow, Inc., created the Routine Health



Information Network (RHINO). RHINO is a collaboration of developing country governments, donor agencies, technical groups, and private voluntary organizations whose purpose is to strengthen the role of evidence-based decision-making by engaging organizations and professionals in promotion of effective collection and use of routine health information, especially at the district level and below.

The RHINO Initiative has a mission to:

- Advance the state of the art in routine health information systems (RHIS).
- Improve the practice of RHIS design and implementation worldwide through cross-fertilization of lessons learned and best practices from various countries and organizations.
- Advocate for use of routine health information for evidence-based decision making.

Leadership: RHINO has more than 600 members, representing over 60 countries, Ministries of Health, bilateral and multilateral donor and technical agencies, academic and research institutions, consulting agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations. It is advised by a Technical Steering Committee, which gathers RHIS experts from all over the world and managed by a daily Secretariat of MEASURE Evaluation advisors.

Activities: As a network for routine health information system professionals, RHINO promotes best practices and shares RHIS experiences through such means as sponsored panels at international conferences, training workshops and various web-based resources. RHINO has held three state-of-the-art workshops, in the United States, South Africa and Thailand.

Networking: RHINO works in close contact with other organizations and networks on strengthening health systems and health information systems. It has a privileged relation with the recently created Health Metrics Network (HMN). HMN is a Gates Foundation-funded initiative, based in Geneva, to harmonize and develop standards for country health information systems.

Training Workshops: Under the MEASURE Evaluation project, a RHIS training curriculum has been developed on the using the PRISM framework for improving RHIS performance. Previous training workshops were held in collaboration with the University of Pretoria and the Instituto Nacional de Salud Publica in Cuernavaca, Mexico.

Online Forums: Electronic discussions have been moderated by health information professionals with expertise in specific topics of interest. Previous topics have included:

- “Routine and Not Sexy: Motivating Health Workers.”
- “Developing a culture of information as a key determinant of sustainable quality information availability and use.”
- “Software applications for RHIS: the role of open source software.”

Listserv: A moderated listserv for health information professionals and users promotes communication among those interested in routine health information collection and use

throughout the world. If you would like to join the listserv, send a message to the_rhino@jsi.com.

Register, Bibliography and Web site: RHINO maintains a searchable database of health information professionals from around the world and an annotated bibliography of articles related to RHIS. Both can be found on the RHINO Web site, www.rhinonet.org, a collaborative workgroup site that allows members to contribute their knowledge, share resources, and work collectively on RHIS issues.

Publications: RHINO has produced the following reports and resources, which are available from the MEASURE Evaluation Web site, www.cpc.unc.edu/measure/:

- *The Potomac Statement on “Investment in Routine Health Information in Developing Countries”* discusses the benefits of routine health information and proposes steps to increase and guide investment in this area.
- The 1st International RHINO Workshop Report on “Issues and Innovation in Routine Health Information in Developing Countries.”
- The 2nd International RHINO Workshop Report on “Enhancing the Quality and Use of Routine Health Information at District Level.”
- The 3rd International RHINO Workshop Report on “Information for Action: Community and Facility Focus.”
- The PRISM Framework is an innovative conceptual approach to improve understanding of the RHIS performance.

RHINO, an independent NGO: In 2007, RHINO was incorporated as an independent NGO with 501 (c)(3) or non-for-profit status. This will allow RHINO to continue as an independent network after USAID financial support ceases and to receive funds from other donor agencies as well as from its own members.

For more Information

- Theo Lippeveld (theo_lippeveld@jsi.com)

MEASURE Evaluation, Carolina Population Center
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
206 W. Franklin St., CB 8120
Chapel Hill, NC 27516

919-966-7482 <http://www.cpc.edu/measure/>