

Improving Data Quality in Mozambique: Standardized Systems Yield Better Data

National programs and partners are working to achieve ambitious goals in the fight against epidemics like AIDS, TB, and malaria. In order for these programs to assess the quality of their data and strengthen management and reporting systems, strong monitoring and evaluation (M&E) tools must be regularly used.

Since 2009, MEASURE Evaluation has been improving the capacity of the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) Implementing Partners in Mozambique to assess internal M&E and strengthen their programs through the use of the Routine Data Quality Assessment (RDQA) tool. The team has adapted the tool for specific use in Mozambique and is working closely with the U.S. government to train partners. MEASURE Evaluation has conducted several training activities on the RDQA tool, covering the concept of quality, data quality, and supportive supervision including field exercises.

POSITIVE RESULTS

One of the components of the overall PEPFAR partners M&E strategy is a technical capacity-building activity, which will be carried out in M&E workshops at central and provincial levels. A total of 16 partner organizations were trained on the use of the tool, reaching 140 staff and teaching them to:

- rapidly verify both the quality of reported data for key indicators at specific sites, and the ability of data-management systems to collect, manage, and report quality data;
- implement measures with appropriate action plans for strengthening data management and reporting systems and improving data quality; and
- monitor capacity improvements and performance of data management and reporting systems to produce quality data.



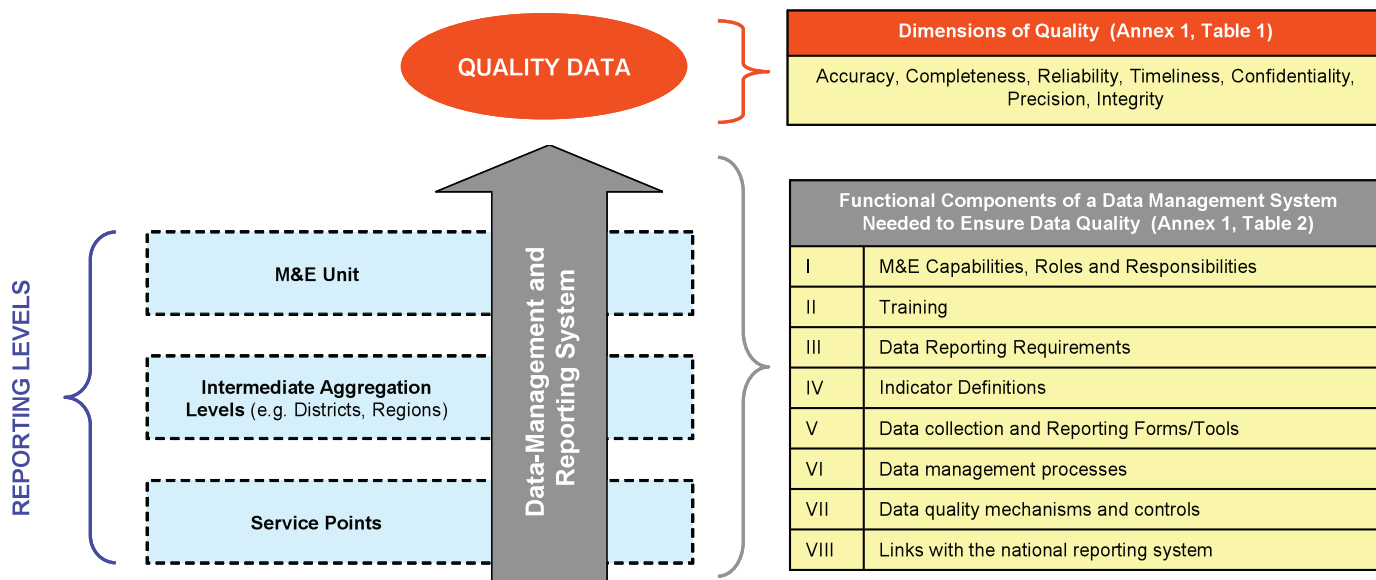
Some of the partners trained are: the National AIDS Council of Mozambique; PSI; Foundation for Community Development Mozambique; the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID Deliver Project; International Center for AIDS Care and Treatment Programs; Project Hope; Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation; Hope for African Children Initiative; Save the Children; World Relief; ADPP Mozambique; Family Health International; Health Action International; World Vision; and Pathfinder International. The RDQA tool has also improved the quality of HIV/AIDS data reported to USAID. The success has been recognized beyond the health sector. At a regional training in Nampula, a local television broadcaster came to interview the MEASURE Evaluation team, about the usefulness and the benefits the tool provides in enhancing the data quality of health information systems.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

The RDQA tool is designed to be adaptable for country specific use and can serve multiple purposes. There are many potential uses of the tool in Mozambique, such as:



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Conceptual framework for the RDQA tool—data management and reporting systems, functional areas, and data quality.

- conducting routine data quality checks as part of on-going supervision (for example, routine data quality checks can be included in already planned supervision visits at the service delivery sites);
- conducting initial and follow-up assessments of data management and reporting systems (for example, repeated assessments of a system’s ability to collect and report quality data at all levels can be used to identify gaps and monitor necessary improvements);
- strengthening program staff capacity in data management and reporting (M&E staff at district and community levels can be trained on the RDQA tool and be sensitized to the need to strengthen the key functional areas linked to data management and reporting in order to produce quality data);
- preparing for a formal data quality audit (the tool can help identify data quality issues and areas of weakness in the data management and reporting system that would need to be strengthened to ensure readiness for a formal data quality audit); and
- externally assessing the quality of data (such use of the RDQA for external assessments by donors or other stakeholders could be more frequent, more streamlined and less resource intensive than some comprehensive data quality audits).

The RDQA tool is most effective when used routinely. Other potential users of the RDQA tool include program managers, supervisors and M&E staff at national and sub-national levels, as well as donors and other stakeholders. As Mozambique scales up its HIV/AIDS program, strengthening M&E systems, human resources and institutional capacity will all be vital steps along the way. MEASURE Evaluation is providing consistent follow up and mentoring meetings with the partners to ensure that the RDQA tool is fully incorporated in their ongoing effort to improve data quality and successfully implement the national HIV/AIDS strategy.

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