



**Elizabeth Glaser
Pediatric AIDS Foundation**
Fighting for an AIDS-free generation



Photo: Eric Bond/EGPAF, 2019

Malawi Capacity Building Toolkit

Acronyms

CBO	community-based organization
CBP	capacity-building plan
EGPAF	Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation
FPAM	Family Planning Association of Malawi
GMHD	Grassroots Movement for Health and Development
HR	human resources
ISP	institutional strengthening plan
IT	information technology
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
OCA	organizational capacity assessment
PACF	Positive Action for Children Fund
PMTCT	prevention of mother-to-child transmission (of HIV)
TA	technical assistance
TCA	technical capacity assessment
TOR	terms of reference

Key Terms

Capacity: The emergent combination of individual competencies, collective capabilities, assets, and relationships that enables a human system to create value.

Civil society organizations (CSOs): National nonprofit, voluntary organizations, separate from the state, that are formed by people in the social sphere. As used in this tool kit, the term refers to nongovernmental organizations, community-based organizations, and faith-based organizations.

Community-based organizations (CBOs): Nonprofit organizations that work at the community level to improve health outcomes for residents.

Competencies: The mind-sets, skills, and motivations of individuals, which are an essential part of the broader concept of *capacity*.

Core project team: The EGPAF team that manages CBO relationships and technical assistance (TA) activities.

Goal: The desired aim for an organization to reach within the capacity component.

Indicator: The item an organization needs to achieve to reach the capacity component's goal in the OCA.

Institutional strengthening plan (ISP): The capacity-building or action plan that EGPAF and a CBO jointly develop following the results of an organizational capacity assessment and a technical capacity assessment. It is created as a deliverable from the capacity assessments and is further refined at the kick-off meeting.

Mentorship: TA that guides a CBO in the application of new skills and tools for specific capacity areas. As defined in this tool kit, *mentorship* is the TA provided to CBOs in their prioritized areas of need. Mentorship builds skills and empowers organizations to create and own their organizational systems.

Organizational capacity assessment (OCA): A review of an organization's systems to support the process of enhancing, improving, and increasing their operational capacity. The OCA identifies organizational assets and weaknesses as a means to find the appropriate TA to improve competencies and collective capabilities.

Supportive supervision: As defined in this tool kit, *supervision* is the action associated with site visits, phone calls, and emails to ensure that (1) CBOs are on pace to meet their goals by completing identified activities to improve their operational and programmatic systems, and (2) they receive the correct TA from EGPAF. Supervision includes oversight of activities as well as help with the coordination of TA and relationships.

Technical capacity assessment (TCA): A review of an organization's knowledge and ability to implement health projects. The TCA uses quantitative and qualitative components to guided discussion on an organization's current stage of technical development as well as its future direction that identifies strengths for an organization to leverage and opportunities for targeted TA.

Technical capacity assessment (TCA): A review of an organization's knowledge and ability to implement health projects. The TCA uses quantitative and qualitative components to guided discussion on an organization's current stage of technical development as well as its future direction that identifies strengths for an organization to leverage and opportunities for targeted TA.

Introduction

In 2011, the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF) established a partnership with ViiV Healthcare’s Positive Action for Children Fund (PACF) to provide technical assistance (TA) to community-based organizations (CBOs) in Kenya and Malawi. Through this partnership, EGPAF provides TA to independently selected CBOs directly funded by ViiV. As the ViiV TA providers, EGPAF works with CBOs to strengthen their technical and organizational capacity and improve their networks of public and private partners.

This tool kit serves as an instructive guide for project implementers to support local organizations to improve their operational and technical capacity and enhance their local networks based on Malawi’s experiences. The tool kit contains information on the **Capacity to Impact Model**, EGPAF’s **capacity-building approaches**, and **key TA activities** used by the EGPAF–Malawi team to improve local organizations’ competencies and skills as well as their underlying systemic and institutional processes and structures.



Section 1: Capacity → Impact Model

Introduction

EGPAF Malawi's TA approach, outlined in this tool kit, is founded on the EGPAF Capacity→Impact (Capacity to Impact) Model—EGPAF's signature results-driven global approach to strengthening national CBOs to sustainably improve HIV outcomes as measured through incremental improvements in comprehensive organizational and technical capacity over time. To build successful organizational and technical capacity, the model combines two essential elements, comprehensive review and trust. To reinforce these two elements, the Capacity to Impact Model utilizes an established set of guiding principles and a six-pronged approach that directs EGPAF teams' interactions with local organizations.

Guiding Principles

Organizational capacity development support should translate into results. Organizational capacity development activities should be tied to clearly defined results, which include not only increases in organizational capacity but also improvements in HIV/health outcomes. **High organizational capacity alone is insufficient if it does not translate into improved health outcomes for the intended beneficiaries.**

Each organization is unique. Each organization is driven by its unique mission, goals, and institutional personality. While it is important to utilize standardized, broad approaches for CBO strengthening, organizational development support **must be tailored to meet the individual objectives, needs, and potential of organizations of various sizes, scopes, and capacity.**

Effective organizations require comprehensive capacity. To sustainably impact health outcomes, organizations require comprehensive administrative, operational, governance, and programmatic capacity, **grounded in a culture of continuous improvement and innovation.**

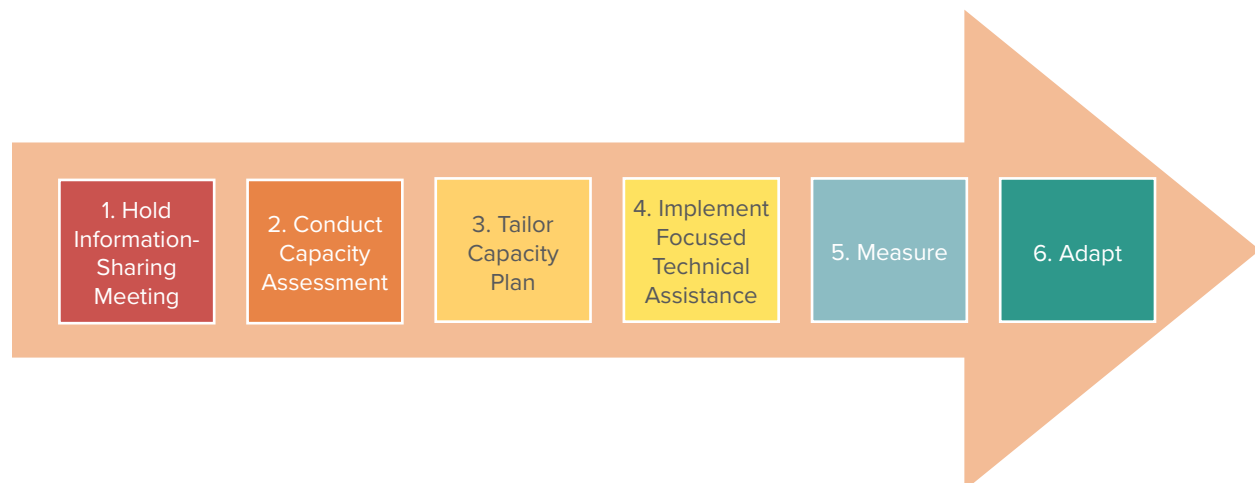
Organizational development support is an opportunity for mutual learning. Each organization has unique capacity and expertise. Through its collaboration with a variety of national CBOs, EGPAF also **gains insight into new programmatic approaches, technical expertise, and innovations** to be used for CBOs' continual growth.

Organizational development is nonlinear. Organizational development is a continual process, following a nonlinear trajectory. For this reason, organizational development processes and **approaches must be adaptive and responsive, and allow for adequate time for change** and development.

Organizations must own their development. Sustainable improvements in operational and technical capacity are driven by the organization. Organizations need to **own the capacity-building process and trust the TA provider** in order for successful TA implementation and sustained change to occur.

Six-Pronged Approach to Capacity Building

The guiding principles are the backbone of EGPAF's six-pronged approach to capacity building (illustrated below).



The six prongs of the process proceed as follows:

- 1. Launch an informed process:** Understanding the CBO's institutional mission, vision, goals, and objectives is a critical component to providing effective organizational development support. For this reason, as the first step, EGPAF begins a dialogue with the CBO leadership and staff to inform the organizational development process, which often takes the form of on-site reviews, semi-structured interviews, and document reviews. The CBO assigns staff member(s) to lead the assessment process and spearhead the development of the capacity plan.
- 2. Assess institutional capacity comprehensively:** EGPAF utilizes EGPAF-developed capacity assessment tools—the organizational capacity assessment (OCA) and the technical capacity assessment (TCA)—to guide discussions with the CBO on its current performance, as well as how it would like to evolve operationally and technically in the future. Through the assessment process, CBOs have a structured opportunity to engage all staff in the process of organizational and technical development, facilitate dialogue about perceived strengths and weaknesses, and encourage management and staff ownership of the process.

- 3. Collaboratively develop a results-driven plan:** Once the assessments are complete, EGPAF holds a kick-off meeting with the CBO leads to clearly outline the roles of the two parties, define expectations, and create tailored action plans. Utilizing the results of the assessments, EGPAF and the CBO develop a mutually accountable, phased action plan for the provision of TA to support organizational and technical development, as well as intended targets and results. This plan is known as either the *capacity-building plan (CBP)* or the *institutional strengthening plan (ISP)*. The plan and targets are geared to increase institutional capacity and incremental improvements in health outcomes through CBO-supported programs. Within the plan, EGPAF and the CBO decide on priorities to focus on for the first three months of the TA period, which are dictated by assessment scores, importance to the CBO, importance to donor(s), and timeliness of events/activities.
- 4. Provide responsive, evidence-based TA:** EGPAF utilizes a range of methods to provide high-quality and responsive TA, including mentorship; supportive supervision; group and individual training; and provision of tools, templates, and manuals.
- 5. Measure and evaluate results:** Through periodic reassessments using the EGPAF capacity tools, and by evaluating progress toward health outcomes, EGPAF and the CBO use a data-driven approach to identify what is working and make adjustments where needed.
- 6. Adapt, as needed, to respond to changing CBO priorities and development:** Consistent evaluation and communication is necessary to ensure that organizational development support is responsive, timely, and based on the CBO's key needs and priorities. Therefore, EGPAF adapts its TA provision based on the updated priority areas identified by both the CBO and EGPAF teams through assessments, regular check-ins, and on-site supervision and mentorship.

Subsequent sections of this tool kit demonstrate the overall process of the Capacity to Impact Model. It starts with a comprehensive review of CBO systems through **EGPAF's organizational and technical capacity assessments (p. 9)**, setting the baseline for where an organization falls on the spectrum from minimal to high technical and institutional capacity. Once the baseline is established and areas of focus are identified, EGPAF staff use supervision and mentorship as their key **capacity-building approaches (p. 29)** to support CBOs to build their capacity and own their development. As part of the model, EGPAF establishes local networks among community partners to facilitate local mentorship and TA that, in turn, drives the long-term sustainability of the organizations. The consistent communication and focus on sustainability through EGPAF's capacity-building approach improves communication and the identification of EGPAF **TA activities (p.39)**, and ensures that EGPAF's TA is consistently being adapted to CBOs' evolving priorities and development needs. The success of the model is seen in CBOs' stories about the **impact (p. 50)** they have on their communities.

Organizational Capacity Assessment

Capacity is the emergent combination of individual competencies, collective capabilities, assets, and relationships that enables a human system to create value. The OCA tool reviews that system to support the process of enhancing, improving, and increasing technical and operational capacity. Through the review, the OCA identifies organizational assets and weaknesses to find the appropriate TA to strengthen competencies and collective capabilities within an organization.

The tool evaluates organizations on 66 quantitative and qualitative indicators in the following capacity areas: governance, program management, organizational management, human resources (HR), communications and advocacy, networking, award and sub-award management, procurement and inventory management, financial management, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), information technology (IT), and resource mobilization. Each area is evaluated within a spectrum of capacity stages (no or minimal capacity, emerging capacity, moderate/good capacity, and strong capacity), which are then combined to determine an overall score (organizational capacity category): *Beginning* (< 69%), *Developing* (70%–79%), *Expanding* (80%–89%), or *Sustainable* (90%–100%).

Objectives

1. Quickly build awareness of best practices and identify critical gaps within the organization
2. Produce a list of items to add, enhance, or update to strengthen organizational capacity
3. Guide the development of a tailored technical capacity plan based on identified gaps and organizational goals

How to Use the Tool

Organizational Capacity Assessment Structure Tab

The OCA tool is divided into various sections, represented by the *General Information*, *Evidence for Verification*, *Organizational Type Assessment*, *Capacity Sections*, *Goals*, *CB Plan All* (for the CBP), and *Graphs* tabs. How to use those different sections is described below.

General Information Tab

The section collects logistical information as well as asking questions to learn from the organization its main challenges, successes, and goals prior to conducting the assessment. The collection of this information can be done over the phone, by email, or in person.

Evidence for Verification Tab

This section is a list of all the documents and resources the assessment team can review to determine indicator responses. The verification documents are categorized by capacity area.

Organizational Type Assessment Tab

This section helps the assessment team understand the type of organization that will be reviewed and the number of assessors that will be needed for the assessment.

Capacity Sections Tabs

Each capacity area is broken into components that have goals evaluated by indicators. Indicators receive a response of *Yes*, *No*, or *Partial*. The indicator responses are combined to give an overall score for the capacity component.

Capacity component: Specific focus area within the designated capacity area.

Goal: The desired aim for an organization to reach within the capacity component.

Type: Defines the goal as either a compliance goal or a best practice goal. A compliance goal is one necessary to achieve in order to meet contractual or other legal requirements under U.S. government donor standards. Best practice goals are systems, processes, practices, or outcomes that are strong contributors to organizational sustainability and excellence but will not affect legal compliance.

Indicator: The item an organization needs to achieve to reach the capacity component's goal.

Response: There are three possible responses—*Yes*, *No*, and *Partial*. A *Yes* response means the organization has achieved the indicator and needs no additional help. A *No* response means the indicator has not been achieved. A *Partial* responses means the organization has achieved parts of the indicator but may need TA to be fully compliant.

Capacity gap: A space for the assessor to write in the specific issue that needs to be resolved in order for the organization to receive a *Yes* response. What is written in this part of the tool will be transferred directly to the CBP at the end of the OCA exercise.

Overall score: The sum of the indicator responses, which provides a score of Strong, Moderate, Emerging, or No capacity for a goal.

Action plan: Displays if the indicator has been linked to the CB Plan All tab.

Goals Tab

This section displays the overall score, each capacity area score, and component scores. It is important to emphasize throughout the assessment that the **OCA score is an indicator of where an organization has designated its time, resources, and energy, and not a marker of an individual's performance.**

Scores are determined by the indicator responses. Each response is assigned a numerical value. A *Yes* response is 1 point, a *Partial* response is 0.5 point, and a *No* response is 0. The component scores are summed and averaged to calculate the capacity area score and the overall organizational score. The capacity area and component scores are measured on a different continuum than the overall organizational score (see *Tables 1 and 2*).

Table 1. Overall OCA Score

Total Score	Range	Definition
Beginning	0%–69%	An organization’s comprehensive capacity is minimal and likely requires TA in a number of content areas. Some content areas may be performing at a higher capacity; however, the overall capacity of the organization is low.
Developing	70%–79%	An organization’s comprehensive capacity is moderate, and the organization likely has content areas with strong weaknesses requiring TA. The organization likely has systems, processes, and structures in place in most organizational areas, but requires strengthening of these areas for the organization to be more effective.
Expanding	80%–89%	An organization’s comprehensive capacity is good, and several organizational areas have strong capacity with functional systems, processes, and structures in place. The organization likely has existing capacity gaps that can be addressed with targeted TA.
Sustainable	90%–100%	An organization’s comprehensive capacity is strong to very strong, and highly functional systems, processes, and structures are in place. The organization has processes to continually improve and demonstrates utilization of these processes. The organization may request or require a very limited amount of TA, likely focused on further improving organizational areas rather than addressing major gaps.

Table 2. Capacity Area Score		
Goal Score	Range	Definition
Beginning	0%–49%	There are limited or no systems, processes, or structures in place to support this area, and staff capacity is likely limited. An indicator may be scored as having no or minimal capacity if it is an area requiring significant TA or if it is a new area of focus for an organization and systems are not yet developed.
Emerging Capacity	50%–74%	There are some, although potentially still limited, systems, processes, or structures in place to support this area, although with gaps. TA will be targeted toward addressing the key gaps in capacity.
Moderate or Good Capacity	75%–99%	There are functional systems, processes, or structures in place to support this area. Some areas within the indicator may not yet be fully developed. TA will likely be limited and targeted.
Strong Capacity	100%	There are fully functional and continually improving systems, processes, or structures in place, and no areas of potential noncompliance.

CB Plan All Tab

The CBP section, accessed via the *CB Plan All* tab, displays all indicators that received a *Partial* or *No* response. To select the indicators of focus, use the filter buttons located on the title row of each column (*illustrated below*).

Capacity Area	Component	Goals	Type: Compliance vs. Best Practice	Indicator
---------------	-----------	-------	--	-----------

With the filter buttons, one can organize the CBP based on capacity area, indicator type (compliance versus best practice), goals, or components. This will remove the other indicators from the section and allow the organization and assessment team to work with priority areas first.

Note: *If an indicator is not showing up on the CB Plan All tab, refresh the sheet. To do so, go to the Capacity Area title cell and open the filter button. Check the box that says Select All and press Okay.*

Capacity Area Score Graphs Tab

This section displays the capacity area scores and overall organizational score.

Graphs

Provides graphs depicting the number of components within each capacity area that received a Strong, Moderate, Emerging, or No capacity score.

The Organizational Capacity Assessment Team

It is recommended that at least two and a maximum of six people conduct the OCA with an organization. This team size allows the OCA to be broken up by capacity area and reduces the amount of time needed to conduct it. The decision on the number of people for the assessment team will be determined by the size and complexity of the organization (see *Organizational Type Assessment tab*).

Lead assessor: Introduces the OCA and leads the group through the process. Tasks include notifying the organization of the assessment, setting up assessment dates, organizing the assessment team, and ensuring clear communication with the assessed organization throughout the process. The lead assessor will also participate in the assessment and cover capacity areas within his or her expertise.

Assessors: Team members with expertise in the following capacity areas function as assessors:

- Award and sub-award management
- Financial management
- Procurement and inventory management
- Project management
- Organizational management
- M&E

If there is a particular capacity focus for the assessment, choose team members with expertise and skills in those areas.

Organization Group Size and Composition

Group size: Minimum 3 people and maximum 20 people

Group composition: The group should be made up of lead staff members who work on the different capacity areas and any key staff necessary to assist them. These typically include the executive director, operational director, technical director, and lead managers. It is recommended that one ask the organization to pull together the group to be interviewed by the assessment team. Let them know the capacity areas the assessment will cover so they can choose the appropriate persons.

Organizational Capacity Assessment Process

Summary		
Phase	Activities	Time Frame
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication with organization to initiate planning and gather documents for review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule OCA dates • Share agenda and document list • Selection of organization staff to work with assessment team • Assessment team review of organization documents to become familiar with systems and processes 	2–4 weeks prior to assessment
Information-Sharing Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of OCA objectives and process, and setting of expectations for the 3-day OCA exercise (see OCA presentation template) • Answer questions by organization staff 	Day 1, for 30 minutes to 1 hour
On-Site OCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants break out into teams based on OCA capacity sections • Assessment team scores OCA with organization staff counterpart(s) • At end of day, lead assessor compiles data for the CBP • Assessment staff meet at end of each day to cross-reference results 	Days 1–2
Tailoring of Capacity Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitated discussion on OCA outcomes and next steps • Tailoring of capacity-building action plan to focus areas 	Day 3
Follow-Up	<p><i>Short-term:</i> The organization that was assessed schedules meetings to coordinate TA with EGPAF.</p> <p><i>Long-term:</i> Approximately 3 months after the OCA, the EGPAF project manager contacts the organization to assess the degree to which the organization has addressed its priority needs. Additional referrals are made as appropriate for support and assistance.</p>	Immediately and 3 months after OCA

Phase 1: Preparation (2–4 Weeks Prior to On-Site Assessment)

Purpose: Prepare the organization and assessment team for the on-site OCA

Learning Objective

- Assessment team is familiar with the organization’s systems, missions, and goals prior to on-site review
- Organization is aware of the OCA process and has dedicated time for the exercise

Process

Introduce the EGPAF team and share the objectives and OCA process with them. This is the time to learn about the organization (*General Information tab*) and request documents to review (*Evidence for Verification tab*).

TIP: *It may not be possible for an organization to send files electronically or in time for the on-site review. If that is the case, plan to review them on-site and add that time into the schedule.*

Create an OCA review schedule to share with the organization and have them assign staff to the different capacity areas. The OCA schedule will help introduce the capacity sections and assist in determining how they will be broken out for review. The OCA review schedule will be adapted through conversation with the organization based on its staff availability and structure.

Materials

- **OCA agenda template**

Phase 2: Information-Sharing Meeting (Day 1: 30 Minutes)

Purpose: Introduce the OCA objectives and process to the organization

Learning Objectives

- Participants understand the OCA structure and what is required of them during the exercise
- Participants understand the objectives of the exercise

Process

At the start of the on-site assessment, the EGPAF team meets with the organization’s staff to introduce the OCA objective and process, and to set expectations for the review. At this time, the EGPAF team will address any questions staff members have about the assessment and final deliverables. At the end of the presentation, staff will break out with their assigned EGPAF assessor(s).

Materials

- [OCA agenda template](#)
- [OCA presentation template](#)

Phase 3: On-Site Organizational Capacity Assessment (2 Days)

Purpose: Assess the different capacity areas of the organization

Learning Objective

- Build awareness within teams of best practices and identify critical gaps
- Score each assigned capacity area and answer questions from the participants about the indicators

Process

For each capacity section, the EGPAF team member meets with the organizational counterpart to discuss the indicators and provide a score via a response of *Yes*, *No*, or *Partial*. All No and Partial responses are automatically recorded in the *CB Plan All* tab.

TIP: *Ensure that you write in what the organization is missing in the Capacity Gap column. The information in this column will be automatically populated in the CBP section to remind the team of the specific activity, process, or document the organization needs in order to achieve the indicator.*

YES: Fully meets the indicator and does not need TA.

PARTIAL: A process or document is in place to meet the indicator, but the organization needs additional support to strengthen it.

NO: No document or process is in place.

At the end of each day, the EGPAF team meets to cross-reference results. Assessors report on areas of concern and items that other team members may want to follow up on in relation to their assigned sections. Discussion also helps team members solidify their justification for their scores.

The lead assessor should compile finished sections in the master OCA tool. The master OCA displays the final scores and used in the next phase to tailor the capacity plan.

Materials

- [OCA tool](#)

Phase 4: Tailoring of Capacity Plan (Day 3: 2–4 Hours)

Purpose: Refine the CBP to focus on the organization’s and donors’ priorities within a set period of time

Learning Objectives

- Participants reflect on their organization’s trajectory and identify shared concerns and priority actions

Process

The EGPAF team becomes familiar with the strongest and weakest areas of the organization through review of the *Goals* tab. The sheet provides a score for each capacity area, as well as the individual component score. The EGPAF team presents the *Goals* tab information to the organization. The presentation does not need to include all of the information but highlight areas of strength and opportunity. From there, the group reviews scores and decides on priorities to focus on within the first 3–6 months.

A capacity plan is only as good as the organization’s willingness to execute it. For this reason, it is important to listen to the organization and align the plan with the organization’s goals, assessed need, and operational and programmatic importance.

TIP: *Focus the conversation on strengths the organization can use to address the weaker areas noted in the OCA tool. The conversation will reinforce that the organization is able to improve its systems on its own. The EGPAF tools and TA will be used to enhance organizational competencies and collective capabilities, not as a filler for a larger problem that will only reemerge once EGPAF TA is gone.*

Once the CBP has been tailored to the indicators of focus (see “*CB Plan All*” in the “*OCA Structure*” section of this tool kit), the EGPAF team and the organization can fill in the rest of the capacity plan that outlines next steps, persons responsible within the organization, and the EGPAF tool or TA that will be applied.

Note: *Not all sections of the CBP will need EGPAF TA or a tool. A Partial or No response for an indicator does not mean the organization has no skills in that area. Rather, the organization may not yet have designated time, resources, or energy to that indicator and will address it now.*

TIP: *Make sure all of the next steps listed in the CBP are within the manageable interest of the organization.*

Once complete, the CBP will be left with the organization. Once goals are accomplished, EGPAF and the organization will choose a new set of indicators to work on for another designated period.

To formally close the assessment, the facilitators thank all of the participants for their active

involvement in the OCA exercise and encourage them to follow up on the initial actions they have prioritized, stressing the importance of meeting and following up on their defined commitments according to the CBP.

Materials

- OCA tool: Goal and Graph tabs
- **OCA outcome presentation template**

Phase 5: Follow-Up

When the facilitators compile the OCA report, it is shared with both the EGPAF team and the organization to help guide any finalization of the CBP and ensure transparency between EGPAF and the CBO.

It is recommended that about three months after the OCA, a meeting be held with all of the staff involved in the capacity-building activities to discuss progress on implementation of capacity plans, share achievements and challenges, and make any necessary adjustments to the plans. The meeting can be the first quarterly meeting review—a recommended meeting for organizations to review their project or institutional progress, challenges, and successes.

Technical Capacity Assessment

The goal of the TCA is the promotion of an organization wide discussion on an organization’s current stage of technical development as well as its future direction. The tool does not assess how good or bad an organization is but provides a foundation for outlining key steps that will support the organization in reaching its technical goals and objectives. The TCA also supports EGPAF to define the exact TA needed to reach the goals set by the organization.

Objectives

- Assess organizational skills, systems, knowledge, and practices in selected technical areas
- Identify capacity gaps and organizational goals
- Guide the development of a tailored technical capacity plan for the organization based on identified gaps and organizational goals

TCA Technical Areas

- Staff knowledge
- Access to new information
- External communication
- Public policy and advocacy
- Program management
- HR
- Referral systems
- Community engagement

Assessment Team

Facilitator: **Introduces the TCA** and leads the group through the process. Encourages discussion and asks questions to ensure the group stays on topic, positive, and focused on achievable next steps.

Note taker: Records the group discussion on which benchmark to choose and notes the final justification for the chosen benchmark. The facilitator may call on the note taker to review discussion notes as needed to keep the group on track.

Coordinator (optional): Supports the team in organizing breaks and meals, depending on the size and length of time of the assessment. The coordinator also resolves any issues that arise while the TCA is taking place. This will ensure that the facilitator and note taker do not need to pause the assessment. The coordinator can also take notes as a backup to assist in capturing all of the discussion points.

Group Size and Composition

Group size: Minimum 3 people and maximum 20 people

Group composition: The group should be made up of organizational members who work on the different technical programs. Usually this includes M&E, program management, research, and communications staff as well as the technical director and executive director. However, not all organizations are the same, and one might find that employees outside of these areas, such as drivers or HR managers, have helpful contributions. It is recommended that one ask the organization to call together the group. Let them know the technical areas the assessment will cover so they can choose the most appropriate persons. One can also recommend that participants be selected from the stated positions above.

Group dynamics: It is important to notice whether the executive director or other leader in the room is causing discussion to be one-sided or hindered. If that is the case, have the coordinator or note taker interview the executive director or other leader in a separate room. Alternatively, split the group up into smaller teams, placing the dominant personalities in one group together.

Technical Capacity Assessment Sections

To understand where an organization is and where it wants to grow, the assessment is broken out into three sections: the scale assessment, the road map, and the capacity plan. The scale assessment indicates the organization's current standing in a technical area, the road map facilitates discussion on where the organization wants to build capacity or grow, and the capacity plan delineates responsibilities and sets time frames.

Part 1: Scale Assessment

Purpose: Identify an organization's current standing in a technical area

Process: The assessment team customizes the scale assessment by selecting appropriate scales from the **TCA Question Index**. The selected scales are chosen based on the technical

capacity areas the team wants to assess as well as the need to be responsive to the priorities of the project donor and organization. Once scales are selected, they need to be reviewed and tailored to ensure that the questions and scale definitions are appropriate to the local context.

The scale is a spectrum made up of four benchmarks that are designed to depict ranges through which a typical organization will evolve as its technical capacity grows, from *foundational to emerging to moderate to excellent capacity* (**see Scale Assessment Example, p. 21**). For each scale, the facilitator asks a series of questions to assist in reflection on how the organization functions within that technical area. Once the discussion is concluded, the group selects a benchmark from the four-point scale that they feel represents where the organization currently falls. Once the benchmark has been chosen, the group justifies and records why they gave themselves that score.

Questions: The questions listed on the assessment are sample discussion questions to support interaction within the group. Prior to the assessment, the assessment team should review and modify the questions to ensure they are pinpointing the capacity areas one wants to assess and are contextually appropriate. Once the discussion is started, the assessment team asks additional questions that arise from the conversation and lead the group to choose the most accurate benchmark.

Discussion notes: In this section, the facilitator or note taker should capture key aspects of the discussion for use during benchmark selection to help the group make an informed decision. This area may also be used to record limitations and strengths to be discussed in more detail during the road map section and in the final report write-up.

Benchmark justification: This section provides an opportunity to write in how the organization interprets the scales within its own context and the reason for the benchmark selection. In sum, it is where participants *explain the reason(s) for why they chose the benchmark*, including concrete examples. The facilitator or note taker can highlight any debates between benchmarks as well as the final decision. It is helpful to refer back to this section when listing priority actions in the road map, as many times organizations will mention during the justification discussion what they need to do in order to achieve a higher benchmark.

Scale Assessment Example

Program Management: PMTCT

Questions

Which activities support prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV (PMTCT)?

How do the activities reach women?

In what ways are activities tracked?

Do the program approaches seek to address the needs of different categories of target clients (individuals, families, support groups, community and workplace, regional and national, young and old, infants and adolescents, women and men)?

Do field implementers, including volunteers, need supporting materials to do their work?

How does the organization track patients to ensure they are retained in care?

Discussion Notes:

Chosen Benchmark:

(Based on the group discussion, have the group choose the appropriate benchmark for the organization.)

Explain why this benchmark was chosen:

4	PMTCT activities are based on a plan to reach target populations. The implementers have supporting materials to do their work (e.g., antiretroviral therapy protocols, referral guides, counseling cards, tracking forms, registers), and use periodic reviews to ensure that the materials are up-to-date and relevant to the context and realities. Activities are monitored through an M&E system to make informed decisions on programs.
3	Implementation of PMTCT activities is based on a plan to reach target populations. Activities/programs undergo periodic reviews to ensure that the approaches are up-to-date and relevant to the context and realities. Data on activities are not collected.
2	Implementation of PMTCT activities is based on a plan to reach target groups.
1	Organization provides PMTCT activities on an ad hoc basis to reach target clients.

Part 2: Road Map

Purpose: Sets goals for organizational growth in a technical area and identifies an organization’s strengths and weaknesses in relation to achieving that goal within a set time frame.

ROAD MAP Program Management: PMTCT					
Assessment Benchmark	Barriers	Strengths	Priority Action		Goal
			6 Months	1 Year	

Process

As a group, choose which technical areas to prioritize first in the road map. Priority areas are decided by score, importance to the organization, and/or timeliness of events and activities. Once the benchmark for each area is chosen, insert it in the left-hand column, under “Assessment Benchmark.”

Next, discuss a time-bound goal to improve this benchmark. It is best to have organization staff articulate the goal they would like to achieve in the set time. However, one can use one of the benchmark scales as the goal, if necessary. Once decided, write the goal in right-hand “Goal” column.

Note: *Modify the time periods under “Priority Action” to what is most appropriate for the project, organization, and donor. For example, one year, six months, quarterly.*

Once the current state of the organization (“Assessment Benchmark” column) and future goals (“Goal” column) are defined, discuss with the group the barriers to and strengths that support reaching this time-bound goal.

List barriers and strengths in the road map. It is best to have the road map visible to the whole group through either a projector or large paper sheets when listing strengths and weakness. Discuss barriers first and then strengths. This order is important because when the group moves on to action items to achieve the goal, it is best that they feel empowered by their strengths.

After barriers and strengths have been listed, support the group in thinking through ways to leverage the organization’s strengths to overcome barriers. Translate the strengths into priority actions the organization can take to achieve the goal. This the time to identify the types of TA that EGPAF can provide to assist in the achievement of the goal.

The priority actions will then be translated to clear next steps on the capacity plan form.

Note: The “Priority Action” section has two columns to break out short-versus long-term steps. Modify the time periods and/or columns to fit within the scope of the project. For example, if an organization is reviewed only annually, then use only the “1 Year” column.

Part 3: Technical Capacity Plan

Purpose: Set time-bound next steps to complete priority actions from the road map, assign leaders for those tasks, and identify EGPAF TA.

Capacity Plan							
Capacity Area	Goal	Next Steps	Organization’s Responsible Person	EGPAF/ TA Role	Timeline	Status	Comments/ Support Provided

Process

From the priority action items listed in the road map section, the group will assign next steps, responsible persons to lead the actions, and a time frame for completion. The group will also decide whether TA is needed from EGPAF to support a specific action.

The organization’s priority actions may be inserted into the capacity plan in one of two ways: (1) the group can translate the priority actions into steps that are written into the capacity plan under “Next Steps,” or (2) the facilitator can write them into the capacity plan to be reviewed and modified by the group later. How you decide to do the capacity plan will be based on time and the dynamics of the group.

Once next steps are in the capacity plan, the organization will assign staff member(s) to spearhead them. Leave a copy of the capacity plan with organization to help staff monitor progress. EGPAF will also use the capacity plan to review progress when conducting supervision and mentorship visits.

Materials

- [TCA Introduction Presentation Template](#)
- [TCA Scale Assessment](#)
- [TCA Road Map and Capacity Plan](#)
- [TCA Outcome Presentation Template \(lower half of presentation\)](#)

CBO Kick-Off Meeting

Introduction

The kick-off meeting formally signifies the official start of the Positive Action for Children Fund (PACF) project and EGPAF's technical support to the CBO. The kick-off meeting is an essential activity that establishes the foundation of the relationship between EGPAF and the CBO. It is where the CBO and EGPAF review the PACF terms of reference (TOR), define and refine roles and expectations, and set clear next steps for working together. The kick-off meeting is an important time for EGPAF to clarify its role as TA provider and demonstrate that its aim is not to find fault with the CBO's systems or approaches, but to strengthen areas of weakness and help the organization capitalize on its already-developed assets. This clarification is key to establishing trust with the CBO and to supporting collaboration across the life of the project.

Objectives

- To build trust and create a common understanding of roles and responsibilities
- To clarify that EGPAF's role is to work with CBOs to enhance their technical and operational systems, not to audit their systems
- To review, refine, and finalize the institutional strengthening plan (ISP) and agree on effective collaboration strategies
- To review and agree on project indicators and begin a performance monitoring plan
- To agree on effective collaboration strategies, including open communication, flexibility with scheduling, and transparency

How to Conduct the Kick-Off Meeting

Structure

The kick-off meeting is split into two phases—the planning phase and the kick-off meeting itself. The planning phase occurs at least one week prior to the kick-off meeting, and the kick-off meeting typically lasts one full day (six to eight hours), but sometimes it lasts a day and a half. It typically takes place at the CBO office; however, if the CBO office is too small, the meeting is held at an outside venue.

Team Roles and Responsibilities

EGPAF: EGPAF is responsible for the preparation of the **TA model presentation**; provision of materials for the meeting; and arranging logistics for EGPAF and CBO staff, including accommodations, transport, per diems, meals, and refreshments for the meeting. EGPAF takes the lead in facilitating discussions and in ensuring that there are agreed-upon action items and next steps at the end. The kick-off meeting is a joint responsibility between EGPAF's project officer and project manager.

Project officer: The project officer acts as the frontline worker, who is in contact with the CBO and keeps the EGPAF project manager up-to-date on the activities. The project officer liaises with the CBO's executive director to prepare for the kick-off meeting, facilitates the discussions during the kick-off meeting, and ensures follow-up of next steps.

Project manager: The EGPAF project manager primarily oversees the execution of this activity, and jointly leads the kick-off meeting with the project officer.

CBO: The CBO is responsible for preparing a presentation on its [project overview](#) and sharing necessary copies of any other background materials relevant to the project, such as the work plan and M&E plan. Additionally, the CBO finalizes the venue for the meeting and shares all necessary logistic information with participants. The venue is typically the CBO office but at times is an off-site location.

Executive director: The executive director is the point of contact at the CBO for the kick-off meeting. The executive director works closely with EGPAF's project officer to ensure that logistics are in place for the meeting and contributes to the discussions along with other staff.

Group Composition

The group comprises the EGPAF core project team (one to three staff) and all CBO staff, based on the kick-off meeting agenda. If possible, it is beneficial for the CBO board members to participate as well, because they set the strategic direction of the CBO and their involvement will support strong engagement throughout the TA process.

Given the small size of CBOs, most staff play multiple roles and are responsible for a variety of departments, including project coordination, M&E, HR, and financial management. For this reason, all discussions during the kick-off meeting occur as one group.

Purpose

The purpose of the kick-off meeting is to clarify EGPAF's and the CBO's roles and responsibilities, and finalize the CBO's ISP and project M&E plan.

Process

Phase 1: Pre-meeting Planning (approximately 1–2 weeks prior to kick-off)

Once EGPAF and the CBO agree on the kick-off meeting date, EGPAF develops an agenda and shares it with the CBO a week prior to the meeting. The standard agenda typically includes an overview of the CBO's project, review of the TOR, review of the project indicators, review and refinement of the ISP, and if time allows initial development of an M&E log frame. While a standard agenda exists for the kick-off meeting, it is important to remember to design the agenda based on the priorities and specific needs of the CBO. The OCA and TCA will help to identify the focus of the meeting, associated topics, and required participants.

Useful Documents

- **ViiV CBO TOR:** Outlines PACF, CBO, and EGPAF roles and responsibilities. It is complementary to the official contract of work between the CBO and PACF, and it outlines the assessment, activity, and capacity-building processes, as well as the reporting and communication requirements.
- **ISP:** The CBP or action plan that EGPAF and the CBO jointly develop following the results of the OCA and TCA. It lists the action items and TA needed to address the identified areas of improvement as well as the persons responsible and the timeline for completion.

TIP: Remember to allot adequate time for the teams to discuss the results of these TCA and OCA assessments, as they are the foundation of the CBO's ISP.

Materials

- **Standard agenda**
- **TA model presentation**

Phase 2: Kick-Off Meeting (1–1.5 days)

The EGPAF-led kick-off meeting is broken into three main activities—information sharing, discussion and action planning, and next steps.

Information Sharing

As a first step, it is important that EGPAF and the CBO understand the expectations set by the PACF project for the TA provider (EGPAF) and the TA receiver (the CBO). For this reason, EGPAF starts the meeting with a presentation of its **TA model** and a review of the PACF TOR. This is followed by the **CBO team's presentations** on the PACF-funded project, including the following:

- Project's scope, goals, and objectives
- Summary of the stated problem that is being resolved
- Summary of the approaches/strategies being used to solve the stated project
- What the project intends to accomplish and what is outside of the project's scope
- Project timeline
 - Key milestones
 - Key target dates
- Identified challenges and risks

The CBO can use the meeting to present any materials it has developed for the PACF-funded project, such as the work plan and the M&E plan.

Open Discussion and Action Plans

EGPAF and the CBO discuss the presentations and any associated materials. EGPAF provides initial feedback on the CBO project objectives and activities. If applicable, EGPAF reviews project tools (e.g., baseline assessment or questionnaires) and/or the project M&E plans, and makes recommendations for improvement. The CBO and EGPAF then review the TOR and clarify any unclear language or content; this process helps clarify EGPAF's role as the TA provider and increase the CBO's understanding of the required deliverables from the beginning.

EGPAF then presents the OCA and TCA results to the CBO; EGPAF reviews the scores and discusses the implications for the TA work. The OCA and TCA results are used to align the ISP with the CBO's and donor's priorities. The review process can be done by looking at the lowest-scored areas first and then prioritizing which ones to focus on first. Alternatively, one can focus on the capacity areas of most interest to the donor and/or the CBO, and then prioritize TA based on the interest/motivation to build capacity in those areas (see the "*Organizational Capacity Assessment*" and "*Technical Capacity Assessment*" sections of this tool kit for more details).

Based on this discussion, EGPAF and the CBO refine the ISP created during the **OCA and TCA review (OCA: p.17, TCA: p.23)**. It is at this point that the teams agree on who is responsible for each activity, the timelines, and any additional resources that may be needed (event space, expert TA provider, external trainer, etc.).

Key Feedback Questions

As EGPAF provides feedback on the CBO's project objectives and activities, it is important to consider both technical and operational components.

Technical

- Does the CBO align its project activities with the UNAIDS 90-90-90 goals?
- How does the CBO plan to measure each activity that it implements?
- Are the indicators aligned with national data collection systems?
- What are the targets and how were they chosen?

Operational

- Has the CBO considered who will lead each project activity, and is someone identified?
- What is the CBO's supervisory structure for project activities?
- How will the CBO communicate information to staff/volunteers to keep them up-to-date on technical or operational changes?

Next Steps

At the end of the meeting, the CBO and EGPAF share **contact information** for future communications and designate CBO key points of contact. Following the meeting, EGPAF shares the minutes from the meeting and the finalized ISP that tracks action points and next steps.

Materials

As a first step, it is important that EGPAF and the CBO understand the expectations set by the PACF project for the TA provider (EGPAF) and the TA receiver (the CBO). For this reason, EGPAF starts the meeting with a presentation of its **TA model** and a review of the PACF TOR. This is followed by the **CBO team's presentations** on the PACF-funded project, including the following:

- Printouts shared during the meeting:
 - **Agenda**
 - ISP
 - TOR
 - Associated background materials
 - Project work plan (if applicable)
 - Project M&E plan (if applicable)
- Online/electronic files referenced during the meeting:
 - OCA results
 - TCA results
- **CBO Contact Information Form**
- **CBO's presentation on project overview and associated IT resources**
- **EGPAF's presentation on the TA model and associated IT resources**

Section 2: Capacity-Building Approach

Supervision and Mentorship

EGPAF's supervision and mentorship are two functions that work together to support CBOs to build their capacity. EGPAF's supervision ensures that CBOs are on pace to achieve their goals and follow their capacity-building action plan. It is used to coordinate EGPAF technical assistance and facilitate relationships between the EGPAF team providing a specific TA and the CBO. EGPAF mentorship is the provision of TA to the CBO that guides its staff in the application of new skills and tools for specific prioritized capacity areas.

Supervision

Supervision by the EGPAF project team is the main line of communication between the CBO and EGPAF. The routine check-ins and visits maintain a strong relationship with the CBO that builds trust and affords the EGPAF project team insight into how best to support the CBO to achieve its operational and technical capacity goals. As outlined below, different approaches are used to conduct supervision, but the main objectives and goals of the approach are similar.

Objectives

- Ensure the CBO is on target to achieve its capacity-building goals and activities as outlined in its action plans
- Coordinate TA to CBO within EGPAF and with other CBOs and consultants
- Discuss ways to incorporate new suggestions to support project implementation

Supervisory Approach

Supervision is provided by one or two people who remain consistent to the CBO throughout the project life cycle. Consistency in the supervisory structure encourages relationship and trust building between the CBO and EGPAF. Through this relationship, the project team is able to learn more about the CBO's weakness and challenges, which helps EGPAF to coordinate better TA and provide guidance on how to address capacity needs.

Supervision is provided by the project manager and project officer. Together they work to build strong relationships with the CBO that support strong communication, transparency, and trust.

Project manager: Oversees the EGPAF team’s supervision to the CBO. Participates in regular check-ins and the active relationship manager that ensures the CBO is supported to achieve its capacity goals. The project manager participates in trainings and TA to ensure the priorities outlined in the action plan are met, and supports the CBO as needed.

Project officer: The project officer works with the project manager to coordinate EGPAF supervision visits and check-in calls, and regularly communicates with the CBO by email. As part of the supervision, the project officer helps to set up trainings and TA mentorship through other EGPAF departments. The project officer participates in trainings and TA to ensure that the priorities outlined in the action plan are met, and supports the CBO as needed.

Composition: Supervision is provided by the project officer with support from the project manager.

Capacity Building in Action: Supervision and Governance

Supervision and follow-up is key in linking developing knowledge and skills to practicable application within the CBO systems. For example, following a governance training, the EGPAF supervision team played a key role in supporting a group of CBOs to follow through on essential policy documents listed on their action plans. Many CBOs left the training recognizing the need for clear board charters that outlined the specific roles, responsibilities, and authorities of their board members; however, it was through EGPAF’s follow-up and support that the CBOs dedicated time and energy to finalizing their charters.

CBO Quarterly Review Meetings

To support a culture of quality improvement, the EGPAF team recommends that CBOs hold their own quarterly review meetings to discuss project strengths, challenges, and opportunities.

These meetings are run by the CBO with participation from EGPAF. They serve as a platform for taking stock of project activities, identifying new TA areas for support, and monitoring CBO project engagement. At the end of each meeting, the ISP is reviewed and the teams decide if new areas of support should be added to it. This ensures that the ISP is a working document that accurately tracks the CBO’s progress and TA needs.

Mentorship

Mentorship is the TA provided to CBOs in their prioritized areas of need. Mentorship comes from across the EGPAF office, depending on the specified needs and priorities of the CBO. Mentorship guides the CBO in the application of new skills and tools for growth in specific capacity areas.

Objectives

- Support CBO to develop a new skill set and/or tool that will improve its technical and operational systems
- Link information and skills learned in trainings to the CBO's operational and technical systems

Mentorship Approach

Mentorship is provided to the CBO from one of the EGPAF experts in the technical or operational priority area identified for improvement. While the structure and style of mentorship varies across EGPAF providers and capacity areas, the focus is on skill building and empowering the CBO to create and own its organizational systems.

To build CBO competencies, TA is done in a stepwise process that improves CBO staff knowledge and puts it into practice. Designated CBO members work with the TA provider, who mentors them to create and own the work, and ensure that their organization's culture and processes are documented. The application of new skills or use of new resources that are easily understood supports good change management across the CBO.

Lead mentor / TA provider: The TA provider is selected by the EGPAF project team to help the CBO develop needed skills, resources, and tools in the provider's area of expertise and support the CBO in applying these resources to its systems.

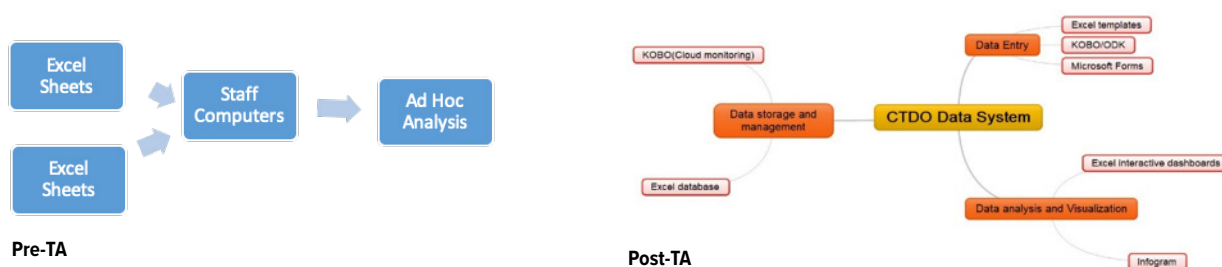
Team project manager/officer: The team project manager/officer follows the work provided by the TA provider and assists the CBO and TA provider as needed.

Composition: The composition of the team is guided by the learning needs of the CBO. The level of expertise of other EGPAF team members determines who participates in the routine check-ins (through site visits or telecommunication). For example, if the CBO team needs support on HR management, a representative from HR will be key to the EGPAF mentorship team.

The project manager/officer will always be a part of the mentorship team and is responsible for leading all CBO-EGPAF interactions. Because this person is involved in and well acquainted with all of the CBO's activities, he or she additionally serves as backup for any expertise or follow-up need the CBO may have.

Capacity Building in Action: M&E Mentorship

Upon completion of the organizational capacity assessment, three CBOs were identified for M&E capacity building. Areas of weakness were seen in the form of limited or no M&E plans, poor project indicators, and limited ability to store and use data for project improvement. To support the CBOs, EGPAF held a collective M&E training to go over M&E fundamentals. The training went over the structure and use of an M&E plan, the selection of indicators, and the use of databases. Once the training was completed, the EGPAF M&E team worked with each CBO individually to create or refine its M&E plan and develop its M&E databases to streamline data use. Database creation was seen as a priority because the CBOs had been storing their data across files in different Excel spreadsheets, which limited their use by CBO staff (*see before-and-after illustrations below*).



EGPAF mentored the CBOs to design their own databases with structured data systems to help them accurately monitor and evaluate the progress of their activities over time. With EGPAF support, one CBO expanded its database system to include mHealth technology, which increased its ability to visualize and use data in real time.

Post TA CBOs easily access project information and make data-based decision because of their improved M&E plans and the centralization of their data. Since the training and mentorship, EGPAF has seen an increased use of graphs and data tables at CBO quarterly review meetings. The data have helped each CBO identify challenges as well as areas of success.

Learning Visit

To improve networking and encourage mutual learning between CBOs, EGPAF facilitates learning visits between local organizations. The goal of these visits is for CBOs to share their experiences with each other and increase their local networks of support to promote sustained technical and operational capacity once EGPAF TA is complete.

The learning visit agenda and objectives vary because they are tailored to the CBOs' specific capacity area needs as identified through the capacity assessments and routine check-ins. EGPAF promotes the learning visits in the first engagement with CBOs during the initial **capacity assessment meetings (p. 27)**, where the teams talk through the importance of networking and building partnerships. Then from the results of the capacity assessments, EGPAF guides each CBO to identify another CBO to learn from and establish a connection with them. Note that the selection of the host CBO does not need to be based on the capacity assessment results. The results help serve as a guide for where the visiting CBO might focus, but the selection of the host CBO is based on the interest of the visiting CBO and the host success in that area. The learning visit can also include trainings in the specific area to augment the learning and maximize the time spent with the CBOs.

Purpose: To improve networking among CBOs and create a space to share CBOs' experiences, challenges, and best practices

Objectives

- Strengthen CBO networks and partnerships to ensure sustainable systems of support for local organizations
- Create peer-to-peer learning opportunities that enhance CBOs' organizational and technical capacities
- Provide a learning platform to share organizations' knowledge, experiences, and approaches in various technical and operational areas
- Establish CBO ownership over the learning and networking processes

How to Conduct the Learning Visit

Structure

The learning visit is done in three phases—pre-visit planning, the learning visit itself, and post-learning visit. The pre-visit planning phase takes a minimum of one to two weeks to set up. For the learning visit, it is important to schedule at least one or two days for the teams to meet with each other. Typically, the first part (a half or full day) is spent presenting and discussing, while the second part (a half or full day) is spent on a field visit and debriefing. The post-learning visit phase is critical to ensure that the teams digest the new information and conduct any necessary follow-up actions. The post-learning visit phase is not a specifically identified period, but rather the actual continued implementation of the project activities following the visit, including the incorporation of lessons learned and recommendations into ongoing activities.

TIP: *It is important to maximize the time a project team has with a CBO in person. Holding one-on-one meetings, site visits, and training can be difficult due to conflicting schedules and competing priorities. When applicable, a learning visit may also be a good time to conduct orientation sessions or trainings that address CBOs' common needs and interests.*

Group Size and Composition

Group size: The typical size for a learning visit is about 10 people, including 4 staff from the visiting CBO and 4 staff from the host CBO.

Group composition: Staff from the visiting and host CBO typically include the executive director, program staff (either program officers or coordinators), and representatives from finance and/or HR. EGPAF staff include the project officer and program manager.

Timing Is Everything!

Start communication with the host CBO early. Schedules are complicated, and finding a time that works for everyone can be challenging.

Make sure there is sufficient time for reflection in the schedule. It is key to identifying the lessons learned from the visit

Team Roles and Responsibilities

EGPAF: EGPAF's role is to facilitate the setting up and coordination of the learning visit. Responsibilities include communication with the host CBO and oversight of the agenda and logistics. EGPAF provides prior guidance to both CBOs on the development of the agenda/program, the key participants needed during the visit, the activities to highlight, and the resources needed.

EGPAF project officer: The project officer is the point of contact for the activity. The officer provides guidance during the planning phase by helping the visiting CBO define the learning objectives and think critically around the goals of the visit. The officer asks questions and recommends tools that should be shared in advance of the meeting. In addition, the officer helps create an agenda and requests that both CBOs develop presentations to share. The officer participates in the learning visit, helping facilitate questions and discussions during the visit.

Visiting CBO: The role is to lead the visit setup and establish clear objectives. Responsibilities include jointly defining the goals and objectives of the visit with EGPAF and the host CBO; coordinating the date, time, and participants for the visit; and preparing a presentation on the CBO's mission, project portfolio, and systems that will be relevant to the host CBO.

Executive director: The executive director is the main point of contact for coordinating and planning the visit.

Host CBO: The role is to host the visit and ensure the visit objectives are met. Responsibilities include itinerary setup; participation in creating the agenda; and presenting on the organization’s mission, project portfolio, and systems that will be relevant for the visiting CBO.

CBO program staff: Program staff are responsible for finalizing the agreed-upon itinerary and schedule of activities before and during the visit, as well as ensuring that the CBO leadership is involved in and aware of the activity.

The Learning Visit Process

Phase 1: Pre-visit Planning (1–2 weeks)

A learning visit starts once the visiting CBO’s project team identifies an organization they want to learn more about. There are no specific criteria for a host CBO, but a peer organization is recommended so as to enhance both CBOs’ local networks and foster possible partnerships in the future.

Once a host CBO is identified, the EGPAF project officer and the visiting CBO outline the learning visit goals and objectives. At this point, the EGPAF team encourages the visiting CBO to think critically about its learning objectives and narrow down the visit goals to ensure a successful exchange. The visiting CBO’s project team works with the EGPAF project officer or team of other EGPAF technical experts to refine the objectives of the visit. It is the responsibility of the EGPAF project officer to invite other EGPAF team members to participate in the pre-visit planning phase based on their area of expertise and its alignment with the learning visit goals.

It is important that the EGPAF project team stay involved at all times during the visit even if other EGPAF technical experts are involved. In the planning phase, they will be instrumental in suggesting what activities to include or how best to refine the goals based on their previous interactions with the CBOs. Additionally, their involvement at the start will enhance the quality of their follow-up supervision once the learning visit is complete. EGPAF will then work with the visiting CBO to ensure the learning visit goal and specific objectives are shared with the host CBO.

***TIP:** It is important to remember that EGPAF TA is time bound and learning visits need to be scheduled within the project timeline. This may eliminate possible host organizations if they are unable to meet within a set time frame.*

Once the learning visit goal and objectives are established, the visiting CBO emails the proposed host CBO to request a visit, copying EGPAF. When the host CBO approves the visit, the two CBOs work together to draft the schedule of activities, keeping the EGPAF project officer copied on all communications.

It is important that the visit request be sent by the visiting CBO in order to demonstrate that the visiting CBO has a direct interest in learning from the host CBO, and the proposed visit is not a perfunctory exercise organized by EGPAF. In addition, the direct email exchanges

between the CBOs helps to establish a connection between their staffs and facilitates continued dialogue after the visit. The EGPAF project officer's role at this phase is to support connections, help refine objectives, and assist with related logistical requirements (transport, venue, number of days). The EGPAF project officer also reviews and approves the **final agenda** before the visiting CBO shares it with all participants. The final approval of the agenda is to ensure that the logistics of the visit, which are organized by EGPAF, match the **agenda** set by the CBOs.

Both CBOs are encouraged to prepare **presentations about their organization** for this visit. Project information presentations are used to facilitate dialogue between the CBOs about their individual missions, project portfolios, and key activities. The presentations are important because they require the CBOs to self-reflect on their work and to put that self-reflection in a structured format that supports clear dialogue between the CBOs on all of their activities and/or systems of interest. Without the presentations, it has been observed that CBOs are not prepared for the interaction and leave out critical information about their activities and systems.

Pre-Learning Visit Questions

How will the achievements from the learning visit help the CBO move forward?

What goals will the CBO set for itself after this visit?

What kind of organization will the CBO aspire to be because of this learning visit?

Phase 2: Learning Visit (1–2 days)

The first part of the visit starts with a review of the agenda by the host CBO. This is an opportunity to clarify objectives, preview activities, and explain how the learning visit will be carried out. It is important the agenda be discussed because not all participants are involved in the planning phase, and the agenda sets expectations for the visit.

Next, both CBOs present on their organization's mission, project portfolio, and systems that are relevant to the objectives of the visit. During and after the presentations, the host CBO facilitates time for questions, discussion, and clarifications.

On the optional second day, a field visit may occur if consistent with the goals of the learning visit. Field visits are helpful when the area of interest is programmatic and activity focused. For example, a field visit to a CBO facility was held in Malawi to learn about client flow and let the visiting CBO witness the process firsthand. The host CBO demonstrated its work and the visiting CBO asked questions directly of the health facility management and clinical staff about their involvement, challenges, and success with the approach.

TIP: For field visits, it is important that EGPAF take an active role in the agenda setting to ensure the visit will speak to the CBO objectives and include the correct participants.

To end the learning visit, the CBOs hold a debriefing meeting. Each CBO's participants share feedback on what they learned, discuss their challenges, and provide recommendations to each other. This debriefing occurs either at the field visit or back at the meeting space, depending on time constraints. The debriefing is important as it gives each CBO space and time to seek clarifications, ask additional questions, and provide feedback to the host CBO on the experience and the CBO's technical systems.

EGPAF is an active participant in the learning visit to ensure that the visit goals and objectives are met, to facilitate conversation across the CBOs, and to be aware of lessons learned for application later.

Learning Visit Questions

Are there any similarities or differences between our project management approaches and those of the host organization?

What can be learned from the host organization's project management structure to encourage strong team collaboration and communication?

How were data used to in the field to improve project outcomes?

In what ways did the organization improve or teach new technical skills to staff and/or volunteers?

Phase 3: Post-Learning Visit

The post-learning visit phase is integrated within the life of the project through implementation of the lessons learned and recommendations from the visit.

During this phase, both the visiting CBO and the host CBO continue to reflect on the learning visit and the lessons learned. Having exchanged contact information, the CBOs stay in touch and act as resources for one another. For example, staff of one CBO that graduated from the Malawi EGPAF teams' TA has continued to stay in contact with a CBO that visited them for a learning visit. The two CBOs check in with each other and help each other resolve various project implementation or organizational system issues.

The post-learning visit phase is a great opportunity for CBOs to reflect on and assess their systems and to think about what could be done differently from now on. In this phase, EGPAF encourages and facilitates this reflection as well as supporting continued communication and networking between the CBOs. Throughout the check-ins and site visits, EGPAF supports the CBOs to apply what they have learned from the visit to their systems.

Tip: *Following the visit, support visiting CBO staff to refer back to the objectives of the visit and discuss whether or not they were achieved. Additionally, work with them to identify further lessons and takeaways that will be helpful to their organization.*

Post-Learning Visit Questions

Did we enjoy the exchange visit?

Why or why not?

What did we learn from this visit?

How effective were the showcased solutions/strategies?

If there were another chance, what would we do differently to make this learning visit experience more meaningful? What could we have done better?

Capacity Building in Action: Referral Systems

EGPAF facilitated a learning visit from Grassroots Movement for Health and Development (GMHD) to Family Planning Association of Malawi (FPAM), with the objective to learn how FPAM referral systems work and to think through ways to apply good practices to GMHD's system. After the visit, one GMHD staff participant observed, "FPAM referral systems work better because of the camping they do to a particular area. This is easy, as they stay at one site for not less than three days, and this is done every month. In our case, it is difficult as we only have one-off community awareness day and may take some time before coming back to the area." The visit increased GMHD's understanding of antiretroviral therapy and HIV testing and counseling referral systems, as practiced by FPAM. With this new knowledge, GMHD is applying for funding to modify its system to increase the frequency of its awareness campaigns.

Section 3: Technical Assistance Activities

External Communication Activities

EGPAF's external communication TA is designed to build CBOs' capacity to create strong promotional resources that will support their organizational sustainability and aid in the achievement of their missions. EGPAF TA covers the following four activities of external communication:

- Creation of a communication plan
- Writing and development of success stories
- Brand management
- Development of an organizational profile

EGPAF provides this capacity building either in a one-day training or during routine site visits at the CBOs. Depending on the need and interest of the CBO, EGPAF provides capacity-building TA on all of the activities outlined below, or just a few. Each TA activity is interactive, with hands-on components that build CBOs' writing skills and challenge them to think critically about their brand and key organizational messages.

Objectives

- Create or enhance a CBO's communication strategy
- Increase the CBO's knowledge on the different types of communication tools and materials used to promote an organization and/or its activities
- Increase the CBO's knowledge on the importance of having communication tools
- Develop communication tools that support the CBO's communication strategy (e.g., communication plan, success story, organizational profile)
- Increase the CBO's knowledge on brand management and the importance of having branding guidelines

Group composition: Two EGPAF facilitators lead the activities; they typically include either the ViiV project manager or project officer and the EGPAF communications and advocacy officer. The activities involve almost all CBO cadres, including the director, the project officer/coordinator, and the finance officer. All staff members are included because employees promote the CBO's work on a daily basis and it is important that they be involved in and

aware of the organization's key communication messages. Additionally, involving all members tends to remove potential delays in the execution of the strategy by making everyone aware of the strategy, purpose, activities, and associated costs.

EGPAF may choose to conduct each communication activity with one CBO or with multiple CBOs together. The decision to work with one or multiple CBOs depends on the CBOs' needs and interests, as well as EGPAF's capacity at a given time. Both options have advantages:

Multiple CBOs: Conducting an activity or organizing a communication training with multiple CBOs encourages cross-learning; CBOs are able to share tools and strategies with one another and identify their peers' strengths and areas for improvement. Because EGPAF is a much larger organization that operates on an international level, it is helpful when CBOs share their tools or strategies with one another. By seeing examples from similar-sized organizations, CBOs without developed tools are encouraged and inspired to develop their own. This cross-learning also fosters mentorship among the CBOs and provides future opportunities for sharing and learning.

Single CBO: There are also advantages to conducting these activities independently with one CBO. Such activities are typically conducted during site visits at the CBO's office, allowing EGPAF to use the environment to inform the training activity. For example, EGPAF may be able to see posters or branding materials at the CBO, which can be included in the discussion. Conducting the activity with one CBO allows EGPAF to focus on that CBO's specific goals and objectives, and create tailored tools. Additionally, because the TA is on-site, less logistical planning is needed, and more CBO staff can be included in the training.

Group dynamics: Depending on the size of the group, participants may be kept together as one group or split into multiple groups. It is preferable to have groups of two or three people for the activities in order to encourage active participation. When multiple CBOs participate in the activity, individuals may be grouped by CBO or split into mixed groups, depending on the activity. To further encourage participation, EGPAF encourages participants to sit next to people they do not know and typically selects groups randomly by having participants count off to create mixed groups.

Activity Preparation

EGPAF: Prior to conducting TA, EGPAF develops and refines the activities to meet the needs of the CBO(s) and prints all necessary materials. If the activities are grouped together and are conducted as a one-day training, EGPAF develops, shares, and prints an **agenda for the day.**

CBO: The CBOs are requested to look through their existing communication tools and/or strategy and identify who the target audience is and what the key messages are. CBOs are also requested to prepare objectives and expectations for the trainings and identify desired outcomes for their communication tools or strategies. It is important that CBOs think about their current approaches and tools for communication, as it is best when EGPAF and the CBOs can work with the organizations' already developed tools and knowledge,

emphasizing their strengths and collective capabilities, rather than impose new templates or processes that, if not well understood, could be rejected or bring down group morale.

Location matters: The necessary logistics planning depends on the location of the training. If the training and capacity building is conducted as a one-day event and/or with multiple CBOs participating, EGPAF will likely need to procure an off-site venue. The procurement team will need to book a venue and include food and refreshments. If, however, the training is done during routine site visits to the CBO office, this type of planning will not be necessary.

How to Carry Out External Communication Activities

Communications Plan Activity

Time needed: 1–2 hours

Objective

- Start or enhance the CBO’s communication plan
- Increase the CBO’s knowledge of the purpose and importance of a communication plan

Deliverables

- CBO communication plan outline
- Action plan with a set time frame and individuals responsible for sharing a draft communication plan with EGPAF

Method and Processes

Preparatory work: EGPAF prints and brings the **communication plan template** to hand out during the session. The CBO comes prepared with any draft communication plan and/or ideas around the intended audience and outcomes.

Introduction: One of the facilitators introduces the session and its objectives. The facilitator introduces the importance of an organization’s mission statement and the use of communication materials to promote it with different audiences. The facilitator then defines what a strategic plan and a communication plan are, and how they work together to document and highlight an organization’s overall mission:

Strategic plan: For a CBO to run effectively, it requires a strategic plan, which defines the organization’s strategy and direction (where it is going). It also outlines the organization’s strategic goals.

Communication plan: A communication plan helps to identify and prioritize activities that will enhance the ability of the CBO to meet its strategic goals. It represents a policy-driven approach to providing stakeholders with information about the organization. It defines who should be given specific information, when that information should be delivered, and what communication channels will be used to deliver the information.

A facilitator also provides examples of materials that can be included in a communication plan, such as brochures, pamphlets, posters, and fact sheets.

Once these terms are defined, the CBO(s) are asked to share their mission statements and strategic goals. This will help to shape the subsequent activity and discussion to their context. It may also be necessary to accommodate the activity to the skill and knowledge level of the CBO. If the CBO does not have strategic goals or it is difficult for participants to come up with goals, then the initial discussion should focus on developing key goals.

A facilitator hands out the **communication plan template** and reviews the content with the group. The facilitator goes through each column, discussing the significance and providing an example for each. After reviewing the document, the facilitator opens the discussion for questions.

Group work/activity: Depending on the size of the group, the facilitators break the participants into small groups, keeping staff from each CBO together.

Tip: *Groups of two or three people encourage active participation and good discussion.*

Note: *If broken out into groups, one person from the group will be chosen as the recorder, who writes or makes changes to the communication plan. Another person will be chosen as the presenter, who will present the group's example communication plan back to the full group.*

Each group discusses the communication plan template and chooses one of the CBO's goals to develop in the template. The group uses the goal to identify key communication messages and associated materials that align with that goal. The group then either fills in the blank communication plan template or modifies an existing communication plan if the CBO has one.

During the exercise, the two facilitators walk around from group to group to answer questions and help facilitate a discussion.

Tip: *One area that needs to be consistently brought up or clarified is the inclusion of the community as a beneficiary or target audience to ensure an understanding that the target audience is not just the donor.*

Group discussion and wrap-up: Participants come back together as one group. Each group presents its communication plan and/or discussion points from the activity. At this point, the facilitators may also choose to share an example of another CBO's communication plan, highlighting key components. After sufficient time for discussion and questions, the facilitator summarizes the key components of the communication plan and shares the next steps.

Next steps: Each CBO creates an action plan that states who will draft or enhance its communication plan and when the plan will be ready for EGPAF review. These action plans are submitted to the EGPAF facilitators for future follow-up during **routine check-ins (p. 29)**.

Success Story Activity

Time needed: 1–2 hours

Objectives

- Increase CBOs' understanding of the use of a success story
- Increase CBOs' knowledge around the content and flow of success stories

Deliverable

- Action plan to develop and share a success story

Method and Processes

Preparatory work: EGPAF takes a completed success story and cuts it up into independent paragraphs. EGPAF mixes these up and places them in an envelope. The number of copies and envelopes will depend on the group size.

Introduction: The facilitator first assesses the group's knowledge about success stories. The facilitator asks the group about the goals, intended outcomes, and components of success stories, and sees if anyone has ever written one. The facilitator then summarizes what a success story is and goes over [EGPAF's checklist of criteria for developing a success story](#).

Group activity: Depending on the size of the group, the facilitator splits the participants into subgroups. If there are multiple CBOs, groups are split so that they are mixed. The facilitator gives each group an envelope with the mixed-up paragraphs and instructs the groups to put the paragraphs in order to create a complete story.

Once all groups have completed the activity, everyone comes back together as one large group. Each group goes over its story order and explains why its members chose that arrangement.

Tip: *It may not be easy for group members to agree on the arrangement of the story. That is okay, as long as they provide reasons for their choice of arrangement.*

The facilitator then shares the original story and allows time for groups to compare it with the version they created. The facilitator provides justification for the order of the story and shows how it fulfills the criteria of the checklist. It is important that the group understand the key sections and the criteria each section meets, rather than solely focusing on the "correct" order as presented by EGPAF.

Next steps: Each CBO creates an action plan that states who will draft a success story and when it will be ready for EGPAF review. The action plans are submitted to the EGPAF facilitators for future follow-up during [routine check-ins \(p. 29\)](#).

Brand Management Activity

Time needed: 45 minutes–1 hour

Objectives

- Increase CBO’s knowledge of brand management and its importance to nonprofit organizations
- Build CBO’s capacity to create branded materials for the organization

Learning Outcomes

CBOs have an increased ability to prioritize branding materials to adapt and develop in the future. Though no concrete deliverables come out of this activity, CBOs often use the knowledge gained to adapt existing materials or create new ones. For example, following the activity, EGPAF has noticed CBOs formalizing PowerPoint slides, creating email signatures, or adapting their documents to include their logo.

Method and Processes

Preparatory work: EGPAF compiles examples of branded materials (presentation slide decks, font and color samples, business cards, etc.) to bring to this activity.

The CBOs compile the following documents (if applicable) and come to the activity prepared to discuss them:

- Mission and vision statements
- Logo
- Slogan/tagline
- Email signature
- Business cards
- Writing style guide
- Presentation slide deck
- Information on standard organizational colors, typeface, and fonts

Introduction: At the start of the activity, the facilitator introduces the importance of brand management and the objectives of the module. The facilitator shares the handout titled **“What Is Brand Management?”** and discusses the following key points:

- Brand management is the process of maintaining, improving, and upholding a brand so that the name is associated with positive results in line with an organization’s vision and mission statement. While it is the most important aspect of marketing for companies, branding is also a requirement at nonprofit organizations.

- An organization’s brand is what sets it apart from its competitors; what helps define its reputation and mission; and what helps others identify the materials, resources, or people associated with the organization. By communicating one’s key messages clearly, consistently, and effectively, an organization can connect with, inspire, and motivate its local audience.
- Every organization needs to have branding guidelines that are designed to help staff and partners use the organization’s brand with confidence and consistency.

Activity/discussion: After the overview, the facilitator assesses the group’s knowledge. The facilitator uses a commonly known commercial company, for example, Coca-Cola, to begin to demonstrate what a brand is. The facilitator asks the group the following questions:

- How do you identify this company?
- How do you associate a certain product with this company?
- What colors and font do you associate with this company?
- Does this company have a logo?
- Are there any taglines or songs associated with this company?

After a few minutes of discussing the commercial company, the facilitator then shows some of EGPAF’s branded materials—EGPAF’s logo, colors, font, email signatures, business cards, presentation slide deck, and so on—explaining how each contributes to EGPAF’s brand.

The facilitator then asks each CBO’s participants to review the documents that they prepared and brought to the activity. The facilitator asks participants to identify which documents they have, and which they are missing or have not yet developed. The facilitator asks CBOs to share their materials with the larger group, identifying key branding elements of each, and discussing how each contributes to the organization’s overall goals and objectives.

During this part of the activity, the facilitator poses some of the following questions to the CBOs as they present their materials:

- How did you develop the logo? What does it mean?
- Why were the specific colors chosen?
- Who helped develop the branding materials?
- What resources or funds were needed to develop these materials?

Tip: *Throughout this activity, it is important to stress that brand management is important because it helps the community and other stakeholders quickly identify an organization’s staff, work, and products. Additionally, it is important to stress that branding requires sufficient funds and resources, which must be considered when CBOs plan their organizational budgets.*

Next steps: To wrap up the activity, CBOs are asked to think about their project’s key messages and how to improve them within their branding materials. The CBOs are asked to consider which of the branding materials discussed they should prioritize for development, and what resources and funds they have available to use.

Organizational Profile Activity

Time needed: 1.5 hours

Objectives

- Increase CBOs’ knowledge of an organizational profile and its importance for nonprofit organizations
- Build their capacity to create their own organizational profiles

Deliverable

- Action plan to develop an organizational profile

Method and Processes

At the start of the activity, the facilitator explains what an organizational profile is and discusses why an organizational profile is important for organizations. The facilitator distributes the handout **“Creating an Organization Profile”** and discusses the criteria and key components needed for an organizational profile.

Inclusion criteria:

- History of the organization’s founding: when, why, and by whom
- Mission of the organization
- Vision of the organization
- Objectives of the organization—not the specific projects
- Organizational governance structure, including a list of all regulatory, legal, advisory, and/or governing boards
- Ongoing projects, along with their geography and their key goals and outcomes
- Key successes and achievements of the CBO
- Contact information

The facilitator then shows an example of a **CBO’s profile** and goes through the document with the group. In each section, the facilitator highlights key components and their importance in branding.

Tip: *It is important to emphasize that CBOs should not just copy the format and design of another organization’s profile, but rather develop one that specifically suits their organization and its mission.*

Next steps: Each CBO creates an action plan that states who will draft the organizational profile for future follow-up during **routine check-ins (p. 29)**.

Referral System Review

Strong referral systems play a key role in ensuring that all people have access to quality health care irrespective of where in the health system they access care. CBOs play an important role in the identification, education, and linking of community members to health services. For this reason, it is important to build their capacity in how to review and improve the quality of their referral systems.

Objectives

- Improve CBO referral system
- Build CBO staff skills in quality improvement
- Increase communication and coordination between CBO and community stakeholders

How to Conduct a Referral System Review

Structure

The need to improve a CBO's referral system is identified during the **TCA (p. 23)** and is listed in the CBO's ISP. Once the need is identified, the CBO and EGPAF work together create or refine a referral system that reflects the needs of the CBO's community and effectively works with participating health facilities. The referral system review is done in four parts—stakeholder engagement meeting, CBO–health facility coordination meeting, material design, and review meetings.

Team Roles and Responsibilities

EGPAF: To mentor and provide technical oversight to the CBO on the referral system review process

CBO: To lead the review process, design the referral system, and consolidate feedback and incorporate it into the final product. The CBO is also responsible for implementation of the system and for holding review follow-up meetings.

Process

Stakeholder Engagement Meeting

Referral systems are effective when all stakeholders involved effectively work together. To help CBOs create or enhance a referral system that works for all stakeholders, EGPAF mentors them in how to conduct a stakeholder engagement meeting.

To start, EGPAF and the CBO work together to set the agenda and structure of the meeting and to think through the participant list. The participant list should include health facility staff

and key community members, groups, and other CBOs or nongovernmental organizations that will or could play a role in the system. Though EGPAF participates in the design and structure of the meeting, the CBO conducts the meeting to ensure that the health facility and community recognize the CBO as the leader and owner of the referral system.

One of the goals of the meeting is to leave with a draft referral system. This can be done in one of two ways: (1) At the meeting, the participants work together to develop or enhance a draft of the referral system. This draft is shared with EGPAF for review. (2) Alternatively, EGPAF and the CBO work together to create a referral system prior to the meeting. At the meeting, the referral system is presented for stakeholder input. Which method is chosen should be decided based on the status of the CBO's current referral system, the stakeholders involved, and the skill set of CBO staff.

Once a draft referral system has been created by the CBO, alone or with stakeholder input, the CBO continues to work with EGPAF to refine it. Once the draft is complete, the CBO presents it to the participating health facilities.

Health Facility and CBO Coordination Meeting

At this meeting, the CBO presents the referral system and the process through which it was created or improved. After the presentation, the CBO leads a discussion on the roles and responsibilities of CBO staff/volunteers and health facility staff in making the referral system functional. Buy-in and clear understanding of each other's roles and the supervisory structure of the system is important in order to reinforce accountability and let people know whom to contact if there are issues or challenges.

Commonly Discussed Questions

- To whom does the patient give the referral system slip?
- Will referral slips be collected by health facility staff or will they go into a box?
- How will the health facility confirm to the CBO that health services were provided to the patient?
 - Will the health care workers confirm that the patient received services?
 - Will a CBO staff member or volunteer collect slips from the referral box in the health facility, or will project staff collect the signed referral slips?

Material Development

Once roles and responsibilities are confirmed, the CBO designs the referral slips, with EGPAF support through one-on-one on-site mentorship, phone calls, or exchange of emails. It is important to remind CBOs of key content to include and the importance of **branding** the slips. Once the slips are finalized, the CBO implements the new or improved referral system.

Review Meeting

Three months after implementation of the referral system, EGPAF and the CBO hold a review meeting that includes active participants from the community and health facility to discuss the challenges and success of the system. This meeting can be part of the CBO's *quarterly review meeting* or a stand-alone meeting. It is recommended that at least two meetings be held within the year to review the success of the referral system.

Section 4: Impact Story

The power of clinic, community, and community-based organization (CBO) collaboration in promoting access to maternal and child health (MCH) services

Grassroots Movement for Health and Development (GMHD) is a local organization based in Lilongwe that has been serving communities since 2010. GMHD's program focuses on women, children, and their families and aims to support the prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV, as well as promote socioeconomic and sexual-reproductive health rights for women and girls. Volunteers are key in supporting the project activities by conducting home visits and group meetings and by providing referrals from the communities to the health facilities within their catchment area of Mtenthera and Nathenje.

Since 2011, the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF) has been supporting GMHD with technical assistance (TA) and capacity-building activities under the ViiV CBO Project, funded by the Positive Action for Children Fund (PACF). As a TA provider, EGPAF supports GMHD across a variety of technical and operational capacity areas with the aim of strengthening its project activities and sustainably improving its HIV outcomes.

To improve GMHD's referral system, EGPAF sat with GMHD staff to review the referral system's structure. The review revealed that despite the 90% successful referral rate, GMHD continued to face challenges in the community, whereby certain community chiefs restricted GMHD volunteers from referring clients to the health facilities free of charge. Instead, chiefs were charging a fee to put their stamp on the referral letters that volunteers used to link women to the health facility to access MCH services. The request for payment was problematic, as women who were not able to pay the chief's fee were unable to receive health services.

This posed a major challenge for GMHD's work and its aim of supporting communities with PMTCT services. As one GMHD volunteer explained, "We are not in good books with some chiefs as they see us denying them their rights to provide letters to women at a fee. This does not go well with our work in the community."

To address this issue, EGPAF helped GMHD take a collaborative approach, involving community, clinic, and CBO. EGPAF supported GMHD to conduct a review meeting with the area development committee, a platform where chiefs meet to discuss health and other issues in their communities. EGPAF mentored GMHD on developing a plan for the meeting and methods for actively engaging the custodians of culture in the communities where they work. GMHD held the meeting, discussed the root causes of the challenges for the referral system, and suggested some possible solutions. The meeting provided a platform for active stakeholder dialogue, allowing for productive discussions around the challenge of chiefs charging a fee for MCH services and the possible solutions.

Following the meeting, chiefs agreed to take up the stamp matter and hold each other accountable in ensuring that all women received free access to health services. In addition, with EGPAF's support, GMHD community leaders conducted sensitization meetings with village heads and community members on the subject of the referral system. Because of these efforts, chiefs stopped requesting a stamp fee for referral slips. To date, no chief has charged a woman who needs a letter to get a referral to receive antenatal care.

GMHD will continue to conduct scheduled meetings biannually with community members and health facilities to review and discuss project activities and other challenges that arise. The health facility will utilize this opportunity to share information, dispel myths, and receive feedback from the communities on the services it offers.

Thanks to the power of collaboration between clinic, community, and CBO, as well as TA from EGPAF, no woman from Mtenthera and Nathenje has to pay for a referral for services from the community to the health facility.

ELIZABETH GLASER PEDIATRIC AIDS FOUNDATION (EGPAF)

1140 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20036

P +1 202 296 9165

F +1 202 296 9185

WWW.PEDAIDS.ORG
