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Practicum Site:
Primeros Pasos
Quetzaltenango, Guatemala

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Improving monitoring and evaluation processes for a community health outreach program in Guatemala

Purpose: Primeros Pasos, a primary care clinic serving indigenous Mayan communities in the Palajunoj Valley of Guatemala, recently restructured its community outreach program. The community outreach program has two main components: (1) health education classes ("charlas") with groups of mothers, and (2) school-based health education classes for children. Due to frequent changes, the current monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework for the outreach program is time-intensive and not optimized to obtain actionable results. The objective of this project is to streamline and update the outreach program's M&E plan in line with Primeros Pasos' three-year strategic plan.

Design: This project was designed to maximize sustainability. The goals of this project are to: (1) simplify the data collection and entry processes for the outreach program, (2) maximize the utility and actionability of M&E metrics, (3) develop basic tools that improve Primeros Pasos' ability to analyze their data. Stakeholders involved in project development include the general director, outreach coordinator, the clinic physician, and the clinic dentist.

Outcomes: This project is currently in development. Final practicum products include a M&E framework for the outreach program, REDCap reports used to present data, and a guide that staff can use when analyzing key outreach program metrics.

Interpretation: Based on Primeros Pasos' past experience, it is clear that M&E efforts are most effective when they are user-friendly, actionable, and sustainable given time constraints and frequent staff

turnover. Challenges include frequent changes in outreach program participants, unstable internet and computer access, project dependence on variable funding sources, and changes in included communities due to local politics. This project goes into effect in January 2020, when the next group of outreach program participants matriculate.

