



Summary Evaluation report (2013)

Use of the 'Are You On The Right Track?' Workbook in Zimbabwe

The workbook "Are you on the right track?" is developed by organisations in Zimbabwe with technical support of STOP AIDS NOW! And Rutgers WPF. The workbook explains six steps to measure the effects of programme activities and is developed for organisations who implement Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) and HIV prevention interventions for youth.

An evaluation is conducted to understand how the workbook is used by organisations working on youth SRH and HIV prevention in Zimbabwe and what the effects are for the organisations and their programmes. The report presents the findings and recommendations for further roll out. *Why is it important to measure on outcome level?* Organisations will not only be able to show the results about the effects, it gives them furthermore directions where improvement is needed. It can contribute to the quality of programmes for youth.

This evaluation reports shows that indeed using the Workbook contributes to the quality of programmes and makes it possible for organisations to show results of their programme activities on outcome level. Numerous effects were seen in the organisations that used the Workbook. The effects range from minimal, such as increased awareness of the theory of planned behaviour to optimal, used the results of the pre- and post-tests to adapt programmes and revised M&E system. A few organisations reported that using the Workbook had brought them additional funding: they were now able to document their results and/or show that they had a good M&E system in place when applying for funding.

Practical recommendations are provided for organisations who want to use the workbook, such as secure support of management.



Summary Evaluation Report

Use of the 'Are You On The Right Track?' Workbook in Zimbabwe

Project objective

The study aimed to document the roll-out of the Workbook and measure the effects of its use on organisations and their programmes. The study is conducted by a team of local researchers from Development Data¹ and researchers from the University of Amsterdam (UvA).

Specific objectives:

- Document the roll-out of the Workbook to organisations and within them.
- Gain insight into organisations' use of the Workbook.
- Document the reported effects of the use of the Workbook: on organisations' programmes and M&E systems as well as individual staff members.
- Gain insight on the possible effects of using the Workbook on organisations' target groups.
- Document the experiences of Workbook users, identifying promising practices and difficulties.
- Document organisations' opinions on strengths and weaknesses of the Workbook.
- Give recommendations to improve the Workbook's content (for its "second edition") and for further roll-out.

"Personally I benefited, I was not that good in M&E but then coming up with the determinants of behaviour that was the key issue because once you have your determinants properly, it's easier when you are evaluating...."
(Bekezela respondent)

Methodology

Target group – Staff of thirty organisations implementing SRHR education or HIV prevention programmes for young people in Zimbabwe were involved in one of the data collection rounds. All received training in the use of the Workbook.

Training and support – A two-member support team (Young Africa & SAFaIDS) provided technical support in the form of two training workshops, through a website and by email and telephone. While the workshops were well attended, only four organisations requested support via telephone or email

Data collection – Through a baseline study, two monitoring moments, and an endline study between November 2011 and January 2013 the effects of the Workbook on organisations, staff members was evaluated. All 30 organisations participated in at least one round of data collection; 17 organisations participated in the end line survey (N=17) and case studies (N=10). Data collection in these first three study rounds involved self-administered, semi-structured questionnaires sent by email. Case studies were done through in-depth interviews with staff members.

"At a personal level I can safely say it has improved the quality of my service delivery, even the way I relate or work with other partners at community level has improved the way I see things." (Padare respondent)

Analysis - The case study interviews were audio-recorded, which the Zimbabwean team members transcribed verbatim. The qualitative data were analysed by theme, using cross-comparative techniques to identify emerging sub-themes. A thematic analysis table was developed in Excel to allow easy comparison and the identification of emerging issues. Quantitative data from the email questionnaires were also analysed using Excel, generating basic frequencies, graphs and charts.

Limitations - The main limitation can be traced to the self-administered email questionnaire. It proved difficult to get responses from all organisations. Some did not answer all questions, while some others gave inconsistent answers. In the case studies, it was not always possible to access all the information, due to the absence of key persons at the time of our visit. In some cases, requested information was not sent by email.

¹ Development Data is a Zimbabwe-based consultancy specialised in research and capacity building for both non-profit and public sector organisations.

Results

All 17 organisations in the end-line survey had used the Workbook in one way or another. Some were inspired by the theory of planned behaviour to include new determinants of behaviour in their programmes; others used it to revise their M&E systems.

The case studies show that organisations used the Workbook to:

- strengthen existing data collection tools;
- revisit their M&E plans and log frames
- design tools for new project baseline studies and use their findings for designing activities; and
- test the outcomes of educational and training activities.
- Eight organisations in the survey reported conducting pre- and post-tests to measure programme effects. Others were planning to do so in the near future.

The case studies also revealed three reasons for not (fully) using the Workbook:

- staff shortages;
- the trained person not disseminating knowledge of the Workbook in the organisation;
- lack of funding to implement programme activities.

“More than three-quarters of our M&E work or the ideas were born from the use of the Workbook. Actually when we started the year we never really had an effective M&E set up. (...) The Workbook gave us a starting point to the steps that we needed to take. We obviously had the idea in previous projects but we never really got into that motion to say we really want to develop this concept. (Participant, Padare, Zimbabwe)”

Effects of using the workbook

Table 1 gives an overview of the effects of using the Workbook as reported by organisations in the survey and case studies. The effects range from minimal (such as “increased awareness of the theory of planned behaviour”) to optimal (such as “used the results of the pre- and post-tests to adapt programmes” and “revised M&E system or policy as a result of using the Workbook”).

Of the 17 organisations that filled out the survey, eight also participated in the case study. The effects marked with ‘*’ in the table could only be verified through case study.

Table 1 effects of using the workbook in Zimbabwe

Effect	Number of organisations (N=17)
Theory of planned behaviour	
Increased awareness of the theory of planned behaviour	11
Capacity in M&E	
Increased M&E capacity of participating staff	13
Hired additional M&E staff because of the Workbook*	2
Organisational environment	
Commitment of the management to adopting the Workbook*	8
Applying the Workbook	
Used the Workbook to develop outcome indicators*	2
Used the Workbook to do a pre-test	9
Used the Workbook to do a post-test	2
Used the Workbook to do a pre- and post-test	8
Used the results of the pre-test to adapt programme*	4
Used the results of the pre-test and post-test (or post-test only) to adapt programme*	1
The Workbook as a whole influenced the type of determinants addressed*	6
Spin-offs	
Spin-offs as a result of using the Workbook (facilitated funding)*	5
Integration into the M&E system	
Revision of M&E system or policy as a result of the Workbook*	5

How is the Workbook used?

Of the 22 organisations that participated in the baseline study, 17 claimed to be using or have used the Workbook in the end-line study or in the first or second monitoring rounds.

When using the Workbook, most organisations did not follow its six steps sequentially. They focused on those steps which they needed at the moment, as a guideline on topics they were less familiar with. This is probably why most organisations called the Workbook a “Handbook”, “Guideline” or “Reference Book”.

According to the survey, the most popular sections of the Workbook were: Step 1: Selecting indicators; Step 2: Selecting M&E design; Step 3: Design tailor made tools; and Appendix 3 with examples of data collection tools.

“I can say it is one of the outcomes of the Are You On The Right Track as now we have an M&E manager, not just an officer. Someone who can sit in the management and make decisions about how to track data and how to make use of the data that we are gathering from the communities, so it is one of the outcomes as well.” (SAfAIDS, Zimbabwe)

Table 1: Parts of the Workbook used by organisations (N=17) and reasons why they are most useful

Parts of the Workbook	#	Why most useful?
Step 1: Select indicators	15	<i>Behaviour of young people is complicated therefore it was easier to use the book in selecting indicators (WAG)</i>
Step 2: Selecting the M&E design	13	<i>It helped to make data collection more systematic (FACT)</i>
Step 3: Design tailor-made tools	12	<i>It gave us insight into developing our own tailor-made tools, such that we now have a systematic M&E system that we are using with all beneficiaries (SAYWHAT)</i>
Step 4: Plan for data collection	10	<i>Gave the project team an opportunity to identify a feasible and practical design commensurate with institutional capacities within the organisation [they used volunteers and peer educators for data collection] (Patsime)</i>
Step 5: Analyse the information	5	<i>It helped because data analysis has always been difficult for us as an organisation since none of our staff members have adequate capacity in this regard (ARYI)</i>
Step 6: Write a report	8	<i>It made us avoid writing what was not useful (WAG)</i>
Appendix 3 Data collection tools	13	<i>Now easy to design questionnaires (IGAC) Suits our operating environment and we can design questions that are relevant to our target group (MAYO)</i>
Theory of planned behaviour	11	<i>It supported the project team’s appreciation of the theoretical grounding of the work we do. It also provided a basis for understanding behaviour change within the target group (Patsime)</i>

All 17 organisations in the survey reported using the data collection tools in Appendix 3 to design their monitoring and evaluation tools: eight adopted some of the tools completely, while 15 modified them to fit their purpose.

Factors influencing use of the Workbook

Motivation for adoption

Training sessions usually introduced one organisational representative to the Workbook, while its adoption depended on the motivation of key persons within the organisation, especially managers. Their motivation could either stem from personal interest in M&E or their conviction that projects and programmes must measure outcomes.

Involving others within the organisation

Once a staff member is introduced to the Workbook, he or she must promote its use in the organisation through feedback, training and its practical application. If new staff members find the Workbook integrated in project activities, this will prevent loss of institutional memory and capacity.

Training in M&E

The Workbook was developed as an easy to use and hands on instruction manual for staff with or without M&E backgrounds. Staff on the ground, however, pointed to the value of a prior M&E background or proper training to appreciate the Workbook’s content.

Conclusion

The Are You On The Right Track Workbook is developed for organisations to measure effects on outcome level. *Why is that important?* Organisations will not only be able to show the results about the effects, it gives them furthermore directions where improvement is needed. It can contribute to the quality of programmes for youth. This evaluation reports shows that indeed using the Workbook contributes to the quality of programmes and makes it possible for organisations to show results of their programme activities on outcome level.

Show results of programme activities

Data of the evaluation study in Zimbabwe shows that eight organisations were able to show the results and did a pre and post-test. This had a positive effects as five reported to have access to additional funding or received positive feedback from existing donor's as they were now able to show that they had good results or strong M&E systems. Two organisations managed to revise their M&E systems or policies by using the Workbook, while three others are in the process of doing so. The majority reported increased M&E capacity of staff members.

Contribute to the quality of programme activities

Most organisations have improved programmes because they had used (elements of) the workbook. For instance four organisations adapted their activities based on a pre-test. Six explained how using the workbook influenced the type of determinants that they addressed in their programmes. Most organisations used the theory of planned behaviour as explained in the Workbook. They included more stakeholders who can influence youth behaviour.

Pre-conditions for an optimal effect

Several pre-conditions are necessary to achieve an optimal effects of using the Workbook. These include support from the management, having several staff members introduced to the Workbook (through training by STOP AIDS NOW! or internal staff meetings), and staff having the capacity to analyse the collected data.

The case studies revealed that organisations found data analysis difficult and writing reports time consuming. Organisations with M&E departments and dedicated staff had an advantage here.

The Workbook was developed as an easy to use and hands on instruction manual for staff with or without M&E backgrounds. Staff on the ground, however, pointed to the value of a prior M&E background or proper training to appreciate the Workbook's content.

Recommendations

Recommendations for organisations

- Secure support from the management and introduce all staff to using the Workbook
- Integrate the Workbook into the M&E system.
- Introduce the Workbook to funding partners in order to get support for measuring results at the outcome level.

Recommendations for STOP AIDS NOW!

- Introduce organisations to the Workbook through training. Integrate possible new models of training, i.e. E-learning for organisations that have access to fast and reliable internet.
- Add greater detail on data analysis which should include use of appropriate software packages and how to analyse qualitative information. The user should ideally be able to triangulate the qualitative and quantitative data and use this for the reporting of pre and post-test findings.
- Add a section on budgeting for data collection, analysis and reporting.
- Market the Workbook to funding partners so that they can tie this into their funding.

