

# Development of a training and mentoring plan to build monitoring & evaluation skills among 44 recent university graduates hired to strengthen M&E capacity in Botswana

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## Issues

- The Government of Botswana has clearly recognized HIV/AIDS as a health and development crisis and has mounted a comprehensive, multi-sectoral response to fight the epidemic and mitigate its impact.
- The systematic collection of data on the National Response to HIV/AIDS is critical to ensuring accountability, appropriate policy formulation and review, program improvement and appropriate resource allocation.
- There is, however, a critical shortage of individuals trained in Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) in Botswana.
- To improve the quality and timeliness of routine HIV and health care data, there is a need to strengthen M&E capabilities through the development of a skilled cadre of M&E professional working at the district-level.



\*Photo #1: There is a need to strengthen M&E capacity within Botswana by increasing the number of skilled M&E professionals, such as Sheila Joko, M&E Officer in Lobatse, Botswana working with the District AIDS Coordinator.



\*Photos #2 & #3: 44 recent university graduates hired to work as M&E Officers in districts across Botswana

## Description

- Given the shortage of skilled M&E personnel in Botswana, recent university graduates in the field of social sciences were utilized to begin developing a new cadre of M&E expertise.
- In October 2007, the Ministry of Local Government (MLG) hired 44 M&E Officers to work in each district in Botswana with financial support from PEPFAR. MLG is responsible for implementing Ministry of Health Policies at primary healthcare settings throughout Botswana.
- The 44 M&E Officers were posted to districts around the country, with each district having 2 M&E Officers. One officer was assigned to work with each of the following:
  - the office of the District Aids Coordinator (DAC)
  - the District Health Team (DHT).
- These officers were hired to fulfill the following duties:
  - collect data,
  - improve data quality,
  - manage electronic databases,
  - conduct data analyses to inform programmatic decision-making,
  - produce quarterly reports,
  - facilitate data exchange.
- A baseline knowledge and skills assessment was conducted to inform an intensive training and mentoring plan to ensure the M&E Officers are equipped with the appropriate knowledge, skills, and abilities to fulfill their duties.

## Lessons Learned

### Work and Volunteer Experience

- The assessment revealed that the 80% of the officers had prior related work or volunteer experience:
  - 45% had worked or volunteered as a research assistant or enumerator,
  - 40% had worked or volunteered with an HIV/health-related organization.

### Educational Background

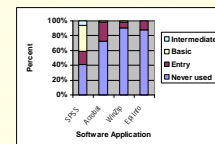
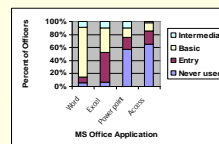
- The M&E Officers held a Bachelors' degree from a range of social sciences
  - The majority studied Economics (41%), Statistics (20%), or Demography (18%).
- 75% of the Officers took at least a basic statistics course.
- Health-related courses were not commonly reported.
  - 25% reported taking either health statistics or health economics
  - 15% reported taking an HIV-related course.

### Data Analysis Skills

- The M&E Officers were presented with several small data sets to analyze.
  - 85% were able to calculate a percentage and a mean,
  - 95% were able to determine a median value
  - 80% were able to draw a graph
  - 63% would seek clarification when presented with abnormal data
  - 93% were able to perform a simple data aggregation task.

### Computer Skills

- Computer skills were relatively high.



## Next Steps and Conclusions

### Training and Mentoring Plan

- The assessment informed a year-long mentoring and training plan to
  - further develop professional skills
  - further improve computer skills,
  - provide in-depth training related to health and HIV programs
  - instill a high-level of M&E knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- The mentoring and training plan includes
  - national and regional trainings,
  - one-on-one mentoring visits,
  - telephone/email contacts,
  - curricular materials with activities,
  - newsletters.
- Trainings conducted thus far include
  - a 5-day Health Informatics training
  - A 5-day M&E training
  - A 6-day training on the National Health Programmes and Data Management

Activity	Time Frame											
	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
National Training												
HIV Programs and Data Management	X											
Targeted computer training								X				
Regional Trainings												
Data Management and Analysis					X							
Data Use for Evidence-Based Planning										X		
Quarterly Newsletter		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Written curricular materials with activities		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
One-on-one mentoring	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

- Recent university graduates can be trained and mentored to provide critical M&E services. Preliminary analysis indicate that the percentage of districts submitting quarterly reports increased after hiring the M&E Officers.
- On-site mentoring is important for building capacity at the local level; it allows for individualized problem-solving and support where there is the greatest need.
- The creation of this new cadre of M&E expertise is believed to instill the culture of data utility for local decision making at district level as well as to improve data quality and timeliness.
- The development of an M&E plan to track progress of the Officers is critical in documenting changes in data quality and timeliness.

- Plans are underway for Botswana to absorb this new cadre of M&E resources into the Government payroll system after three years of USG support.

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