



Quality Action
Improving **HIV** Prevention in Europe

Quality Action CASE STUDY

1. Name and country of the organisation

(Please state the name and the country of the organisation that implemented this practical application of a QA/QI tool as part of Quality Action. We do not publish this information unless you agree. You can remain anonymous by adjusting the settings at the end of this form).

GAT - Grupo de Ativistas em Tratamentos (Portugal)

2. Authors of the case study and contact details

(Please provide then name of the author(s) of this case study and any contact names, Email address or websites where readers can access more information about this practical application of a QA/QI tool).

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3. External support (facilitators/partners/technical assistance)

(Please list the names of other organisations and/or people who were involved in this practical application of a QA/QI tool, e.g. project partners, technical assistance, external stakeholders etc..).

4. Project/Programme and key population/target group addressed

(Please describe the project/programme to which you applied the tool and the key population/target group addressed).

The tool was applied to the National Needle and Syringe Exchange Program, targeting People who Inject Drugs.

5. Goals/aims of applying the QA/QI tool

(Please list the goals you wanted to achieve with the practical application of the tool).

The overarching goal was to improve the quality of the Program, since it had never undergone such a process. Also, the Program's design dates back to the early 90's and has not had many changes made to its structure and objectives, despite having changed in terms of the response. Since, today, the drug consumption scene in Portugal is very different than it was at the time, we thought it would be interesting to have the viewpoint of the several stakeholders involved regarding the effectiveness of the Program.

6. Tool and methodology used

(Please indicate which of the five tools you used (Succeed, QIP, PQD, PIQA, Schiff) and briefly sketch out the steps and measures of how you applied it).

The tool used was Shift.

We organized a 2-day workshop, but sadly, even with 2 full days (09:00 to 18:00), we were unable to go through all of the stages of Shift. We thus decided to prioritize some of the sections we considered more important, and left out some sections we were quite certain would come up in the discussion even without being prompted by the tool. Sections left out were D. Resources and E. Barriers and enablers. As expected, issues with both Resources and Barriers especially came up during the rest of the sessions.

It took several months to set the date, due to organizational setbacks, but we eventually managed to find dates that allowed for the participation of 11 stakeholders, representing the coordination of the Program, the National AIDS Program, the National Service for Intervention in Addictive Behavior and Dependences (SICAD), Regional Health Administrations (both the Public Health focal point and the Harm Reduction focal point), representatives of Pharmacy Associations (they also distribute syringes) and, of course, Civil Society (both NGO's and the only national Drug Users' Association). All the stakeholders are members of a permanent Commission that meets every other month to discuss the Program, so they are all very knowledgeable about how the Program works, and what its limitation, strengths, etc. are.

The sessions were organized following some of the recommendations in the Shift facilitation guide, with a few adaptations. In the session on stakeholders we used a stakeholder mapping exercise to start with, and went through the questions with the support of the resulting visual representation, for example. We took great advantage of small group work prior to whole group discussions, and tried to get visual outputs for some of the suggestions/ideas discussed in the small groups.

7. Results and benefits of applying the QA/QI tool

(Please describe what resulted from applying the tool and if and how your project/programme benefitted).

- Very Long. 2 days could eventually be enough, but even for a very specific Program such as this one, there is much to be said (probably also because it was the first process of this type that the participants took part in).
- Very dependent on group participation (facilitators obviously have a key role). It is easy for a couple of people to take the lead and occupy the "speaking space", so the mix of activities helps a lot (fishbowls, small groups, visual session outputs, etc.)
- Facilitator required to have good knowledge of the Program at times, since technical aspects are often raised, as well as political/structural aspects, and moderating/reframing is only possible with a good understanding of what is being discussed.
- Overall great satisfaction, a total reworking of the NSP was outlined by the participants, who unanimously agreed that it is outdated and requires a lot more data and intervention reach to fulfill its goals. Since the application was in December, we are still compiling information and preparing the first draft report to circulate for feedback.
- A suggestion was made that after the final report, a public presentation would be made to policy makers in order to keep the momentum and attempt to get some high level buy-in to implement at least some of the changes/start outlining some of the research that was considered fundamental.
- In terms of future sustainability, there was an interest from some of the participants in applying this tool (or another, more appropriate one) in their work contexts.

8. Recommendations

(Please describe the lessons learnt from positive and negative experiences during the process of using the tool itself and about the quality of projects/programmes like yours).

The tool itself still seems very long to be adequately applied in 2 days. 3 days should be the recommended time, as 2 days will most likely either make you rush through some of the topics or skip some of them.

A good stakeholder mix is critical, obviously, in order to reflect the viewpoints of the entire system involved in the Program. Good representation of Civil Society and "end users" of the Program is imperative, or many things can be lost in system/structure discussions.

Focusing on the aims/objectives of the program was essential. This might be specific for this application, since it relates to harm reduction very closely, but discussions shifted to other topics/structures frequently, and refocusing was a difficult task since many of the topics discussed also had an impact on the NSP itself.

Recording the sessions is very helpful. The amount of information is sometimes overwhelming to take notes/keep track of, so an audio recording as backup can help a lot, while also keeping the facilitators focused on the present moment. Changing small groups (if some of the activities are done in small groups) along the several sessions/dynamics we also considered very helpful in order to change the power balance and the opinions/viewpoint within the groups.

High level buy in/initiative is very important in order to ensure stakeholder presence and feasibility. "Giving up" 2/3 days of time is very hard without high level permission/mandate.

A good team and good preparation time are also very important. In this case we had a lot of time, but a small team, so workload was (and still is with reporting) very high.

Resources (financial) are also a key point. The overall cost of the application was around 1500€, which is not a huge amount, but is very significant.

Facilities (room, food, support equipment) are also important.

Lastly, despite some fear, high level stakeholders adhere very well to "hands on" dynamics, and to working with practical, less common techniques.

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