

Improving Programs for Orphans and Vulnerable Children

MEASURE Evaluation works to improve programs for orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) by providing much-needed data about programs and populations. MEASURE Evaluation is building OVC monitoring and evaluation (M&E) capacity globally through indicator and tool development, program evaluation, data triangulation, and technical assistance and mentoring both directly and via our online community of practice: **Child Status Net** (<http://childstatus.net/>).

We are currently developing a set of **impact evaluation tools for OVC programs**. These tools will be accompanied by a template data collection protocol, and tool manuals. As a first step in this activity, MEASURE Evaluation recently developed a minimum set of impact indicators for use in OVC programs globally.

We recently conducted an East African regional data **demand and use workshop with OVC country teams** from Ethiopia, Uganda and Tanzania to strengthen the management of OVC programs through better use of data and to build capacity of U.S. government (USG), host government and partner staff on OVC information use, and to strengthen commitment for data-focused action planning. This workshop built upon a multicountry OVC mapping activity conducted under Phase II of the project. This mapping activity, as well as the geographic information system (GIS) sessions at the workshop have built stakeholders' understanding on how data and geographic mapping can be used to better support decision makers and program planners to allocate resources effectively and efficiently.

MEASURE Evaluation developed and tested the **Child Status Index (CSI)**, a tool that assists service providers to monitor changes in child well-being. MEASURE



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Evaluation recently completed a qualitative study that assessed how OVC programs are implementing and using the Child Status Index, and how well it can be implemented by low-literate, community caregivers to periodically capture children's status across the six domains of PEPFAR OVC programming. The study also aimed to understand OVC program field needs for additional tools to meet care, support, and M&E demands. The study findings have led to several programmatic changes including enhanced guidance and improved training materials and methodology.

We are currently conducting a study to determine if CSI users make better care management decisions for children under their care, compared to non-users. MEASURE Evaluation has conducted **targeted evaluations of complex HIV prevention and care programs for OVC** in Zambia, Kenya and Tanzania. The focus of these evaluations is on "what works" in terms of improving child health and well-being outcomes, and determining the most cost-effective programmatic responses to HIV/AIDS.



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MEASURE Evaluation is developing an **M&E framework for PEPFAR's Social Service System framework.**

The purpose of the Social Service System M&E Framework is to provide guidance to countries on how to monitor and evaluate the outcome of social service system strengthening interventions. The M&E framework will provide the foundation for countries to better understand their social service systems using information and data.

NIGERIA

MEASURE Evaluation has two dedicated OVC M&E advisors in Nigeria, and a dedicated data demand and use (DDU) advisor. Under the OVC portfolio, MEASURE Evaluation provides technical assistance to the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (FMWASD) to collect and use OVC information in decision making, and to develop a functional M&E system for the national OVC response. We provided technical assistance to the FMWASD to conduct the National Situation Analysis and Assessment (SAA) of OVC in Nigeria, and later we conducted secondary analyses of the OVC SAA dataset to address stakeholders' priority information gaps and to inform commitments for the new National Priority Agenda for Vulnerable Children in Nigeria (2013–2020).

MEASURE Evaluation played a critical role in the development of the original National Plan of Action for OVC, collaborating closely with the FMWASD, USG, UNICEF, the National Technical Coordinating Group on OVC, and others to agree on strategic objectives and indicators. MEASURE Evaluation is now coordinating revisions for the revised new National Priority Agenda for Vulnerable Children in Nigeria (2013–2020). MEASURE Evaluation supported the FMWASD to develop an OVC M&E Plan based on the original National Plan of Action for Vulnerable Children in Nigeria. The M&E Plan was developed in a collaborative manner with OVC stakeholders and service providers, including UNICEF, PEPFAR OVC implementing partners, and government officers at federal, state and local levels, led by the M&E Technical Working Group of the National Technical Coordinating Group on OVC in Nigeria.

This participatory process ensured harmonization of indicators, data collection and reporting tools, and a reporting schedule. MEASURE Evaluation took the lead role in building the capacity of partners to implement the M&E Plan and has supported the development of an OVC

M&E training curriculum package that was successfully delivered at a regional Training of Trainers workshop. MEASURE Evaluation is also currently leading a review of the M&E Plan to incorporate lessons learned in the pilot implementation, and to ensure alignment to the new National Priority Agenda for Vulnerable Children in Nigeria (2013–2020).

The M&E Plan has led to a more coordinated OVC response in Nigeria. Key national tools such as the Child Status Index, and the Child Vulnerability Index, have allowed for rapid identification of children in need of urgent care and support, with harmonized monitoring tools allowing for review of outputs toward national and PEPFAR goals.

MEASURE Evaluation continues to provide TA to the M&E subcommittee of the National Technical Coordinating Group to ensure proper implementation of the National Priority Agenda, including co-facilitating quarterly meetings, reviewing quarterly reports, and updating the subcommittee on best practices in M&E. MEASURE Evaluation also conducts regular trainings on the CSI for implementing partners, and has built stakeholder consensus on a Nigerian adaptation of the CSI.

MEASURE Evaluation has finalized CSI adaptations/ translations in Hausa and Yoruba and is currently translating and piloting the tool in Igbo and Pidgin English with local community-based organizations. MEASURE Evaluation is also providing evaluation support to Nigerian and international OVC implementing partners to foster global understanding of what works to improve the wellbeing of OVC. With MEASURE Evaluation core funds, we are currently developing a set of global OVC program outcome evaluation tools, and will pilot these tools in Nigeria with support from the USAID Mission.

TANZANIA

MEASURE Evaluation has supported OVC programs in Tanzania for the past three years. Initially, the Tanzanian program specifically worked with USAID OVC partners to strengthen their M&E systems. This was done through conducting data quality assessments (DQA) to determine where the strengths and weaknesses were in the system. Based on the findings of the DQAs, capacity building plans, including mentoring and workshops, were developed to assist in addressing the areas of weakness. In an effort to strengthen implementing partners' information systems, MEASURE Evaluation developed the Community Trace

and Verify Tool, which provides partners with information on whether or not services reported in the registers are actually reaching the recipients, using Lot Quality Assurance methodology. Also, we are in the process of piloting a participatory M&E approach with OVC programs in an effort to create more ownership of data at the community level.

In the past year, MEASURE Evaluation has begun working with the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) to strengthen the national Most Vulnerable Children (MVC) M&E systems. MEASURE Evaluation helped form and is currently the secretariat of the MVC M&E technical working group. MEASURE Evaluation is part of the task force developing the new National Costed Plan of Action for MVC, and will be working with stakeholders to develop the M&E plan for the National Costed Plan of Action. MEASURE Evaluation is in the process of working with DSW on assessing the current MVC data management system and developing suggestions for improvement.

We conducted an initial assessment to determine if there were any systemic weaknesses in the design of the software and looked at infrastructure and human capacity in a small convenience sample. The second, national, assessment examined the infrastructure, capacity and skills at district social welfare offices in 29 districts to inform the revision/redesign of the M&E system.

We have also conducted an M&E assessment using the 12 Components on an M&E System tool on the mainland with stakeholders from across the social welfare system and held a project management training for DSW staff. We are in the process of conducting an ICT/M&E capacity and data demand and use (DDU) assessment in Zanzibar. We are going to all 10 districts as well as interviewing stakeholders at Ministry level and implementing partners.

RWANDA

MEASURE Evaluation has significant experience in supporting the monitoring and evaluation of OVC programs in Rwanda. MEASURE Evaluation staff supported the development of the current national M&E framework for the OVC National Strategic Plan (NSP) and developed data collection tools for key OVC indicators. In addition, we assisted in adapting the Child Status Index to the Rwandan context, including translating the tool in Kinyarwanda, and has supported trainings on the CSI for both national level and decentralized level OVC stakeholders.

MEASURE Evaluation is building on previous work to support the newly-created Rwanda National Child Commission (NCC) to develop a national M&E Plan and Operational Plan for the OVC National Strategic Plan (NSP) in a capacity-building and skills-transfer framework. We are working closely with M&E staff and OVC M&E stakeholders in Rwanda to formally develop and document the OVC M&E system. Key activities are:

- **OVC M&E System Assessment and Systems Strengthening Plan:** MEASURE Evaluation worked with NCC and OVC M&E stakeholders to assess the national OVC M&E system in an effort to identify system strengthening measures. As part of this activity, MEASURE Evaluation adapted the 12 Components Organizing Framework for a functional HIV System to the context of OVC programs. This included adapting the M&E Systems Strengthening (MESS) Tool based on the 12 Components Framework for use in OVC programs, conducting an overall OVC M&E system assessment and developing a multi-year, multi-sectoral, costed systems strengthening plan based on assessment results. Implementation of this Plan will be monitored by the national OVC M&E technical working group.
- **Data quality strategy:** MEASURE Evaluation is supporting the development of an overall data quality strategy for NCC. The strategy development employs a skills-building approach with OVC M&E stakeholders in an effort to transfer capacity. The strategy includes detailed operational guidance on rolling out data quality activities for OVC programs included data quality assurance tools, training materials, and resources.

CAMEROON

In Spring 2012, MEASURE Evaluation conducted a participatory assessment visit of the current M&E system for OVC in Cameroon. MEASURE Evaluation organized meetings with key OVC stakeholders in Cameroon, including the Ministry of Social Affairs, the National AIDS Control Committee, USAID/Cameroon, UNICEF/Cameroon, and implementing partners, in order to discuss the current status of the OVC M&E system and propose improvements. MEASURE evaluation later held a participatory workshop to discuss and share with stakeholders a draft multi-year, prioritized, operational plan to guide the implementation of OVC M&E system strengthening activities.

This plan was validated by the Government of Cameroon, and next steps include the validation of the results framework and priority indicators and sharing of best practices in OVC database development. MEASURE Evaluation will support targeted activities such as M&E capacity building with national staff, secondary analysis of existing data on vulnerable children's needs and current services being received, and the development of standard operating procedures for the routine program monitoring system for OVC activities. MEASURE Evaluation continues to work closely with national counterparts in the Government of Cameroon to ensure the sustainability and local ownership of OVC M&E activities in Cameroon.

MOZAMBIQUE

In 2012, MEASURE Evaluation expanded its OVC portfolio to Mozambique. USAID Mozambique requested MEASURE Evaluation conduct external evaluations of two components of FHI 360's Programa de Cuidados Comunitarios (PCC), a USAID-funded project with the overall goal of strengthening the community-based

response to HIV/AIDS in 7 provinces and 52 districts in Mozambique. MEASURE Evaluation will conduct an outcome evaluation and cost assessment of an mHealth intervention that involves sending text messages to home-based care (HBC) and OVC clients related to HBC and OVC care and services. MEASURE Evaluation will also conduct an assessment of FHI 360's integration of HBC and OVC community-based services. The purpose of the assessment is to understand the cost effectiveness of the integrated approach, acceptability of the approach by volunteers and beneficiaries, and its effect on quality of care. MEASURE Evaluation will be working with key stakeholders within Mozambique on refining the scope of the evaluations so that findings from both of these studies will contribute to scale up of national programs.

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