

Monitoring HIV/AIDS Programs: Participant Guide

A USAID Resource for Prevention, Care and Treatment

Module 8: Monitoring and Evaluating Orphan and Other Vulnerable Children Programs

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Family Health International



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MODULE 8:

Monitoring and Evaluating Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children Programs

Learning Objectives

At the end of this session, participants will:

- Understand the key contextual issues of monitoring and evaluating OVC programs
- Have increased knowledge and skills required to monitor various aspects of planning and implementing orphans and other vulnerable children programs
- Be able to formulate monitoring and evaluation questions for OVC programs and use these to develop process indicators for program monitoring
- Develop data collection and reporting tools as required for OVC children programs
- Analyze and use OVC data for program improvement
- Plan and implement evaluation of program-specific OVC interventions (as required, with technical assistance)

Defining Orphans and Vulnerable Children

Definitions of Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children

Childhood vulnerability has many causes, and not all are related to HIV/AIDS. Unfortunately, resources are limited and we cannot reach every vulnerable child with interventions. Therefore, it is important to specify which vulnerable children will receive services so that we can design interventions, monitor programs, and measure how many children have been reached.

Defining OVC can be difficult because vulnerability and orphanhood is culturally relative, meaning that it depends on local conditions and, therefore, varies between and within communities and countries. Each community and country will, in fact, use different criteria to define their orphans and vulnerable children.

The international community has tried for some time to establish a common definition of OVC.

Here are some OVC definitions that illustrate the difficulty of describing OVC both specifically enough to allow comparisons between programs and generally enough for programs to be designed according to local conditions:

- International definition (UNICEF/UNAIDS, Gaborone, April 2003): A child under 18 years who has lost one or both parents or lives in a household with an adult death in the past 12 months or who lives outside family care. [Facilitator should note that this definition is still under discussion and may be revised further.]
- National definitions: Ask participants if they can provide an example of a national definition of OVC.
- Communities may also have their own definitions of orphans and vulnerable children, which may be much more inclusive than the international or national definitions.

In summary, many different definitions of OVC are being used. Some are difficult to measure and do not adequately capture how OVC programs are designed (i.e., programs provide services to more children than the definition specifies).

Monitoring OVC Programs

1. Define Monitoring

Monitoring and implementing OVC programs involves unique challenges because these programs work with a special target population whose needs and requirements are often difficult to determine and because there is emotional involvement on the part of program staff. OVC programs require two kinds of monitoring: programmatic monitoring and monitoring of the health and well-being of OVC.

2. Key Issues in Monitoring OVC Programs

The following are some of the main challenges program managers and M&E officers face when monitoring OVC programs:

- Double stigmatization (of being an orphan and being affected by HIV/AIDS)
- Sensitivity of collecting information from children
- Double-counting (a child may receive more than one service from the same organization or receive services from several different organizations)
- Multisectoral approaches to addressing OVC and HIV/AIDS issues
- Different OVC program approaches being used

Developing Goals and Objectives

Goals and Objectives for OVC programs

Recall that a goal is a change (in our case, a change in health status) that we desire to bring about over a longer period of time (e.g., 5-10 years).

Objectives are the more immediate results that a program aims to achieve. Unlike a goal, which is broad, abstract, and often intangible, an objective is narrow, precise, tangible, and can be validated. Objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART).

Data Analysis

1. Data Analysis

What are some of the things we look for when we analyze our information?

Data analysis:

- Comparison of current achievements with program targets
- Comparison of current achievements over time (trend analysis)
- Comparison of current achievement between geographical areas and between different project sites

Evaluating Orphans and Vulnerable Children Programs

The purpose of this training module is to orient you to monitoring OVC programs. Effectiveness evaluations require rigorous research design and considerable skills and resources that many programs do not have. However, the international community and donors often call for such evaluations.

Some of the special challenges we face when evaluating OVC programs include:

- Obtaining a reliable answer from children
- Presenting information in a child-friendly manner to inform children
- Adhering to strict HSC guidelines on interviewing children
- Finding a comparison group that is as similar in characteristics to the intervention group as possible
- Providing the children in the comparison group with an intervention after the evaluation has been completed (ethics)