Partner Organizational Capacity Assessment

A Tool for Assessing and Building Capacities of Twinning Partnerships for High Quality Responses to HIV/AIDS

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Introduction

1. What is this tool?

This tool was designed to be used by the Twinning Center in order to achieve any of the following three objectives:

1. to identify capacity-building needs of the partner organization,
2. to plan any technical support needed by the partner organization, and
3. to monitor changes in organizational capacity.

It consists of seven sections, five of which – sections 3 to 7 – focus on specific components of organizational capacity:

1. Background
2. Organizational profile details
3. Leadership, governance and strategy
4. Finances
5. Planning, project design and management
6. Networking and advocacy
7. Technical capacity

The tool was adapted from the Core Initiative's "CBO/FBO Capacity Analysis: A tool for assessing and building capacities for high quality responses to HIV/AIDS".

2. Whose capacity is being assessed by this tool?

Ideally, the capacity of both organizations that are in a twinning partnership should be assessed and monitored. In almost all instances, however, the organization which is implementing the partnership project in the country will be the primary focus of this assessment.

There may be instances where certain capacity sections or questions listed in the tool may not be appropriate because of the nature of the organization (e.g. a health facility may not be involved in designing projects). These sections and/or questions can remain unanswered, however, with explanations provided and documented by the facilitator.

3. When should it be administered?

The tool should be administered at the beginning of the partnership, prior to the development of the partnership's workplan.

It may be re-applied at the end of the Twinning Center-funded partnership in order to determine if any changes in organizational capacity occurred. Decisions to do so will be made by the Twinning Center's Washington DC office.

4. By whom should it be administered?

The tool should be administered by a staff member of the Twinning Center, preferably a monitoring and evaluation specialist or a program officer. Alternatively, a representative of the lead organization, e.g. the project coordinator, can conduct the assessment.

5. How should it be administered?

The recommended method to be used for conducting the capacity assessment is a focus group discussion, involving several staff members and volunteers of the organization who represent the various functional areas such as management, administration, finance, logistics and technical programs.

The size of the group should not exceed seven people in order for discussions to be manageable and contributions of all participants to be possible. More than one focus group discussion may be held, each facilitated by a representative of the Twinning Center or the lead partner organization.

6. What are the specific steps to take?

- Make sure that relevant members of the organization (staff, including volunteers, if appropriate, who have a sound understanding of how the organization functions and operates) are invited.

- Introduce yourself and ask everyone to introduce themselves and their roles. Document people's roles to ensure there are a variety of people from across the organization.

- Explain that the main purpose of the meeting/interview is to get a better understanding of the capacities of the organization, how it operates, what it's long-term vision is, and what are it's needs. This information is crucial in establishing a sound and effective partnership and enabling the Twinning Center to provide the necessary managerial and technical support.

- Each capacity section is headed by an open-ended question which is followed by specific questions which have corresponding possible responses.

- In each capacity section, ask the open-ended question first. The group's response may help answer some of the specific questions, but use the specific questions to get more detailed information. You may also ask the group to rate the organization on a scale from 1 to 4 by reading out the suggested responses.

- The suggested responses should be used in an informative way. Participants may ask for explanations and even challenge the assumptions in the tool. This encourages participants to reflect critically on the way they work and what needs to change.

- For organizations with very low or very high capacity, the answers to certain questions may be obvious. These questions could be completed by the facilitator without asking the participants, to avoid repetition. The judgment of the facilitator is important in deciding which questions to ask and how to ask them.

- Record the main points of the discussion as they are made, on a flipchart if available or in a notebook.

- Select the appropriate capacity score by marking the respective box and listing any notes in the empty space if this is necessary.

- At the end of each session, ask the group if the discussions made them think of any improvements or changes that could be made to the way they work. Try to come to an agreement on any specific actions or plans. Consider or suggest any external technical support that might be needed, such as additional resources, further advice, or training materials and literature.

- After the meeting, write up the notes and flipcharts into a report. It is important that this is done as soon as possible to ensure that all of the key points that were made during the discussions are recalled and captured into a document.

- The report, the notes, and the completed tool should be submitted to:

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1 Background

1. Name / Title of Organization

2. Contact details of organization (mailing address, phone and fax numbers)

2. Name of person conducting the assessment

3. Date when assessment was conducted

4. Name and professional title/position of persons participating in the assessment

Name	Title	Organization

2 Organizational Profile Details

1. When organization was established (month/year)

2. Location where organization works

3. Staff and structure
Who manages the organization? How many full-time staff, part-time staff, and volunteers? What are their roles? Does it have a technical advisor? If so, who?

4. Overview of organization's work
With whom does the organization work? What are its target populations? What activities does it conduct? How many people is it reaching?

5. Key achievements and main challenges
Key highlights/successes of the organization’s work; main problems/issues it faces

6. Sources of funding
Financial, material, or in-kind support received from a) within the community, b) outside the community

7. Future plans
What are immediate needs/priorities? Does the organization have any plans to scale up?
If the organization received more funding, how would it use it?

3 Leadership, Governance, and Strategy

How do you select leaders, make important decisions, and resolve conflict within the organization?					
Question		Capacity score			
		1	2	3	4
1. Constitution	Do you have a written constitution accepted and approved by all the members of the organization?	No constitution	Some rules/principles written down	Written constitution exists but wasn't widely approved	Written constitution approved by representatives of the community and organization
2. Governing committee / board	Do you have a committee/board that meets and makes decisions that guide your organization's development?	No committee, no meetings	Committee established, but it never meets	Occasional meetings, but rarely agree on any decisions	Regular meetings (quarterly) with useful guidance and decisions made for the organization
3. Mission and values	Do you have a mission and set of values which are clearly understood, agreed and approved by all the members of the organization? If so, how are they used?	No clear mission/values	Can describe the mission/values of the organization, but they have never been agreed or written down	Mission and/or values written down long ago, but few people were consulted or understand them now	Mission and values were agreed by all stakeholders, and are regularly used to guide decisions about projects and activities
4. Suggestions for technical support:					

4 Finances

How does the organization plan and manage its finances and budget?					
Question		**Capacity score**			
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**
1. Finances	Does your organization keep accounts of money that can be presented on demand?	No accounts kept	Records kept of money received and spent, but difficult to know how much money is held at any one time	Accounts kept up-to-date and balances and statements are prepared at the end of the year	Balances and statements prepared quarterly. At year end, presented to external stakeholders for approval
2. Bank account	Does your organization have a bank account to hold its funds?	No bank account, all funds managed in cash	Someone's personal account used for any funds	Bank account registered in organization's name, which requires dual (or specific authorized) check signatories	Manual record of all payments (cashbook) is kept and compared with all bank statements
3. Budget and cash flow planning	Does your organization prepare, monitor, and review a budget?	Budgets are prepared for every proposal but not used for anything else	Budget are prepared to decided how much to spend on all project and organization costs, to ensure there is enough money for all future plans	Budgets are presented annually for approval to a board or representative group of members	Every six months budgets are compared to money already spent and planned cash flows
4. Reporting requirement	Do you provide accurate financial reports on time to donors?	No experience of having to submit donor reports	Reports are submitted but always late and with incomplete information	Some reports get submitted on time but are often incomplete or get queried by the donor	Reports always submitted on time and always meet all donor requirements
5. Suggestions for technical support:					

5 Planning, project design and management

How do you develop, manage and evaluate your projects?

Question		Capacity score			
		1	2	3	4
1. Strategic planning	Does the organization have a long-term strategic plan that was developed with participation of all or most staff and/or stakeholders?	No strategic plan	No strategic plan but other document that describes briefly what the organization's long-term goals and objectives are and how they will be achieved.	Strategic plan (2-5 years) that was developed by a consultant or by a few, senior staff members.	Strategic plan (2-5 years) that was developed in participatory manner, involving most staff and stakeholders.
2. Action plans	Does the organization plan the implementation of its activities, involving all people concerned?	Organization mainly responds to immediate needs, with little planning	Occasional short-term planning, e.g. major events or monthly activities	All on-going activities are normally planned in advance with all staff and volunteers	Annual (work) plans are always developed and agreed with community members, volunteers, staff, and board (if one exists)
3. Project and proposal development	Are you satisfied with the quality of the projects you develop?	Organization responds to immediate needs, with no project framework or funded proposals	Funding has been received for one successful proposal mainly developed by an outsider	Funding has been received for at least one successful proposal in the last three years written and developed within the organization	Funding received for at least two proposals developed internally in the last three years, each with needs assessments, activity plans, and budgets
4. Monitoring and evaluation	Does your organization have a functioning M&E system?	No – organization does not do monitoring and evaluation for any of its activities	Organization mainly responds to immediate donor requests for m&e data, ad hoc, with little planning	Organization has an M&E system, is collecting data on an on-going basis and is reporting to donors	M&E system is documented (i.e. M&E plan is available) and data is used to inform management decisions, and to provide feedback to the community and other stakeholders
5. Suggestions for technical support:					

6 Networking and Advocacy

What relationship does your organization have with other local, national, and international players in HIV/AIDS, and how do you work together to influence others?					
Question		**Capacity score**			
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**
1. Advocacy	Do you carry out advocacy activities to influence those in power to change conditions or policies that form barriers to your work in HIV/AIDS?	Haven't thought about local policies or conditions. Little or no targeted advocacy work done in the past	Have only mobilized general public for support or awareness raising, but nothing targeted at key people or institutions in power	Have developed targeted activities towards certain groups or policies but have lacked evidence, community voice, or strength of numbers	Have done convincing evidence-or consultation-based advocacy, mobilizing allies and using many different communication methods
2. Broader context and potential partnerships	Does your organization work with local government, private, or community organizations?	Work in isolation. No knowledge of local policies, strategies, or work of others	Some knowledge of local government policies and of other local organizations who are mainly seen as 'competitors'	Understand national and local policy and strategies of other organizations working in HIV/AIDS. Have personal contact with a few other relevant people/organizations	Have effective partnerships working together, sharing resources or referring clients to local government, private, or community organizations
3. Suggestions for technical support:					

7 Technical capacity

What experience does the organization already have in HIV work?

Question		Capacity score			
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**
1. Experience working in HIV/AIDS	How extensive is your organization's experience in HIV/AIDS?	No previous experience. This will be the first HIV/AIDS project the organization is implementing.	Some experience. Organization has provided some HIV/AIDS services or implemented activities but not on continuous basis.	Considerable experience. Organization has provided some very specific HIV/AIDS services for several years but not covering a wide spectrum of interventions	Extensive experience.– Organization has been providing HIV/AIDS services for many years, covering a wide spectrum of interventions
2. HIV/AIDS knowledge and skills	Does the organization train all its staff and volunteers in general HIV/AIDS knowledge and the technical skills necessary to do their job?	A few people know basic facts about HIV such as methods of transmission, prevention, care and support.	Staff and volunteers know the skills needed for their tasks.	HIV/AIDS issues well understood such as causes of vulnerability, effects of stigma, availability of treatment, but members got no regular training.	HIV/AIDS issues well understood, staff and volunteers trained for the work they do and often provide training and support to others.
3. Information, Education and Communication (IEC) development and utilization	How do you create messages to raise awareness or change people's thinking?	Do not use any materials, tools or activities.	Use some printed pictures or posters to illustrate messages and keep the attention of a group.	Use materials or activities aimed at specific groups with specific messages, sometimes developed within the organization.	Develop or adapt own materials and ensure their effectiveness by pre-testing or involving targeted groups in the production process.
4. Access to new HIV/AIDS information	How do you encourage and enable members to learn and develop their knowledge about HIV/AIDS?	No mechanisms for improving HIV/AIDS knowledge.	Some leaflets and information is made available. Occasional informal discussions.	Information regularly accessed through a variety of sources and actively distributed among members.	Regular internal discussions to learn and share knowledge; information regularly accessed from a variety of sources; and access to an internet/email connection.
4. Suggestions for technical support:					