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Evaluating Orphans and Vulnerable Children Outcomes

A new PEPFAR resource offers global indicators and tools to assess child and household well-being.

The U.S. government and other investors in programs to improve the well-being of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) want to know the impact of their funding. Meaningful evaluation requires measurable results. But existing surveys used to collect internationally comparable data on children—the Demographic and Health Survey, for example—don't capture information at the OVC program level, nor do they capture all of the core indicators of an OVC program's success.

New indicators and tools developed by MEASURE Evaluation, with support from the OVC technical working group of the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), simplify and standardize the data needed to set measurable goals for an OVC intervention. Using them, program designers and administrators can now answer five questions fundamental to the planning and evaluation of OVC programs worldwide:

- What are the educational, health, protection, and psychosocial characteristics of children and their caregivers in my area?
- Where do the children most in need of program support live?
- How many children need services or support?
- What kinds of support do my program's registered beneficiaries need, as a group, for their education, health, protection, and psychosocial well-being?
- Is my program achieving (or did it achieve) the impact I expected on the children and households served?

A way to learn what works

Although programs to improve the well-being of OVC have multiplied over the years, investigators have lacked standard measures of outcomes. As a result, it has been hard to discern which programs are effective and to make comparisons across interventions and regions. With funding from PEPFAR and the support of PEPFAR's OVC technical working group, especially USAID, MEASURE Evaluation engaged members of the OVC community globally to address this knowledge gap in OVC program planning and evaluation. A literature review and survey of the field yielded 600 indicators of child and household well-being. These were in turn streamlined to a set of 12 indicators of an OVC program's impact on children and three indicators of a program's impact on households. Using these core indicators as a starting point, MEASURE Evaluation then developed quantitative tools to measure the outcomes of OVC programs, piloting them in Nigeria and Zambia.

What's in the tool kit

The tool kit, available exclusively online (www.measureevaluation.org/our-work/ovc/ovc-program-evaluation-tool-kit), has the following elements:

1 Manual

The *Child, Caregiver & Household Well-being Survey Tools for Orphans & Vulnerable Children Programs Manual* describes the tools in detail, explaining what they can and cannot do and providing basic guidance to put them into practice.

2 Questionnaires

These are designed for easy implementation with limited support from international organizations.

1. Caregiver Questionnaire
2. Child Questionnaire, Ages 0–9 Years
3. Child Questionnaire, Ages 10–17 Years

3 Impact Indicators

This minimum set of core OVC program impact indicators is the basis for the three questionnaires.

4 Protocol Template

Child, Caregiver & Household Well-being Survey Tools for Orphans & Vulnerable Children Programs: Protocol Template resembles an actual research protocol and its appendices. It outlines the information required for each section of a protocol and discusses issues that users should consider when developing their own protocols. Surveys using the OVC questionnaires should not be conducted without a research protocol in place.

5 Data Analysis Guide

The first step in data analysis is a plan to ensure that the analysis will address the research questions and reflect the strengths and limitations of the data. This guide provides general information about planning and conducting data analysis and suggests analyses that responses to specific survey questions will generate.

6 Training Materials

Data Collector Training Manual and Materials describes the structure and content of a five-day training workshop for data collectors and an additional day for supervisors. The manual is supplemented by Power Point slides and handouts. The questionnaires for children and caregivers/households should be administered by trained data collectors, not service providers.



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