

Impact

HOPE Cape Town Monitoring and Evaluation

HOPE Cape Town has recently developed theory of change diagrams and logical frameworks for each of its programmes. These were then used to design a monitoring framework for each programme, and clarify what data we were collecting, who was going to collect it, and how it would be collected. This ensures that there is clarity on who is responsible for what, and what data we expect to have for analysis.

Where possible, previous data were used in order to set targets for each of the programmes. These targets were set individually by clinic/project site based on previous statistics. Each of our clinic/project sites is unique and faces its own set of challenges and circumstances (for example, population density is greater at some clinic sites, so demand for clinic services is greater. Other clinics only offer certain services, which impacts on which services our HCHW stationed there is expected to offer). Therefore, targets were set per clinic, rather than using an overall target for all of the clinics. When clinic targets aren't met, it is an opportunity for us to investigate and determine what we can do to improve our service provision. Data is compiled and analysed on a monthly basis, and follow-up site visits are conducted where necessary. We supplement our quantitative data with qualitative reports we receive from our HCHWs. This provides us with greater insight into the situation at each of the project sites, and enables us to make informed decisions about our programmes.

The implementation of the monitoring framework has also set the stage for an external evaluation to be conducted in the future. Although internal monitoring is useful, external evaluations can give us the most rigorous indication of how well our programme is performing. Once certain structures are in place, external evaluations can be conducted with minimal disruption to the daily functioning of the programme, and enable us to collect data that would be beyond the scope of our monthly monitoring activities.

Why does monitoring and evaluation matter?

Having a monitoring system in place is important for several reasons:

- **Accountability**

Monitoring ensures that we are held accountable for the promises we make. It allows us to keep track of what we do, and allows us to compare what we've done with the goals we set. When we don't meet our goals, the monitoring system should be able to provide us with the data to understand why it happened, and allow us to work towards improving.

- **Tracking programme implementation**

A monitoring system allows us to keep track of how our programmes are being implemented. If something goes wrong, we are then able to identify at what point in the service delivery plan the problem occurred, and we can investigate or intervene.

- **Sound theoretical base for programme design**

Monitoring systems are designed in order to clarify programme logic, and bring about organisational consensus about what a programme consists of (what the programme activities are) and what the programme is hoping to accomplish by implementing those activities. We can then examine whether the underlying logic or theory of the programmes is reasonable or not. This process is an important part of ensuring that our programmes have a sound underlying logic, and that the programme activities are supported by theoretical evidence. In resource-scarce environments like we have in South Africa, it is important to ensure that we are not wasting resources on interventions which could not bring about the changes we hope to see. Monitoring allows us to identify what works, and what doesn't, and then optimise our programme design accordingly.

- **Paving the way for impact**

Many programmes monitor only what they do- how many counselling sessions were delivered, number of patients that were seen, or how many food parcels were distributed. Determining what changes those things bring about in the programme recipients (the impact of the programme) is trickier. We have started collecting data on some of these changes, and hope to learn more about what we are accomplishing and how we could potentially improve our impact. This type of monitoring is currently in its infancy at our organisation, but we hope to expand upon what we currently have and provide palpable evidence that our programmes have a positive impact on the lives of our programme recipients and their families.