

Technical Brief

Nigeria CUBS

Organizational Development: Strengthening the Capacity of Civil Society Organizations to Provide Care for Vulnerable Children

September 2014

This report was made possible through support provided by the US Agency for International Development, under the terms of Award No. GHH-I-00-07-00058-00. The opinions expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the US Agency for International Development.

Nigeria Community-Based support for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (CUBS)
Management Sciences for Health
200 Rivers Edge Drive
Medford, MA 02155
Telephone: (617) 250-9500
www.msh.org



TECHNICAL BRIEF: Community-Based Support for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (CUBS)

Organizational Development: Strengthening the Capacity of Civil Society Organizations to Provide Care for Vulnerable Children

Launched in 2009, and funded by the President's Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Community-Based Support for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (CUBS) project was designed to support the Government of Nigeria's National Priority Agenda for a coordinated approach to address the needs of orphans and vulnerable children. Implemented by Management Sciences for Health (MSH) in partnership with Africare, the five-year project worked in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (FMWASD) and its corresponding state ministries in 11 states: Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta, Ekiti, Enugu, Gombe, Imo, Kebbi, Rivers, Sokoto, and Taraba. The overall goal of the project was to ensure sustainable access to care and support services for orphans and vulnerable children.

This technical brief summarizes how CUBS strengthened the organizational capacity of 38 civil society organizations (CSOs) in Nigeria to ensure effective, sustainable programming for orphans and vulnerable children.

Limited Community Capacity

In the global fight against the HIV and AIDS epidemic, CSOs – including community-based, non-governmental, and faith-based organizations – have been instrumental in HIV prevention, and AIDS care and support. Without these organizations, fewer services would be available to key populations, people in remote areas would have to travel further for services, and more people would be suffering from lack of treatment.

In Nigeria, 17.5 million children are considered vulnerable due to unmet needs for food, shelter, education, protection, or care. Of these, 2.5 million have lost one or both parents to AIDS. While CSOs have been providing services to these children for decades, the majority of organizations have been unable to meet the growing needs of this population. In some cases, a lack of resources is the issue, while in others, a lack of knowledge and capacity limits the CSOs' impact.



Photo by Andrew Esiebo

Without ample resources and skills, CSOs may channel their efforts and funds into interventions that have a limited effect. International donors, while eager to engage these organizations in development projects, are often unable to find CSOs with the capacity needed to make effective use of funding and resources. The result is that some children are reached but millions remain in need.

Strengthening Civil Society

In 2009, the Nigerian Government responded to these and other challenges by working with USAID to implement a project that would provide realistic, holistic, long-term solutions for responding to the needs of the nation's OVC. From 2009 to 2014, the CUBS project strengthened the capacity of 38 CSOs to provide food and nutrition advice, shelter, education, protection, health, and care to OVC and their caregivers. By addressing operational challenges, building skills in strategic planning and other key areas of organizational development, and offering training in service delivery where needed, CUBS helped the CSOs to increase community engagement, inspire local ownership, and implement culturally-sensitive, effective OVC programming.



Developing Organizational Capacity

In the first years of the project, CUBS conducted a needs assessment at each of its CSO partners. The evaluations showed that CSOs were experiencing high staff attrition rates, poor financial management, inadequate documentation, weak technical capacity, lack of referral systems, poor accountability, and insufficient monitoring and evaluation (M&E). These challenges limited the extent of the CSOs' impact in their communities and led to frequent OVC regression and loss to follow-up. To address these challenges, CUBS trained the CSO staff on operations management, program planning, and M&E. Each year, CUBS conducted service delivery trainings where CSO staff developed skills and strategies for addressing OVC needs and the needs of their caregivers. Each CSO received training curricula and resources they could use to support their work. During strategic planning workshops, the CSOs analyzed their organizational capacity, devised strategies to address key challenges, and developed operational plans and budgets. Furthermore, with CUBS support, the CSOs gained expertise in advocacy, fund leveraging, and resource mobilization to support their growth and development. Every week, CUBS visited each CSO to monitor their progress and provide further mentoring and training, as needed. After just four years, CSOs showed the following improvements:

CUBS trained over 30 CSO directors on operational and strategic planning and 200 staff in program management, service delivery, OVC advocacy, and M&E.

All 38 CSOs now have a Board of Directors to oversee operations and strategic planning, provide accountability, and ensure the organization's financial viability.

Formal registration has enhanced the CSOs' credibility, allowed them to open corporate bank accounts, and improved their ability to leverage funding.

CUBS trained the CSOs to advocate for financial support from community members, private organizations, and donors. CSOs all learned to develop strong proposals with realistic budgets, which enabled them to earn over 100 grants to support their programs.

With CUBS support, the 38 CSOs began meeting monthly with the other project-supported CSOs in their state to share experiences and challenges and offer mutual support through cross-training and problem-solving.

CUBS helped CSOs formalize staff job descriptions and salary structures and introduce cross training and performance management systems to enhance employee commitment and motivation. CSOs report that these efforts have improved staff performance.

CUBS trained the CSOs to apply USAID's Generally Acceptable Accounting Principles to guide their use of the project-issued grants and improve their financial management systems, policies, records, and internal controls.

CUBS' trainings on needs analysis and strategic planning helped CSOs develop detailed sustainability plans that include fund leveraging, staff retention, capacity building, and community engagement strategies.

Capacity Area	2009 Baseline		Status in 2014		Percent Change 2009–2014
	No.	%	No.	%	
1. CSOs registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission	8	21%	33	90%	+69%
2. CSOs with a governing board	8	21%	38	100%	+79%
3. CSOs with operational plans	3	5%	31	80%	+75%
4. CSOs with organizational strategic plan	3	5%	31	80%	+75%
5. CSOs with technical capacity	8	21%	36	95%	+74%
6. CSOs able to self-sustain through resource-mobilization and networking	3	7%	38	100%	+93%
7. CSOs involved in CBO support groups	8	21%	38	100%	+79%
8. CSOs with a staff salary structure	3	5%	33	90%	+85%
9. CSOs with finance policies	3	5%	38	100%	+95%
10. CSOs with procurement policies	3	8%	32	84%	+76%
11. CSOs with sustainability plans	3	8%	38	100%	+92%
12. CSOs with capacity improvement plans	0	0	38	100%	+100%



Improved OVC Data Quality

In 2009, CUBS’ data quality assessment revealed that the 38 project-supported CSOs were not accurately documenting information about their beneficiaries or recording inaccurate data. The assessment also showed that many CSOs were reporting data that did not match their registers or activity sign-in sheets. In response, CUBS trained CSO staff to accurately and consistently report all OVC data using the Child Status Index and national OVC data collection tools. By 2014, the CSOs’ data availability had improved from 67 percent to 83 percent and their data validity improved from 49 percent to 74 percent.

As Udak Umoh, Executive Director of WOCLIF, a CUBS-supported CSO explains, “[Before CUBS] there was no documentation [at our organization] because of the belief that God does not record what He does for us and so we should not record our interventions for others. But in 2010, the story, mentality and indeed everything changed. What happened? It was the coming of CUBS, our very first project and donor. Through CUBS, we are now able to document, monitor, report our activities, and even write winning proposals... We now receive funding from the International Centre for AIDS Treatment Programs (ICAP), the Centre for Integrated Health Programs (CIHP), Health Alive Foundation (HAF), and the Global Fund.”

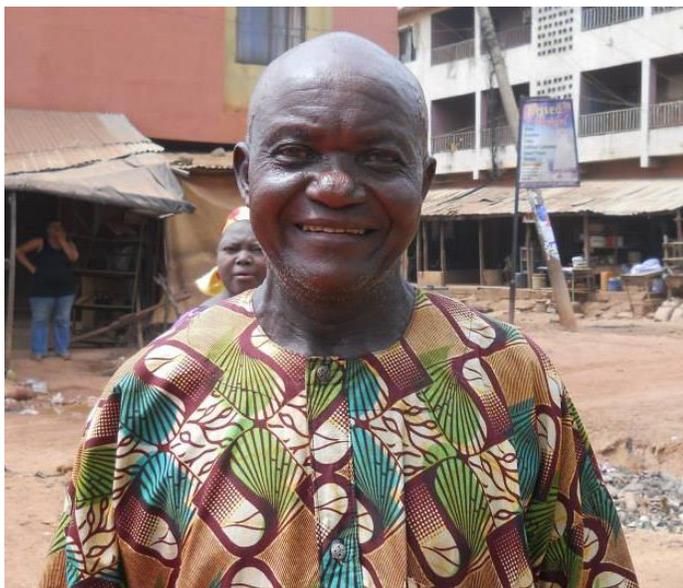


Photo by Jessica Charles

Capacity Development Training Results in New Projects for Enugu State CSO



Photo by Musa Usman

Securing funds from donors and partners can be challenging for Nigerian CSOs, given the nation’s large pool of competing organizations. To attract donor funding, CSOs must have strong proposal writing skills, the ability to defend their proposals, and efficient operational capacity.

The Global Health Awareness Research Foundation (GHARF) is a CSO operating in Enugu State in southeastern Nigeria. For more than three years, CUBS provided capacity building support to GHARF through proposal writing workshops, technical training, and regular mentorship and on-site supervision visits.

In 2012, FHI 360 selected GHARF to help implement the Strengthening Integrated Delivery of HIV/AIDS Services (SIDHAS) project.

“With MSH assessments, mentoring, training and support through the CUBS project, we were able to develop standard policy documents for our organization, which greatly influenced our bidding success,” said Juliet Agu, GHARF’s finance officer.

“We also strongly relied on MSH’s expert guidance and capacity development on monitoring and evaluation, financial reporting, and community development knowledge as a guide for writing our proposal and it worked for us,” said Ms. Agu.

In addition to the FHI 360 project, GHARF’s improved capacity helped the CSO receive a PEPFAR grant to further support its OVC program.

Proposal Writing and Organizational Development Workshops Yield Results

The KAN Development Foundation (KAN) is one of 31 CSOs that participated in CUBS' proposal writing and organizational development workshops. During these workshops, CSO staff learned to develop strong technical proposals and prepare realistic budgets. They also learned to apply USAID's Generally Acceptable Accounting Principles in the management of donor funds and to improve their overall presentation of financial statements and accounting records.

"Before the CUBS training, KAN had no focus, no definite thematic area. We did anything that came our way. But the proposal writing workshop helped us to stay focused," said Kizito Andah, the Director of KAN.

Since participating in the workshop, KAN's new proposal development capacity has enabled the organization to receive additional funding from USAID's Enhancing Nigeria Capacity for AIDS Prevention (ENCAP) project. Mr. Andah reports that CUBS training has also helped him make better use of these funds.

"We ordinarily would have spent 15,000 naira (US \$100) for painting our office," explains Mr. Andah, "but thanks to the CUBS organizational development workshop, we now have a procurement policy which helped us to spend only 4,000 naira (US \$30)."

Mr. Andah has also noticed improved staff commitment and motivation since CUBS taught him to formalize KAN's human resource policies.

"[Before the workshop] the salary structure was just in my head. But now our travel policy, assets management, personnel, and finance policies are all in place," he says.

KAN reports that its improved operations and efficiency is helping it to reach more beneficiaries. Prior to the training, KAN provided services to approximately 42 OVC per month. Now KAN is serving more than 300 with counseling and basic care services.

Photo by Jessica Charles



Maintaining Momentum

When CUBS closes in 2014, the project will leave behind 38 CSOs that are equipped and inspired to care for OVC in their communities. These CSOs now know how to counsel OVC and their caregivers, raise funds to support their programs, and plan for staff capacity development, organizational growth, and long-term program sustainability. The CSOs have reached more than 51,000 OVC with care and support services and will continue to expand these achievements for years to come.

Irene Abdou Photography



For more information, please contact:

Dr. Zipporah Kpamor, MD, MPH
Management Sciences for Health
Project Director, CUBS, Nigeria
zkpamor@msh.org