

How MEASURE Evaluation Helps PEPFAR Deliver Results

PEPFAR 3.0 aims to deliver on the promise of an AIDS-free generation. It includes new initiatives, such as DREAMS (Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, and Safe Women), a partnership to reduce HIV infections among adolescent girls and young women in 10 sub-Saharan African countries, and ACT (Accelerating Children's HIV/AIDS Treatment Initiative to Save Lives). It employs new systems for collecting data, such as DATIM (Data for Accountability, Transparency and Impact), which brings together a consistent set of data elements from MER (monitoring, evaluation, and reporting), SIMS (site information management systems), and EA (economic assessments). The combination of DATIM and country-level health information systems (HIS), together with strategic information, surveillance, and rigorous implementation science and impact evaluation, can allow effective use of data for decision making in designing country operational plans (COPs) that align with a country's epidemiological context and steer a path toward achieving the 90-90-90 targets.

Never before have missions been asked to synthesize, weigh, and consider so much data in the pursuit of cost-effective programming. This presents both an opportunity and a challenge. The MEASURE Evaluation project is one way USAID helps missions to capitalize on opportunities and overcome challenges to deliver results for their partners and the citizens they serve.

How MEASURE Evaluation Can Help

MEASURE Evaluation is USAID's flagship mechanism for strengthening health information systems in developing countries. As a Bureau-wide global health cooperative agreement, MEASURE Evaluation works with missions and their country partners to strengthen systems for collecting and using health information for better programming, including HIV programming. MEASURE Evaluation can help plan and conduct assessments and evaluations that are in line with PEPFAR and USAID policies on evaluation, strategic information, and health system strengthening—studies and evaluations that are rigorously designed and take into account the complexities and realities of real-world settings.

In the growing “tsunami” of data available, MEASURE Evaluation can also assist with the challenges and opportunities presented by new data streams and information systems such as DATIM. For example, MEASURE Evaluation can provide expertise in costing, in data triangulation, in cloud-based dashboards, in micro-targeting for precise size estimation and modeling, and in the use of routine data to track the HIV cascade for specific clients.

The experts at MEASURE Evaluation have a long track record of assisting countries in the following ways:

- Interpret and supplement expenditure analysis data
- Devise ways to track and measure the performance of linkages



Mother and child in Malawi. Photo: Elizabeth T. Robinson

- among facility-based and community-based care, referral networks, and information systems
- Plan the collection, use, and analysis of multiple data sources to interpret DATIM data, MER elements, and special assessments, such as gender assessments
- Apply geospatial science expertise to help with the mapping and spatial analysis of SIMS data and the creation and enhanced use of master facility lists
- Use HIS to support human resource needs and supply-chain management
- Build capacity and provide technical assistance to fill data gaps, strengthen HIS, support DHIS 2 rollout, and improve management skills and policies to assess current program successes and future needs

MEASURE Evaluation strives to accomplish these goals through collaboration and coordination, data quality assurance, capacity building to help countries improve their performance and sustain progress, and knowledge sharing. The project is successful when it demonstrates strengthened collection, analysis, and use of routine health data; when a country's capacity to manage health information systems, resources, and staff improves; when monitoring and evaluation methods, tools, and approaches improve and are applied to address health information challenges and gaps; and when capacity for rigorous evaluations increases.

Services to Help Deliver Results

- Capacity building and organizational development to support partner government and local institutions to collect, analyze, and share data through national or district health information systems, government health information units, and survey/research/evaluation implementation
- Technical assistance to write and implement protocols to map and produce size estimates of key and priority populations
- Technical assistance to implement and deploy operational data systems (e.g., DATIM and DHIS 2), so that real-time data are used for decision making and program planning
- Capacity building for the collection, analysis, and use of HIV and AIDS data, including the implementation of surveys and monitoring systems, development of data standards, support for national health information system planning and development, and implementation of electronic medical records
- Evaluation of effective strategies; identification of barriers and challenges to scaling up programs, strategic information, and health systems strengthening activities; and estimation of costs to aid in investment decisions
 - For example, to reach 90-90-90 targets, countries need to implement PEPFAR’s “Test and Start” concept, which argues for initiating people on antiretroviral treatment immediately upon receiving a positive test for the HIV virus rather than waiting for a specific viral load. The focus needs to turn to identifying effective program models. Further, data systems must be adequate to monitor the implementation of the new WHO guidelines. MEASURE Evaluation can assist with evaluation of such systems, including selection of appropriate indicators and strengthening data sources that will yield quality information. Data will inform the start and scale-up of the program, help predict commodity availability, and maintain treatment coverage over time, leading to viral suppression. All of this will require ongoing strategic information and a strong health system that feeds new data through all levels.
- Improvement of orphan and vulnerable children (OVC) programming by facilitating the collection and use of data to determine what works and to keep programming on track, ensuring positive impacts on children and families
- Development of methods to track mother-infant pairs to improve child survival

Help to Link Communities, Populations, and Services

MEASURE Evaluation worked with USAID/Ghana to evaluate drop-in centers that reach key populations with HIV testing and enrollment in care. The country changed its approach after finding that the centers were underperforming in reach people not yet diagnosed. The project is also working with USAID/Namibia to evaluate a community outreach and case management intervention that links HIV-positive key populations with support services to enhance antiretroviral therapy enrollment and retention. MEASURE Evaluation is also evaluating the Cross-Border Health Integrated Partnership Project (CB-HIPP), which aims to suppress viral load in transnational border areas with large key populations and high HIV prevalence. These evaluations are designed to provide high-quality information to fill data gaps on specific program elements and will contribute directly to future country program efforts.

Help to Improve Data Management

In Swaziland, MEASURE Evaluation is supporting the Ministry of Health, USAID, and USAID implementing partners to strengthen the collection, analysis, and use of routine health information and improved country-level capacity to manage those systems, resources, and staff. MEASURE Evaluation is working to build the leadership capacity of local partners; improve the health management information system—with emphasis on the client management information system—to harmonize vertical systems; address barriers to data-informed decision making; and increase the capacity of in-country partners to analyze, synthesize, and communicate data—particularly with maps.

- Application of implementation science methods to HIV programs and evaluation of these programs’ impact
- Assessments and evaluations of gender and HIV programming

The USAID programs focused on young women, adolescent girls, and children, such as DREAMS and ACT, will require quality data to assess the effect of the interventions and progress to getting these underserved groups tested, on treatment, and virally suppressed. MEASURE Evaluation’s expertise in evaluating programs, assessing impact, planning scale-up, and strengthening strategic information can contribute to wider use of successful elements of these new initiatives and bring countries closer to their 90-90-90 goals.

MEASURE Evaluation’s Services

To access the project’s capabilities statements, visit: <http://www.measureevaluation.org/about/services/capacity-statements>. To access MEASURE Evaluation resources, country governments should contact their local USAID mission. The mission, in turn, can contact the USAID AOR for MEASURE Evaluation, Kristen Wares (kwares@usaid.gov). For more information, e-mail measure@unc.edu or go to our website: www.measureevaluation.org.

