

Presentation delivered during the Second Technical Advisory Committee on HIV/AIDS/STI

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Improving information and
knowledge management,
including surveillance,
monitoring and evaluation,
dissemination

Your 5 minutes starts now!

We will spend our five minutes on....

- *Simple consistency checks* – does this information look consistent with our other sources? Consistent with earlier reports? Any obvious likely errors or questions?
- *Feedback loops* – how can we find simple, low-cost ways of feeding back the report on the information to those who have been responsible for collecting it?
- *Agreeing only a modest number of essential indicators* – Leave out what is unnecessary and leave out what is “nice” to collect but not really essential! Collaborate with others using a harmonised approach.
- *Train first line supervisors and middle managers on how to conduct supportive supervision.*
- *Ensure your systems show respect for clients* – collecting information can be intrusive, there are rights to confidentiality and rights to decide not to answer!

What is a simple consistency check?

- Sign on the 10th floor lift in my hotel
“Before getting in, make sure that the lift is actually at this floor”
- Quick check to make certain that the information provided looks reasonable and consistent – gentle follow-up on errors will improve the reports for the future
- Useful tool for first-line supervisors, especially after a change of staff

What is a feedback loop?

- Simple mechanism for making certain that those who collect the information know the overall results. They should be able to know how the information has been used and how their performance compares to other sites.
- To find out information on HIV and AIDS in country X you have to go to the Bangkok International AIDS Conference!
- Information must be locally accessible and presented in a non-technical format that can be readily understood.
- Never use reports to punish or shame poorly performing sites – this is like requesting them to send garbage data in future!

A few essential indicators...

- Some National AIDS Programmes forced to collect ridiculous amounts of information by funding agencies and by over zealous M&E specialists. Must be a modest number of essential indicators!
- Before collecting any information, there must be a guarantee that the information is essential and will be actively used.
- If an impossible number of indicators are set, data will be collected carelessly, resulting in garbage, or reports will be deliberately false.
- Donors must harmonise on indicators!

Training of Supervisors and Middle Managers

- Three types of supervision: none, in and out, or big stick!
- Essential that supervisors have the skills of supportive supervision.
- Many supervisors have lost the technical skills they had and can no longer demonstrate simple procedures to more junior staff
- Train supervisors carefully in the tasks and functions they have to perform on a day-to-day basis
- Remember to supportively supervise the supervisors – 360 degree feedback useful but not appropriate in all cultures

Respect and confidentiality

- No matter how technically good the systems, if this aspect is missing, the system will fail.
- Clients and staff need assurance that the systems will actively protect rights to privacy and confidentiality.
- If the client does not wish to answer, this must always be an acceptable answer. Simple explanation at the beginning will usually reassure and encourage clients to provide details.

Famous for five minutes if you...

- Conduct simple consistency checks – especially before getting into a lift!
- Design simple but workable feedback loops – to keep accurate data coming into the system.
- Have only a few essential indicators and resist any others!
- Train your supervisors and managers well in techniques of supportive supervision.
- Make sure your systems are full of respect for clients – especially on confidentiality!