



# BUILDING INFORMATION SYSTEM CAPACITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Outcomes from the Enhancing Strategic Information (ESI) Project

Health of a population is supported by robust public and private health systems. To allocate resources and make strategic decisions around health services, governments need reliable, high quality data.

And to get that data, governments need to have the appropriate staff in place, people like Nandi.

In a country with more than **50.5 million people**, she is one of 1,000 health information officers. **That's only 1 officer for every 50,000 South Africans.**

## Meet Nandi.

Nandi lives in South Africa and works in the North West Province as a health information officer.

Nandi is both a Health Officer & Clinician who believes in the power of quality health data



Health information officers like Nandi face challenges.

There are computer issues...

- 77%** of health information officers, like Nandi, have a computer.
- 52%** of staff, including Nandi and many of her colleagues, don't have reliable access to the internet though, essential for transmitting data.
- 24%** of computers used by health information staff have never had an antivirus update, and even more computers tend to be slow and have out-of-date antivirus software.



**These challenges make it difficult to transmit data to the district system & communicate with colleagues.**

and limited training opportunities.

- 71%** of health information officers have received training in the past two years, but this statistic varies markedly by province.
- 56%** of the staff in Northern Cape province haven't received any training in the past two years though.
- 30%** of staff are not trained in the use of pivot tables, a key analysis tool for District Health Information Systems.

**Why?** Staff, like Nandi, often have clinical duties or other responsibilities.

So in the North West province, additional trainings have been scheduled to accommodate hectic schedules.

Despite these challenges, Nandi thinks there have been big improvements in the past four years.

Across the country, there was a **56%** increase in filled health information positions.



Having more trained staff in place has been instrumental to supporting quality data & data use.

All of these achievements point to **increased staff and mentoring and training** across the country, thanks to collaborative work between ESI & the government of South Africa.

In the **North West**, where Nandi lives, some additional trainings have focused specifically on using pivot tables for evidence-based health management.

Nandi has also been working with a mentor and monitoring and evaluation coordinator since 2009, like others throughout four districts in the Northwest. **Those who served as mentors are now provincial Department of Health officials.**

And at the national policy level, **Standard Operating Procedures** for DHIS and national trainings implemented across the country have been instrumental to making information officers like Nandi better equipped to do their jobs.

