

Guidelines for conducting DATIM training seminars

This guide outlines the recommended approach to conducting large-scale training seminars on DATIM (DHIS 2).

Other guides and documents will go in a lot more detail on the overall training plan. Here is just a brief background note to put this specific guide in a larger context.

It is recommended that end-users follow a long term training program with training events at regular intervals over time. It is not possible or feasible to learn all in one event, and as DATIM/DHIS 2 will evolve over time with new features and improvements it will be key to update the users on these developments.

A recommended training plan would be to start with a 5 day intensive introductory training seminar, and then do 3 day follow-up / refresher training seminars approximately every 6 months gradually introducing more advanced features and use of the system, at least for a 2 year period. It is also recommended to do on-site training / supervision visits at least once a year (and ideally every 6 months) to provide more tailored follow-up to users at their workplace.

The follow-up training events should when possible be married with other seminars and be institutionalised as part of periodic meetings such as annual or semi-annual data reviews, operational planning events etc. These training events should demonstrate (and focus on) how DATIM can support these business processes.

Recommended duration of training events:

Introduction to DATIM - an intensive 5 day seminar

Follow-up training - 3 day seminars

On-site training - ½ day per site

This guide will focus on how to do the seminar-based training events.

Content of training

It is recommended to teach topics/features in chunks with live demo + hands-on back to back and not to do many live demonstrations before starting the practical hands-on session. This will help participants to focus on each topic and a limits the number new things to learn at a time.

In the 5 day introductory event the sessions are as follows:

- System login and navigation
- Data Entry
- Data Approval workflow
- De-duplication
- Overview of analysis and Data Visualiser
- Pivot Tables
- GIS

This will provide the users with the capabilities to do data entry, approval as well as some basic data analysis.

In the follow-up training events it will be necessary to do some repetition on the topics above, but focus should be on 1) teaching new features or updates to the system and 2) how the system can support PEPFAR business processes. So gradually move more and more to applying DATIM and its features to support M&E and decision-making. So the training objectives shift from understanding DATIM features more generally, to understanding how DATIM can support the daily/routine work of the users. So it is recommended that the follow-up training seminars are coordinated with other PEPFAR events, e.g. events that are part of the planning or evaluation cycle.

How to teach DATIM features/use?

It is highly recommended to focus as much as possible on practical exercises and hands-on training. The most effective way to learn DATIM is to use DATIM, do practical exercises with guidance from the trainers when necessary.

Monologue lectures should be kept to a minimum, be as short as possible, and focus on demonstrating and explaining the DATIM functionality through real examples on a live DATIM training environment (using DATIM). This means that DATIM presentations are done as system demonstrations (“live demo”) by using DATIM and projecting “how to use DATIM” on the big screen, and NOT by showing screenshots on a slide deck.

These demo sessions could be as short as 15-20 minutes and should not exceed 45 minutes. These sessions should be focused on one contained area of features/use. Try not to mix too many features or modules into the same live demonstration, that will just confuse the users. It is better to have many shorter sessions than a few longer ones.

Every system demonstration should be followed by practical exercises, a “hands-on session” on the same topic. For the hands-on sessions you should at least dedicate as much time as for the live demonstration, and aim towards making them at least twice as long. So a 30 minutes live demo should be followed by minimum a 1 hour hands on session.

Summary:

For each DATIM “topic”:

1. 15-45 minutes live demo
2. 45-90 minutes hands-on exercises

To support the trainers doing the live demos there are Trainer’s guides to each session with detailed step by step explanations with screenshots.

Summary of key principles for teaching DATIM:

- No slides - use DATIM!
- As much hands-on as possible - learning by doing, not listening.
- Go for smaller modular sessions - don’t teach too much at the same time

- Focus on what is relevant for the users, show them how DATIM can make their job easier and their deliverables better

Hands-on exercises

For each module (topic) the live demo should be followed by a hands-on session where the trainees get a chance to test out the same features themselves.

Exercises should focus on the same features and learning objectives as the live demo session and not introduce new things that wasn't covered in the demo.

Walk-through guides for all exercises should be available and handed out on request to show the users the correct answer, or at least one approach to solving the assignment.

For analysis modules (Data Visualiser, Pivot Tables, GIS, Dashboard) which are very much integrated and all related to analysis and presentation of data it makes sense to try to combine these into a more interesting group assignment where a group is given a bigger task to solve or problem area to look at. In this group assignment all the analysis tools are used to analyse the "problem" and to present the related data. Each group can then be given 5-10 minutes to present their work, again - no slides - but using their DATIM Dashboard(s) to present their analysis through charts, tables and maps.

Both exercises and their walk-through answers will be distributed as part of the trainer's package to take home from the ToT.

Equipment and training

The three by far most important practical tasks to get right for a DATIM training are:

1. Access to DATIM training environment to all users
2. Big screen and high quality projector for the live demos
3. Enough power extensions and sockets to charge all the laptops in the rooms

DATIM access

For the local team running the training the by far easiest way to provide trainees with access to a DATIM training environment is to use Internet and access an online DATIM training instance. This should be the option unless it is impossible to get Internet connectivity for the participants at the venue.

The alternative is much more complicated for the local team and will require setting up a local DATIM network at the venue using a local server (powerful computer running DATIM locally) and wireless access points. This will require IT expertise and knowledge on how to run DATIM locally as well as good understanding of how to set up a wireless network for a large amount of users.

Internet options

There are several Internet options for a training venue, and although they may vary a bit from country to country the two main options are typically the hotel wifi and mobile internet.

Typically the hotel/venue wifi will have a limit to how many simultaneous connections that can access AND experience a reasonable speed. This is very hard to test in advance, before you have 50 people trying to access DATIM on the hotel wifi at the same time. The total bandwidth will give you an idea of how many users that can get reasonable DATIM experience at the same time.

Mobile internet is typically set up with a 3G/4G router. These are small devices where you put the sim card and they provide a wifi with mobile internet to 5-10 laptops. Exactly how many laptops you can connect and the speed of the connection will vary based on the router itself and the connectivity provided by the mobile operator. make sure to stay away from the cheapest 3G routers that have a limit of 5 connected devices (should say in the router specifications). The bandwidth will again be the limiting factor, and even though you get multiple routers from the same mobile operator you will be limited by the total bandwidth for that operator in the location where you are (all connections would typically go through the same mobile base station). So it makes sense to have a setup with several routers from 2-3 different mobile operators, e.g. two routers from Orange and two routers from Vodacom.

You will then typically end up with a mix of hotel wifi plus multiple 3G routers from different mobile operators, and many different wifi networks in the same room. What is crucial then is to divide the load on the different networks so you must assign trainees to a particular wifi network and make sure they stay faithful to that network throughout the training event.

It is a good idea to test Internet connectivity at the venue before booking it as the Internet connectivity is a critical factor for the success of your training. A nice (and free to use) tool to test the bandwidth is speedtest.net, available for both phones and computers. You should also try to access the online DATIM training environment and test key features there and see what the performance is like.

You should test both the hotel wifi as well as mobile Internet with multiple mobile operators at the venue. You can do this from a mobile phone and switch sim cards.

Projector and screens

The teaching is focused on live demos of DATIM on a projector screen. So the size of the screen is very important when you have large groups of participants watching. Many hotel screens are still in the old 4x3 letterbox format. DATIM projection will be in widescreen (16x9) format, so these old square letterbox screens are very poor for DATIM demos as most of the top and bottom of the screen will not be used. A wide screen sized projector screen will be much better, or at least if it is a letterbox format then it should be very big. An ideal size for the screen is something like 65" x 116" (inches,), which is 165 x 294 in cm. The bigger the better obviously. It is a good idea to test the projector and screen before booking the venue as this is a major factor for the success for the training.

Other equipment

Power extensions and sockets are almost always forgotten until the last minute. Make sure the room has capacity and enough power extension cables for all participants to keep their laptops plugged in throughout the training.

Numbers and size of training

You need to decide early on the maximum number of participants and whether you will do parallel sessions (using more than one conference room) for all or parts of the time. An ideal number for DATIM training is 30 trainees per room. Up to 50 is doable, but more than that will be very difficult to do well.

Given that there are a lot of hands-on sessions where trainees will need support from trainers you should plan for approximately a 1 trainer per 10 trainees ratio.

The size of the conference room is obviously important and the practical nature of the DATIM training requires a classroom style setting with tablespace for all trainees to put their laptops. Make sure the venue has enough space for your participants in a classroom setting and that there is still space for trainers to walk around and provide support during hands-on sessions. Of course the requirements for conference room will depend on your numbers.