

An introduction to the themes contained within:

HIV/AIDS NGO/CBO

Support Toolkit

A CD-ROM and Website

Version 2.0



CD-ROM Version 2.0 – features over 100 new resources
(attached inside)



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An Introduction to the HIV/AIDS NGO/CBO Support Toolkit

Welcome to the International HIV/AIDS Alliance's HIV/AIDS NGO/CBO Support Toolkit – Version 2.0!

What is the International HIV/AIDS Alliance?

The International HIV/AIDS Alliance (Alliance) is an international non-governmental organisation that supports communities in developing countries to make a significant contribution to HIV prevention, AIDS care and to the provision of support to children affected by the epidemic. Since its establishment in 1993, the Alliance has provided financial and technical support to NGOs and CBOs from more than 40 countries.

Introduction to NGO/CBO support

Increasing attention around the world is being paid to 'scaling up' responses to HIV/AIDS. As part of such efforts, systems and programmes are being established and expanded to provide funding and technical support to local NGOs and CBOs for HIV/AIDS work, and to promote co-ordination and partnership between NGOs and governments.

What is the HIV/AIDS NGO/CBO Support Toolkit?

The **HIV/AIDS NGO/CBO Support Toolkit** is an electronic library of resources about NGO/CBO support that have been collated by the Alliance from a wide range of organisations, based on the understanding that there are many viable approaches to NGO/CBO support programming. These resources are accessible on **CD-ROM** (attached on the inside front cover) as well as at the following **website address**: www.aidsalliance.org/ngosupport.

The **HIV/AIDS NGO/CBO Support Toolkit** brings together resources for people who are establishing, managing or studying such HIV/AIDS NGO/CBO support programmes. This toolkit refers to NGO support programmes as either a system of interrelated and co-ordinated support functions provided by different organisations (as with many Government-led NGO support programmes), or a programme which is implemented by one organisation which provides a range of functions (as with many NGO-led programmes). While the toolkit is primarily designed for those establishing or improving

programmes that aim to deliver both funding and technical support to local NGOs and CBOs, many of its resources will also be of interest to organisations that provide only funding or only training.

The toolkit systematically addresses a wide range of themes related to NGO/CBO support programming – for example, situation assessments, monitoring and evaluation, technical support and grant provision. In addition to some **500 resources** that can be downloaded using the toolkit, each theme and its sub-themes have an **introduction** which highlight key issues to consider for NGO/CBO support programming. The publication you are now reading contains all **69 introductions**.

How do I use the toolkit?

- The **HIV/AIDS NGO/CBO Support Toolkit** is divided into eight themes: an introduction to NGO/CBO support and seven other themes. Each of the seven themes covers one major area of NGO/CBO support work: strategic planning; selecting NGO/CBO partners; project design; selection and grant programming; technical support; policy, advocacy and learning exchange; monitoring and evaluation; administration and finance. Each theme is then divided into more detailed sub-themes. We recommend that you read through **Introducing NGO/CBO Support**, before moving on to other areas of the toolkit.
- Each of the eight major themes is broken down into sub-themes. Each include a brief **introduction** with some key issues to consider, followed by a list of resources that can be accessed by clicking on the titles. We recommend you read through the introductions before accessing the linked resources, unless you have used this toolkit before.

An Introduction to the HIV/AIDS NGO/CBO Support Toolkit

- The resources provided fall into four categories identified by their icons:



Information – reports and articles such as documents introducing HIV situation assessments



Tool – whole training manuals or individual participatory activities such as tools to develop a strategic plan or advocacy strategy



Example – template documents such as grant reporting forms and contracts



Website – websites identified as useful and relevant resources in themselves.



New – this indicates that this is a new resource

The following details are also provided for each resource: the title, date, brief content description, organisation of origin, number of pages, document size and type of document – for example, PDF, MSWord, Powerpoint, etc.

- The resources can be viewed on screen, printed or saved to your computer. Please note that copyright restrictions apply to all resources in the toolkit unless otherwise stated on the documents. If you use Alliance resources for your work, please acknowledge the Alliance as the source. Alliance resources can be recognised by the following icon:  and ordered by clicking the **Order CD-ROM and resources** button.

- There are three ways to find information and resources in this toolkit:
 - ➔ by reading through relevant themed sections, e.g. Technical Support
 - ➔ by using the table of contents on the left-hand side of the page
 - ➔ by using the search function (for a specific theme or document).

- Several themes within the toolkit are linked together where they overlap or are explored in more detail in another area of the toolkit. You will find these links at the end of the **introductions**, before the list of resources. If you click on a link, you will be taken to that part of the toolkit. To return to where you were, click the **Back** button.

The **HIV/AIDS NGO/CBO Support Toolkit** is a resource that will be constantly updated on the website, with a new CD-ROM version being produced periodically. This is the second version of the toolkit – if you have any feedback or suggestions for resources that we could add to help improve the toolkit, please click on the **Your questions and feedback** button.

If you are accessing the toolkit by the web and would like to order a CD-ROM which will allow you to have quicker access to the resources in the toolkit, please click on the **Order CD-ROM and resources** button.

The Alliance would like to thank the many organisations that kindly provided resources for inclusion on the website and/or CD-ROM.

The Alliance has received support to develop this toolkit from the **United Kingdom Government's Department for International Development (DFID)** and the **United States Agency for International Development (USAID)**.

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Since the 1990s, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) engaged in the response to HIV/AIDS. (We include private voluntary organisations (PVOs) and groups of people living with HIV/AIDS in all references to NGOs and CBOs.)

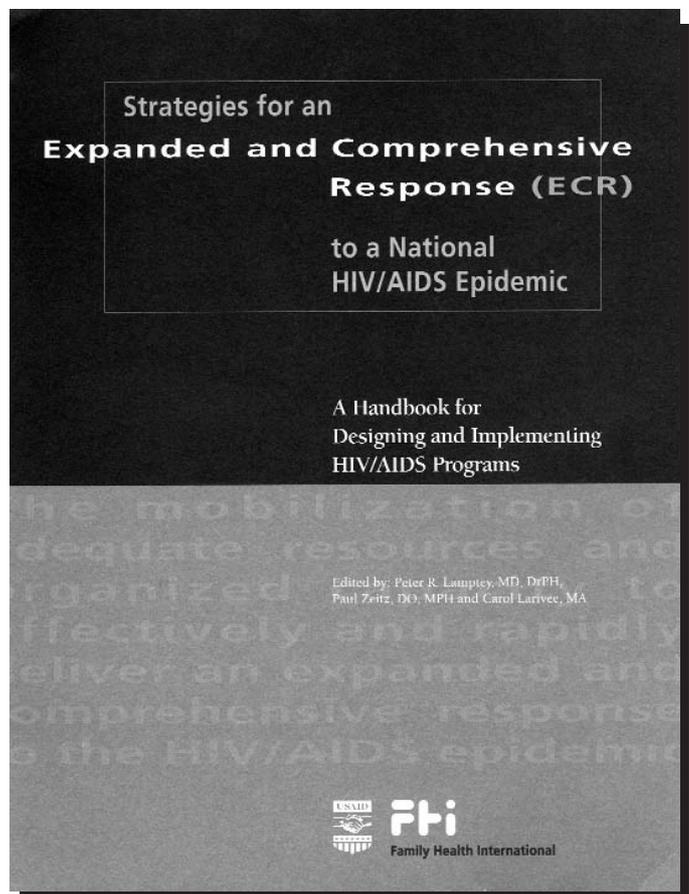
NGOs and CBOs throughout the world have played a critical role – often in the frontline of prevention, care and impact mitigation – in providing essential services where they are lacking and accessing marginalised and vulnerable communities not reached by government. However, although there is recognition of the importance of NGOs and CBOs in the response to HIV/AIDS, there is also acknowledgement that the capacity of these organisations and the quality of programmes that they implement can be variable. More than ever, there is a need for NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) to develop and strengthen the organisational and technical capacity of NGOs and CBOs to maximise their potential.

There is no single model for NGO/CBO support programmes. NSPs vary widely in both structure and function according to the context and needs of their constituents. Expectations of NGOs and CBOs, along with technologies and paradigms, are constantly shifting. NSPs need to think about maintaining their relevance and adapting to these changing working environments.

Some organisations are purely NSPs, whose sole function is to support NGOs and CBOs. Others are service delivery organisations that have incorporated NSP functions. NSPs may be HIV specific, while others have a broader remit that includes further aspects of health and development. As the HIV epidemic evolves and NGOs and CBOs have responded to the new challenges, so too has the range of organisations and institutions that provide NSP functions and roles expanded. Increasingly, NGOs, donors, businesses, governments and multilateral organisations are taking on NGO/CBO support functions or supporting

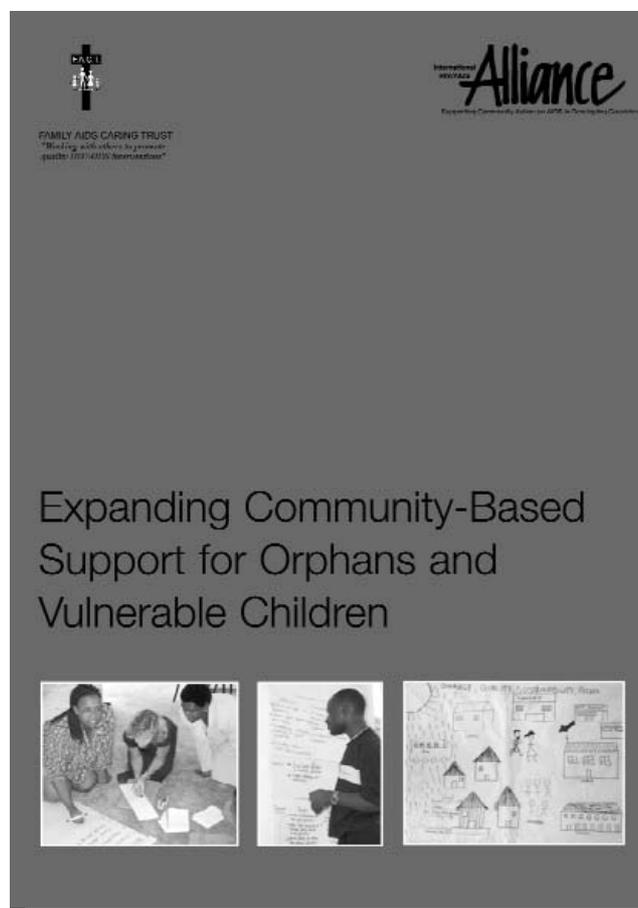
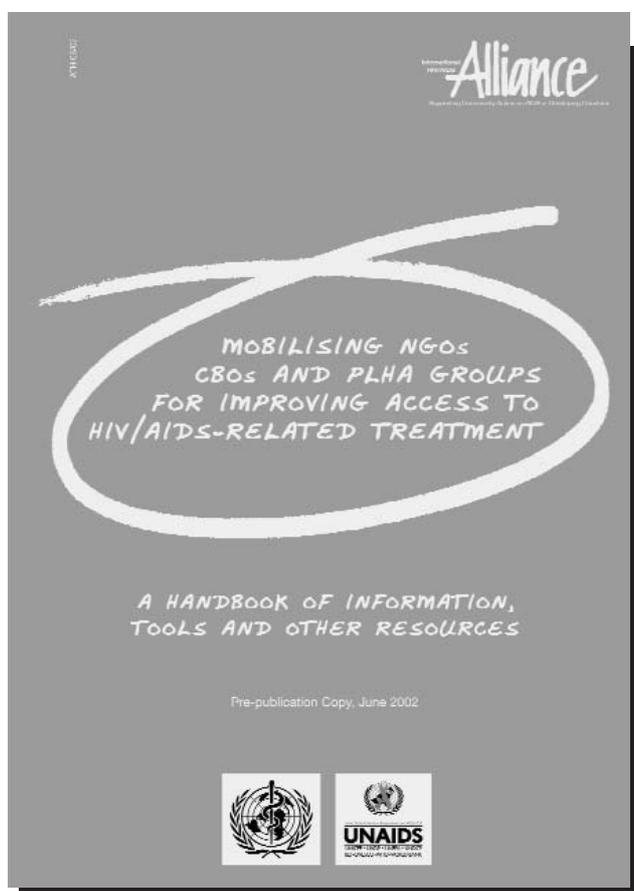
established NSPs to expand their work. In some cases this may involve NSPs setting up intermediary organisations to help build the capacity of NGOs and CBOs. The diversity of types of NSPs reflects the range of types of organisations and needs that they support.

This section offers an overview of NGO/CBO support, including the role and functions of NSPs and some of the different types of NSPs currently operating. Some of these subjects are covered in more detail in other sections of the resource.



1.1 Role of NGO/CBO support programmes

Central to NGO/CBO support work is the mobilising of broader NGO/CBO involvement in prevention, care and impact alleviation, and the capacity building of NGOs and CBOs engaged in those activities. In addition, an increasingly important role for NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) is collective action on HIV/AIDS by bringing NGOs and CBOs to work together, as well as with governments and other sectors.



1.1 Role of NGO/CBO support programmes

1.1.1 Mobilising broader NGO/CBO involvement in prevention, care and impact alleviation

Mobilising NGO and CBO involvement in prevention, care and impact alleviation requires two core components: support for effective implementation and support for scaling up.

The first component involves encouraging and supporting NGOs and CBOs to implement prevention, care and impact alleviation projects. These projects can cover a wide range of programmes, from awareness and behaviour change interventions and community mobilisation to the actual provision of services such as voluntary counselling and testing (VCT), and sexually transmitted infections (STI) services. The quality of these interventions is key to their effectiveness and impact.

NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) have a critical role in supporting NGOs and CBOs to implement quality, integrated approaches which recognise that prevention, care and impact alleviation are all essential and mutually reinforcing. Additionally, by working within a national HIV/AIDS strategy, NSPs can support NGOs and CBOs to identify and respond to gaps in the national response, particularly with respect to highly affected and marginalised populations.

The second component concerns expanding or scaling up effective action on HIV/AIDS. Scale-up in practice means that more groups become involved and a wider range of services is offered, ensuring the greatest possible reach. NSPs can contribute to scaling up both local and national responses to HIV/AIDS by supporting the scaling up of their partner organisations' activities. This can be achieved in various ways, including:

- expanding organisational size and/or scope
- using cascade and multiplication models in which intensive training and programming can be delivered – for example, training of trainers, where relatively small groups of individuals are trained, who in turn go on to train larger numbers of people; or cascade programming, such as models of provision of care and support

- identifying effective programme approaches that can be adapted or replicated by others through documentation and communication work, exchange visits and other means
- building strategic partnerships
- integrating HIV/AIDS into reproductive health and general health and development work
- catalysing and supporting others through technical, organisational and financial support
- decentralising services so that decision-making and co-ordination is transferred from a central location to a more local level.

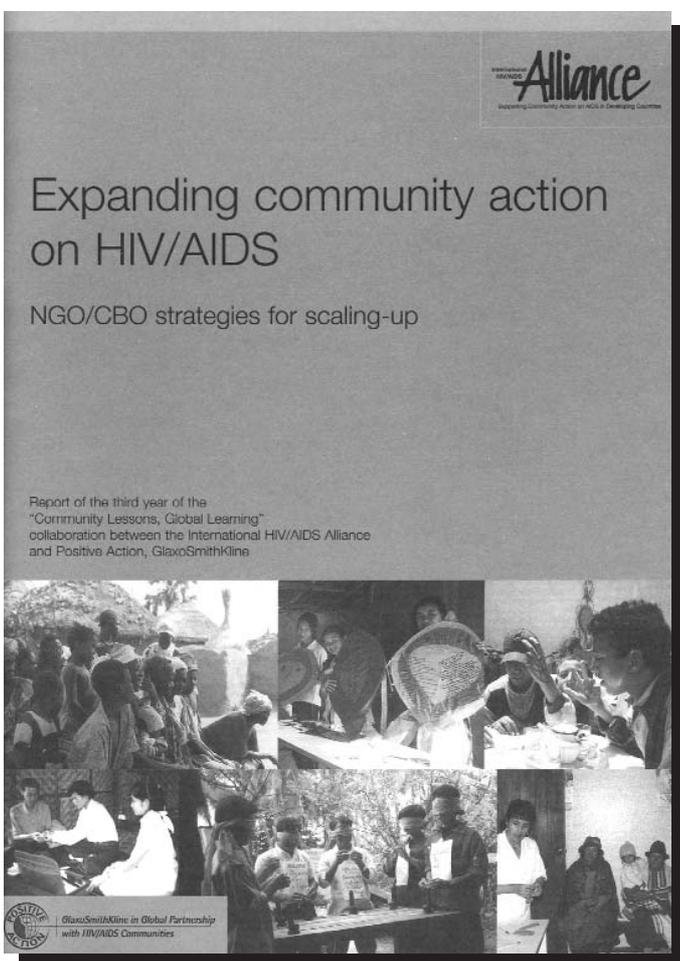
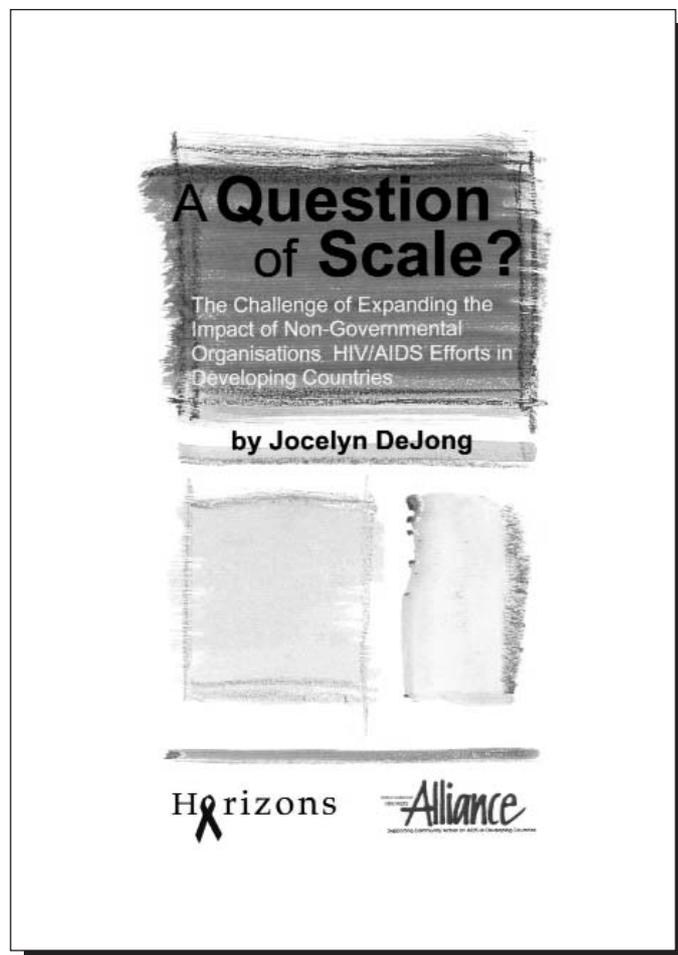
Issues to consider

- ➔ NSPs can actively promote scale-up as a vital aspect of the global response to HIV/AIDS and facilitate the exchange of information on the scale-up of NGO/CBO HIV/AIDS work among local, national and international stakeholders.
- ➔ NSPs should ensure that in mobilising broader NGO/CBO participation, attention is paid to increasing not only the quantity but also the quality of the response. This requires that NGO/CBO mobilisation strategies are focused and attain good coverage. Programmes should be appropriate to the local context and key populations, of a consistently high standard, sustainable and have measurable impact.
- ➔ A key strategy for the scale-up of HIV/AIDS work is the integration of HIV/AIDS into broader development work. This means that NSPs must work with and provide support to a wide range of organisations – reproductive health, micro-finance, development, etc. – with a broad range of skills, attitudes and perhaps interest in HIV/AIDS work.
- ➔ NSPs may want to pay particular attention to jointly defining and discussing scale-up at the start of their relationships with NGOs and CBOs. This should ensure that both sides have a clear idea of existing capacity and a common understanding in terms of the potential for scale-up work in the future.

1.1 Role of NGO/CBO support programmes

1.1.1 Mobilising broader NGO/CBO involvement in prevention, care and impact alleviation

- ➔ Sometimes the pressure to scale up HIV/AIDS work can compromise the comparative advantage of an NGO or CBO by pushing them to expand their work into unfamiliar areas or communities before they are ready.
- ➔ As programmes are scaled up, there is often a tendency for NSPs and donors to overload some NGOs and CBOs, particularly those who are doing good work or showing potential. NSPs need to take into consideration the absorptive capacities of different NGOs and CBOs and ensure that they are not stretched beyond their programmatic or organisational capacity.
- ➔ NSPs need to recognise that competition often occurs among NGOs and CBOs, as well as amongst NSPs. NSPs can play an important role in helping to promote and foster constructive relationships among their partner organisations.



1.1 Role of NGO/CBO support programmes

1.1.2 Capacity building

Capacity building in HIV/AIDS work describes a process whereby individuals, organisations and institutions are supported to play an appropriate and effective role in the response to the epidemic.

Capacity building is not just about addressing weaknesses in the short term. It is also a long-term process, in which existing strengths are enhanced to achieve mission and programmatic goals, and the NGO/CBO partner is equipped to respond to changing contexts. To achieve this requires an integrated and holistic approach to capacity building that acknowledges the importance of participation, strategic direction, technical HIV-related skills, knowledge and attitudes, and good organisational structures and procedures.

Capacity building can occur at the individual, organisational or institutional level. In the context of NGO/CBO support work, this can encompass a wide range of activities, including: providing CBO staff with access to technical support on HIV-related topics; helping an NGO establish an accounting system; and supporting the NGO sector to represent community perspectives in international fora.

Organisations active around HIV/AIDS range from small CBOs composed of a few individuals to large NGOs operating at the national level. Understanding the difference between NGOs and CBOs and recognising their comparative strengths and weaknesses is important for successful NGO/CBO support work.

For example, an NGO working in a slum community and a CBO of slum dwellers may be trying to achieve the same result in HIV prevention, but each brings different skills and perspectives. The NGO may be more experienced in project design and planning and have established linkages and referral systems with other stakeholders, but it may lack insight and access to the community. The CBO may not have previously balanced a budget but can generate community interest. An NGO/CBO support programme (NSP) needs to help identify the

strengths and weaknesses of each and fill the gaps in capacity, whether technical or organisational.

It is also important to recognise that there are differing capacities within the NGO/CBO sector itself. Organisations with greater capacity are in the best position to provide support to their peers. Increasingly, these 'strong' organisations, many of which are implementing organisations, are playing an intermediary role by providing support to other organisations in their geographical or technical area.

The issue of accountability is central to capacity building. With more money being invested in programmes implemented by NGOs and CBOs, donors are asking for – and expecting – a higher level of accountability than was previously required. It is therefore the duty of NSPs both to be accountable for their capacity-building support and to support their partner organisations in developing the skills and systems that will allow them a higher level of accountability. A culture of openness and continual learning is essential for NSPs if they are to encourage similar processes within their partner organisations.

Issues to consider

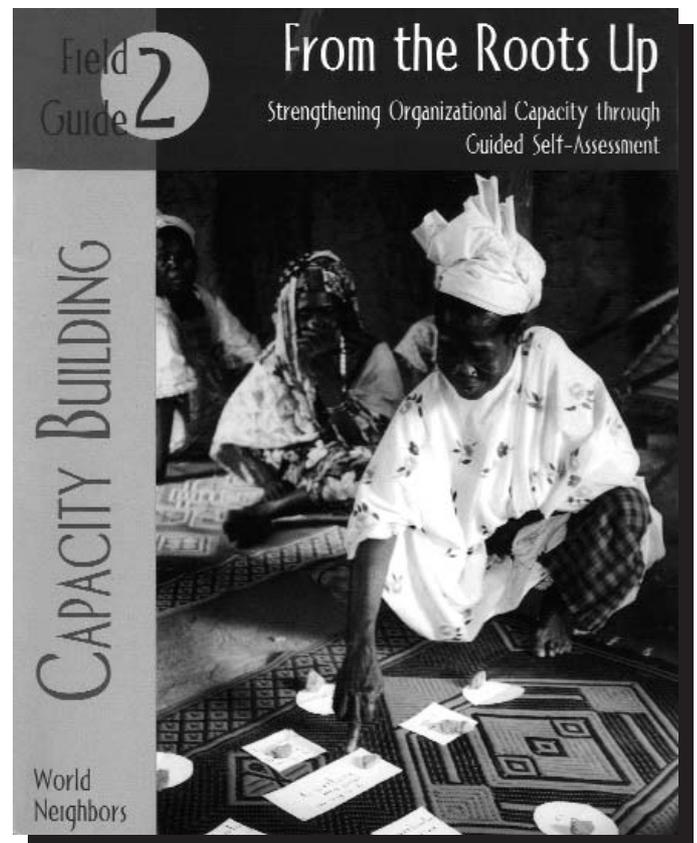
- NGOs and CBOs often have a high turnover of staff. This can affect capacity-building work undertaken by an NSP, as individuals whose skills have been strengthened and developed are lost from the organisation. However, this needs to be recognised as a good thing in some cases, since staff may have moved on to positions in higher status organisations where they will have an opportunity to initiate significant positive change. Where staff turnover is due to HIV-related sickness, however, NSPs can help them to mobilise resources to provide medical benefits.
- There is a wide range of capacities both among and between NGOs and CBOs. By assessing current capacities and jointly identifying needs and priority areas for capacity building, NSPs will be more successful in delivering appropriate technical support. However, NSPs need to find a

1.1 Role of NGO/CBO support programmes

1.1.2 Capacity building

balance between responding to needs identified by partners and being proactive in priority areas not identified by their partners – for example, financial control systems, organisational fundraising, leadership and staff participation support.

- The urgency and scale of the epidemic has inevitably placed greater demands on NSPs, particularly from donors, to produce more results and show visible impact. There is a tension between the need to show immediate results and impact and the recognition that capacity building is a long-term process.
- It is often cheaper and easier, especially in terms of technical support and administration, to support an existing NGO or CBO programme rather than help them design a new programme. It is important to weigh the pros and cons of this approach. What is easier for an NSP may not necessary translate into work that is focused and of high quality, that has coverage and is sustainable, and ultimately has impact.
- One of the greatest challenges for NSPs is how to measure 'built' capacity. Many NSPs find it easy to monitor the **process** of capacity building, but measuring the **impact** of capacity building is more difficult. Indicators for successful capacity building are often linked to the effectiveness of partner organisations. It can be difficult to separate the potential for action on the part of partner organisations from the action itself. Despite these difficulties, clear objectives and indicators developed at the beginning of a programme can help to make monitoring and evaluation of capacity building easier and more achievable.



1.1 Role of NGO/CBO support programmes

1.1.3 Bringing together NGOs and CBOs for collective action

The relationship of NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) with their partner organisations provides them with opportunities and a forum to bring together NGOs and CBOs for joint activities to increase their collective strength, cost-effectiveness, co-ordination and collaboration.

There are several practical advantages for NGOs and CBOs in joining forces. These include collaborating in order to provide a comprehensive package of services for populations key to the epidemic and also collaborating around advocacy issues. No single organisation can address all the needs of a community. NSPs can bring NGOs and CBOs together for joint planning to identify gaps and try to ensure that all services are being addressed.

In terms of joint action for advocacy, the combined strength of several organisations, with their various skills, expertise and influential contacts, is likely to carry more weight than any single organisation. Additionally, individual NGOs and CBOs can focus on their priority advocacy issues, knowing that they can rely on the mutual support of other organisations within that network.

Examples of key advocacy work that has had a greater impact through joint action include: improving access to treatment; promoting comprehensive and integrated prevention, care and impact alleviation programmes; and emphasising the importance of the involvement of people with HIV in programming.

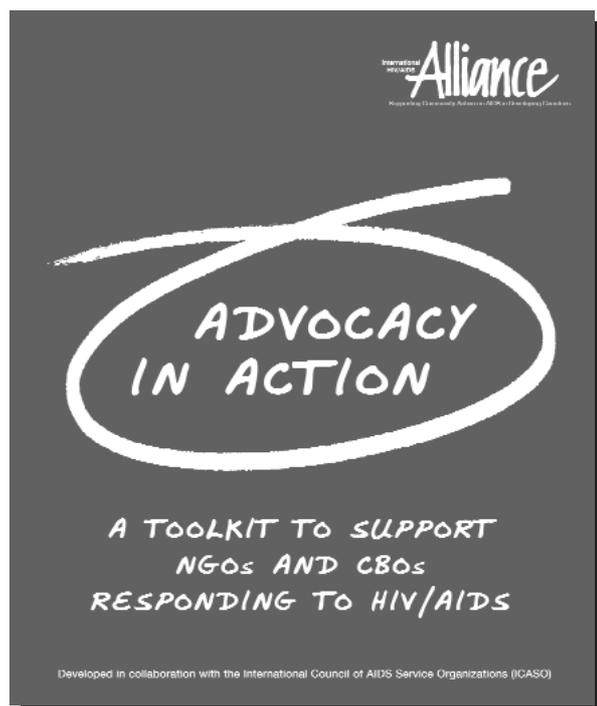
Similarly, the potential impact for NSPs and partner organisations to contribute to research collectively is far greater than the sum of their individual efforts.

Economies of scale enable NSPs to procure condoms, test kits and other commodities in bulk, resulting in a more reliable and affordable supply for their partner organisations. This can greatly increase the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of programmes and allow for the scaling up of activities.

By encouraging and facilitating organisations to co-ordinate and collaborate with each other and in partnership with national mechanisms, NSPs can help reduce duplication of effort and wastage of scarce resources. Collaboration with other stakeholders will also help NSPs and their partner organisations to identify and respond to strategic gaps in national responses, ensuring that under-served regions and populations are catered for.

Issues to consider

- ➔ The role of a co-ordinator is a very sensitive one, and NSPs should be aware of the many concerns of organisations. NSPs need to respect the independence and autonomy of individual NGOs and CBOs and understand the complex relationships between them, including the competitive nature – for funding and otherwise – of many of these relationships.
- ➔ The legitimacy of an NSP's representational role will depend on the mandate of its constituents. An NSP can help to develop this mandate by fostering relationships with NGOs and CBOs that are based on consultation, mutual respect and openness.

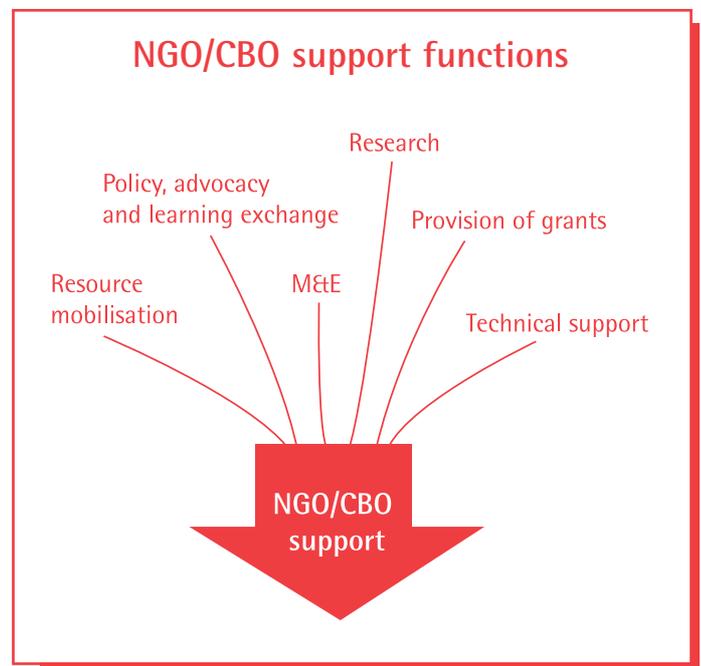


1.2 Functions of NGO/CBO support

There are a range of functions undertaken by NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) that aim to improve the effectiveness and impact of NGOs and CBOs. In different sections of this resource, the following functions are addressed: **technical support; provision of grants; policy, advocacy and learning exchange; monitoring and evaluation; research; and resource mobilisation.**

Although these functions together enable an organisation to fulfil its role as an NGO/CBO support programme, this does not mean that all NSPs need, or do, take on all of these functions. As the epidemic evolves and NGOs and CBOs are faced with new challenges, the demands grow on NSPs to provide more support services. NSPs are increasingly required to provide a more comprehensive package of support functions as well as increase their competence across a wider range of issues.

However, a greater number of organisations (both government and non-governmental) now provide technical and financial support to community-level organisations, resulting in a greater pool of expertise and resources from which to draw. Furthermore, greater collaboration among stakeholders has resulted in NGOs and CBOs increasingly being supported through a variety of mechanisms that may involve more than one NSP. An additional emerging role for the NSP, therefore, is collaboration with other NSPs to ensure complementarity of approaches and coverage.



1.2 Functions of NGO/CBO support

1.2.1 Technical support

Technical support refers to input provided to strengthen the programmatic work of individuals and organisations. This learning covers: technical aspects of HIV/AIDS, such as HIV transmission and prevention, sexually transmitted infection diagnosis, testing and counselling; programming areas such as participatory community assessments, project design and monitoring and evaluation; and organisational development such as governance, resource mobilisation, documentation, management and administration.

In addition to support on technical and organisational issues, NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) may also provide moral support and mentoring to their partner organisations. Although largely intangible, moral support and mentoring can be a vital part of the NSP-NGO/CBO relationship.

It is important that HIV-related technical support is combined with organisational development in a comprehensive package, with each component serving to support and complement each other. Too often there is a focus on just the technical and programming aspects of HIV work, and organisational development is neglected. Organisational development is a long-term process which needs to be addressed early on in an NSP's relationship with its partner organisations to ensure that they have the structures and management that can support their programmatic goals.

Past experience has shown that learning – and in particular adult learning – is most effectively achieved through an interactive process, with an emphasis on a mixture of participatory techniques, direct guidance and information provision. By adopting this approach and combining theory with practice, NSPs can help NGOs and CBOs to improve the quality and impact of their interventions.

Issues to consider

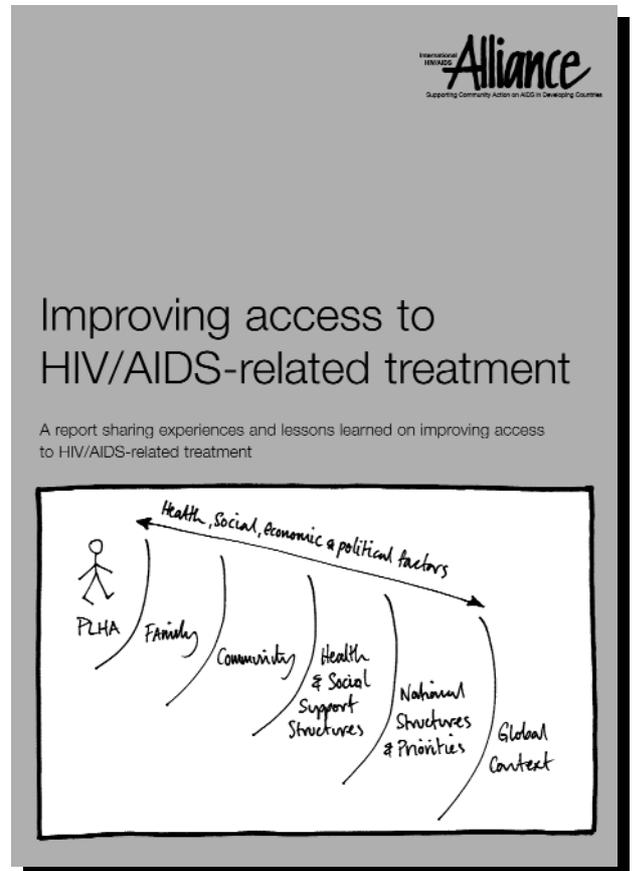
- NSPs need to identify technical support needs jointly with their partner NGOs and CBOs so that all parties agree on what needs to be done and why. The provision of technical support, and the extent to which an NSP can proactively advise on the kind of technical support that might be required, is affected by whether financial assistance is available. NSPs that just provide training often take on more of a service provision role rather than the sort of a long-term partnership that allows for mutual trust and learning.
- The credibility of an NSP frequently rests upon the skills of its staff. Therefore, it is important for NSPs to pay attention to and invest in building the technical skills of their own staff, as well as provide them with access to learning through doing. It is ideal if an NSP is also a service provider/implementer because staff then have the chance to update skills continually through hands-on experience.
- Information, technology and policies relating to HIV are continually changing, and NSPs need to ensure that the information and technical support they provide is up-to-date. Some recent examples include: new drug regimes for prevention of mother-to-child transmission; greater accessibility of treatments and drugs in many developing countries; and new funding initiatives such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria.
- NSPs need to adapt resource materials to fit the local context so that they are culturally and linguistically appropriate and relevant. This adaptation is best done with the participation of partner NGOs/CBOs and the communities they serve.
- In the past, technical support has often been a one-way flow from 'experts' from the developed countries to those in developing countries. This can be very expensive and sometimes not relevant to the local situation. By identifying and building up local expertise, and by using technical support mechanisms that draw on the

1.2 Functions of NGO/CBO support

1.2.1 Technical support

knowledge and skills of participants, NSPs can help to ensure capacity building that is relevant, ongoing and sustainable.

- ➔ NSPs have an important role in identifying and recognising the skills and expertise of their partner NGOs and CBOs and facilitating their exchange. By supporting exchange visits, study tours and workshops for sharing experiences, NSPs can help organisations to learn from each other in both technical and programmatic areas of HIV/AIDS work.
- ➔ Technical support, whether through direct provision or identifying alternative appropriate sources, is time-consuming, and intensive work requires considerable human resources. NSPs should keep this in mind and be realistic when developing and budgeting for their workplans.
- ➔ Often organisational development support is provided by agencies that do not specialise in specific programmatic areas. However, in many cases organisational development support is more efficient and fruitful if rooted in specific programmatic contexts, using content-specific models that are easily understandable by NGOs and CBOs working in the relevant fields.



1.2 Functions of NGO/CBO support

1.2.2 Provision of grants

Many NGOs and CBOs receive grants from NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs). These NSPs are mainly international or national NGOs or foundations. Increasingly, governments are providing financial resources to NGOs and CBOs by making grants through an intermediary NSP or directly through a government body with NSP functions.

Grants are given to NGOs and CBOs for a variety of HIV prevention, care and impact mitigation programmes:

- awareness-raising and community mobilisation
- service delivery – for example, sexually transmitted infection (STI) clinics, community care and support, harm reduction with injecting drug users
- operations research, community or country assessments or systematic documentation and analysis
- development of training and resource materials.

The size, number and duration of grants can vary greatly depending on the availability of resources and strategies undertaken by NSPs.

NSPs often combine ongoing technical support with the provision of grants to help ensure that NGOs and CBOs are equipped with the skills and knowledge to implement the grant successfully.

Issues to consider

- ➔ There is a possibility of NSPs being regarded by their partner organisations as 'gatekeepers' to resources. To help avoid this, it is important for NSPs to be transparent in their rationale for allocating resources.
- ➔ Efficient and effective grant-making requires systems for receiving proposals, assessing them and contracting partners.
- ➔ NSPs should help NGOs and CBOs be accountable to their donors, particularly in the area of financial management.

- ➔ NSPs need to communicate clearly to potential partners the timeframe and limits for financial support. This will help to manage the expectations of partner organisations and allow them to plan for a time when funding ceases.
- ➔ To help avoid problems of dependency, NSPs need to encourage and support partner organisations to widen their resource base.
- ➔ By establishing an NGO or CBO to fill a given niche or need, NSPs should be aware that this new NGO or CBO may collapse when funding stops unless attention is paid to its long-term sustainability.
- ➔ As donors often place emphasis on service delivery by NGOs and CBOs, NSPs may want to consider covering administrative costs within their grants. This will help partner organisations bridge the gap between core funds needed for the running of the organisation and funds for project activities.
- ➔ Attention should be paid to assessing the cost-effectiveness of interventions. This requires that there is increased understanding, skills and information devoted to costing programme activities, particularly for those NGOs and CBOs new to costing activities and those involved with the scaling up of prevention, care and impact mitigation initiatives.

1.2 Functions of NGO/CBO support

1.2.3 Policy, advocacy and learning exchange

As intermediary organisations working with different sectors (NGO/CBO, government and donors) at multiple levels (local, national and international), NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) are well placed to contribute to policy development and implement advocacy initiatives.

NSPs have an important function in ensuring that NGO/CBO and community perspectives and experiences are heard during policy-making processes, and that policies are grounded in field-based experiences and research. By drawing on the expertise and experiences of their partner organisations, NSPs can ensure that donors have greater understanding of the social, economic and cultural aspects of the epidemic and its effects on individuals and communities. Equally, by monitoring the external policy environment, keeping up-to-date with national, regional and global trends, and translating and disseminating this information to partner NGOs and CBOs, NSPs can help partner organisations to become aware of and respond to the changing pressures and broader-level contexts that affect their work.

NSPs are in a good position to be able to work with others to keep HIV/AIDS on the agenda, particularly at times when other priorities are competing for scarce resources. They can act as advocates for their partner organisations by promoting their work and by calling for their recognition and inclusion in the global response to HIV/AIDS.

NSPs are uniquely able to facilitate the exchange of information and lessons learned between partner organisations, government and other stakeholders to enhance local, national and international knowledge on HIV/AIDS. By developing a variety of approaches to systematise their learning and by sharing functions, NSPs can greatly widen their impact beyond work with their direct partners.

Information exchange between partner organisations can help NGOs and CBOs learn about each other's programmes and generate new ideas and approaches. Similarly, new information, strategies, technologies

and examples of good practice from collective global knowledge on HIV/AIDS can be adapted by local NGOs and CBOs to provide quality services that are cost-effective and efficient.

Increasing the access to and use of information and resources by NGOs and CBOs is a critical function of NSPs. As intermediary organisations working with different sectors (NGO/CBO, government and donors) at multiple levels (local, national and international), NSPs are well placed to encourage the exchange of learning between sectors and across countries and regions.

Issues to consider

- NSPs need constantly to keep in mind whom they aim to represent and the legitimacy of this role.
- The dynamic nature of HIV/AIDS requires that information exchange and learning should be an ongoing process for both NSPs and their partner organisations.
- NSPs need to be proactive in recognising that learning is a two-way process and ensuring that partner organisations' input and feedback is taken on board.
- It is essential that information exchange and learning is integrated and linked to strengthening NSP programme support work.
- It is important for NSPs to appreciate that information provision is only one component of NGO/CBO support provision, as at times it may be mistakenly assumed to be synonymous with NGO/CBO support.
- While NSPs should encourage exchange of information and learning between NGOs and CBOs, they should also consider becoming themselves involved in the exchange process in order to ensure the quality and applicability of information and lessons learned.
- NSPs can have an important role in influencing national information provision to become more NGO/CBO-focused.

1.2 Functions of NGO/CBO support

1.2.4 Monitoring and evaluation

NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) are accountable to different stakeholders for their roles, responsibilities and relationships. The urgency of the epidemic and the relative scarcity of resources means that more than ever there is a need and expectation for NSPs to monitor and evaluate critically and impartially not only their partners' work but also their own.

NSPs need to monitor their partner organisations' progress in implementing projects and engage in evaluation of such specific programmatic issues as community mobilisation, linkages and referrals to public and private sector service delivery, and harm reduction interventions for populations most important to epidemic dynamics (for example, injecting drug users and sex workers).

Additionally, NSPs need to monitor and evaluate the technical support and capacity-building processes that form the core of their activities. To do this requires the effective integration of monitoring and evaluation across all of their programmes, with attention paid to enhancing their internal capacity and systems to carry out monitoring and evaluation activities.

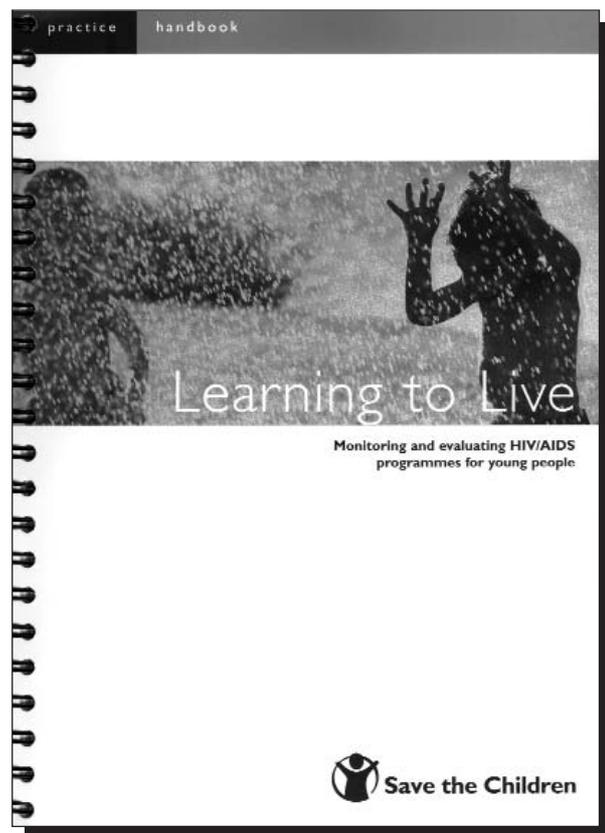
NSPs also have a role in contributing to national evaluation efforts. By collaborating with national authorities in national impact evaluations, NSPs can use monitoring and evaluation data from their programmes to assess the impact of national HIV/AIDS strategies.

Issues to consider

→ NSPs need to integrate all the rationales for carrying out monitoring and evaluation. For example, an important justification for monitoring and evaluation efforts (besides being a justification of spending) is their powerful role in improving support and service provision, upgrading and tailoring approaches, strategies and activities, and developing and introducing new programme elements. A major task for NSPs is that of nurturing the culture of internal

evaluation as part of everyday programming. They have a role in encouraging this learning to be applied in order to benefit the programmes directly rather than to provide results to external stakeholders.

- NSPs need to consider carrying out a range of evaluations such as process, input, output and outcome evaluations in order to gain a complete understanding of the impact of their work.
- In many cases monitoring and evaluation is incorporated after a programme has begun. Although new partners often have a lot to do when they start HIV/AIDS work, ideally monitoring and evaluation activities should be integrated into programme activities from the beginning and become an ongoing process for both NSPs and their partner organisations.



1.2 Functions of NGO/CBO support

1.2.5 Research

Research refers to a variety of activities carried out during the course of a normal project cycle (such as needs analysis and collection of baseline data) or it can be the objective of the project itself. Research is a means by which theories and assumptions are investigated and tested, good practice identified, advocacy strengthened and an organisation's work informed.

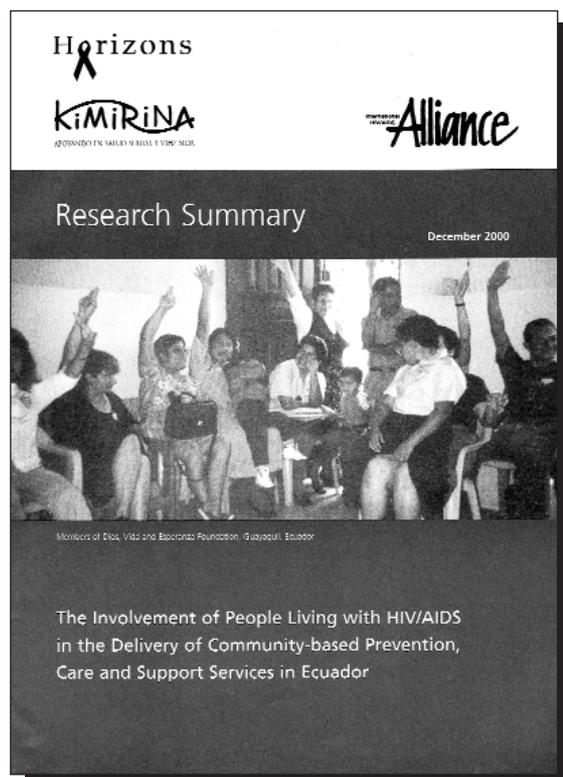
NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) have an important role to play in research activities, particularly **operations** or **action research**. It is crucial that the realities of identifying effective prevention, care and impact alleviation work drive the research agenda. NSPs can serve as a link between academics and practitioners, helping others to think through the appropriateness of their research agenda or, where they have capacity, to identify key research questions themselves.

Additionally, NSPs can identify NGO and CBO partners and community sites to act as implementing partners in operations research activities and provide appropriate support to both local NGOs and CBOs and researchers to ensure that partnerships run smoothly and effectively. Where necessary, this may involve skills building of NGOs and CBOs to collect, collate, analyse and interpret data and information. NSPs can also ensure that communities are prepared for operation research and other technical and ethically complex programmes such as the provision of antiretroviral treatments and vaccine trials.

NSPs can play a key role in ensuring that research has an impact by disseminating research results and incorporating findings into field-level programming and technical support. NSPs support greater impact of the research by helping to ensure that the findings of operations research become incorporated into future planning and implementation of not only their work but also that of other NSPs and stakeholders in other sectors.

Issues to consider

- ➔ There are many research issues NSPs can become involved in. However, they may want to focus their research activities on issues that will help improve support to NGO and CBO programmes and that are directly concerned with effective approaches to community responses to HIV/AIDS. NSPs may need to provide technical support to partners to help them to judge the appropriateness and benefits of different research options.
- ➔ When involving partner organisations in research activities, there needs to be agreement on how the participating NGOs and CBOs – and, more importantly, the affected communities they work with – will benefit from the research.
- ➔ It is also important that the existing resources of NGOs and CBOs (human resources in particular) do not become stretched beyond their capacities by involvement in research activities.
- ➔ NSPs need to have an open mind about research findings and not bring predetermined views to them.



1.2 Functions of NGO/CBO support

1.2.6 Resource mobilisation

Resource mobilisation, as a function of an NGO/CBO support programme (NSP), encompasses a wide range of activities that may include:

- influencing the allocation of donor funds designated to NGOs, CBOs and NSPs in developing countries
- identifying potential sources of support for NGO/CBO work
- facilitating partner organisations to access financial and in-kind support from donors and other stakeholders
- providing access to commodities such as condoms and test kits through direct provision or referral to other sources
- facilitating exchange of successful income generation and other resource (including human resources) mobilisation approaches, skills and experiences.

NSPs have the potential to influence how money is allocated and therefore need to be aware of how global trends in international development may impact on this. By clearly communicating the needs of the NGO/CBO sector and advocating for their inclusion in the worldwide response to HIV/AIDS, NSPs can help to secure funding for community responses. NSPs can work in partnership with other NSPs, perhaps focusing on issues other than HIV/AIDS, to provide collective weight to this argument.

Broadly speaking, through their relationships and links with donors and other stakeholders, NSPs are often better placed than their partner organisations to research or be aware of funding opportunities. NSPs can assist NGOs and CBOs in planning an appropriate fundraising strategy by identifying resources (both monetary and in-kind) from bilateral and multilateral donors, government, foundations, the private sector and other international NGOs, and by providing information on who funds what and under what conditions.

Facilitating access to funding sources can involve a broad range of activities, including:

- building NGOs' and CBOs' capacity in fundraising and maintaining effective relationships with the donor community
- introducing and promoting partners' work to potential donors
- acting as a guarantor for an NGO or CBO where necessary.

Building capacity in fundraising needs also to include attention to sustainability issues. NSPs can help NGOs and CBOs to:

- assess the risks and benefits of relying on only one or two donors and consider the diversification and broadening of the funding base
- plan a strategy to build reserves as a cushion against cash-flow problems between short-term projects – for example, by including a contribution to core costs in programme funding
- balance core and programme funding so that the organisation is not substantially weakened when projects end.

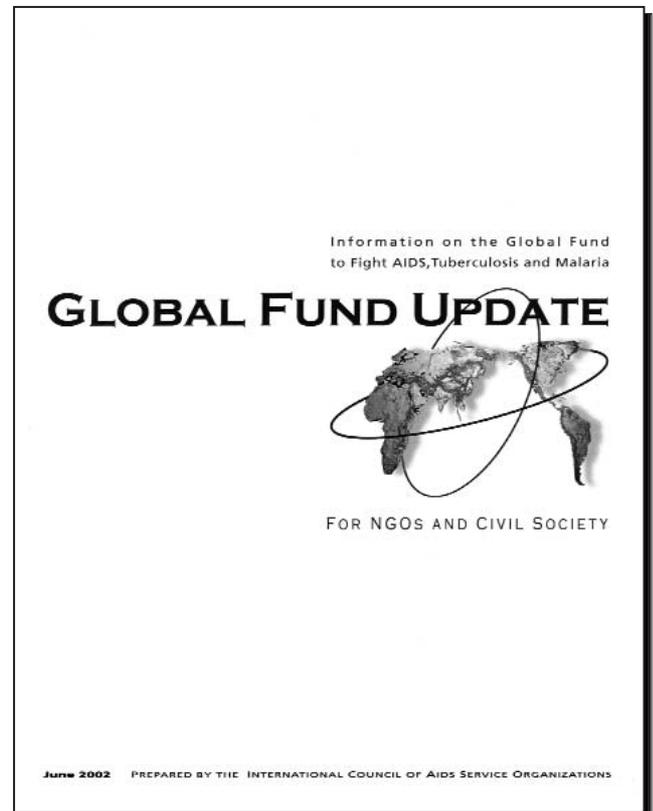
NSPs may also serve as a distributor of commodities such as condoms, sterile needles and test kits for their partner organisations. They can help to assure quality control and, through economies of scale, obtain cheaper prices than individual organisations. If procurement is not done by the NSP itself, it can refer to other sources, or alternatively NSPs can help create 'buyers clubs' or other similar co-operative efforts based on economies of scale.

1.2 Functions of NGO/CBO support

1.2.6 Resource mobilisation

Issues to consider

- An organisation's resource mobilisation strategy should include attention to building its capacity in this area as its sustainability will depend on this. Recognising that building capacity, particularly in this area, is a long-term process, NSPs need to address this issue with their partner organisations early on in the programme and revisit it regularly.
- When facilitating access to resources, NSPs need to help partner organisations consider the conditions and restrictions that may be attached to different monies and understand the pros and cons of that support.
- Reliance on donor money can lead to some loss of independence or a drifting away from the core mission of the CBO or NGO.
- Both NSPs and their partner organisations need to set out principles concerning which sources and types of funds are acceptable and which are not.



1.3 Different types of NGO/CBO support programmes

There are many different models of NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs), often with very different origins. Some are donor-initiated programmes, while others are self-initiated groups. Many NSPs focus solely on providing support to NGOs and CBOs, while others are implementing organisations that have taken on NGO/CBO support functions. As yet there has been little reflection on and analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of different models and the relative value-added of different types of organisations taking on NSP functions.

Although the majority of NSPs tend to be based within an NGO (NGO-led NGO/CBO support programmes), there are an increasing number which are operated by government bodies, donors, businesses or quangos (quasi NGOs). In this toolkit, we have focused attention on **NGO-led NGO support programmes** and **Government-led NGO support programmes**.

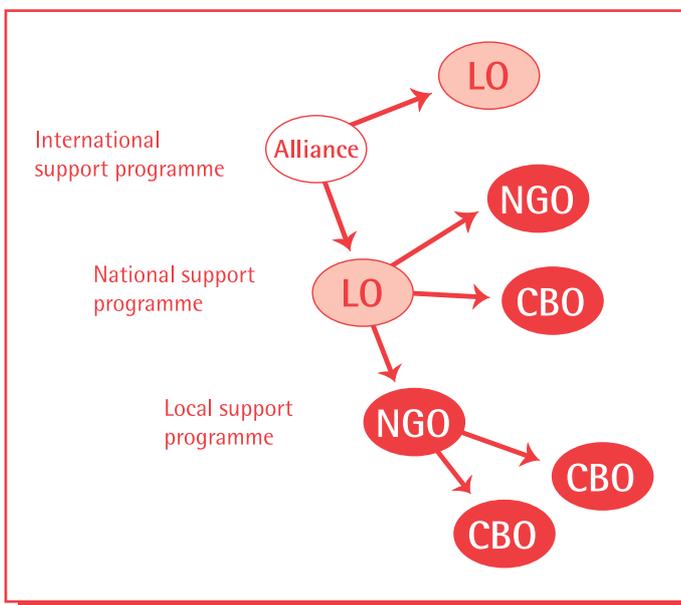
1.3 Different types of NGO/CBO support programmes

1.3.1 NGO-based NGO/CBO support programmes

The majority of NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) are NGOs themselves. There are a variety of models, some of which are outlined below.

Stand-alone NGO/CBO support providers

These are organisations whose mission is to programmes support to other organisations with the aim of enhancing the effectiveness and impact of NGOs and CBOs. They do not actually implement HIV/AIDS programmes themselves. These NSPs take on a variety of functions and often provide a combination of financial and technical support to partner organisations. Examples of NSPs working at the international or regional level include the International HIV/AIDS Alliance (Alliance), PACT and the Southern African AIDS Training Program (SAT). NSPs working at the national level include multi-functional NSPs such as Alliance linking organisations (LOs).

**Implementing/service organisation with NSP functions**

Increasingly, implementing organisations that have gained sufficient expertise, knowledge and skills valuable to other, younger, organisations are taking on NSP functions. These organisations are primarily service providers but may also give technical support to other organisations in their field of

expertise. Examples of such organisations include YRG Care in India, Family AIDS Caring Trust (FACT) in Zimbabwe, and The AIDS Support Organisation (TASO) in Uganda.

Networks

Networks are groups of individuals and/or organisations that collaborate to achieve common goals. Although their missions may not identify them as NSPs, they often fulfil NSP functions. For example, networks provide a venue and structure for member organisations to communicate and share information with each other. They often co-ordinate advocacy action on issues of mutual interest to members and they provide opportunities for enhancing the skills levels of their member organisations. Networks such as International Council of AIDS Service Organisations (ICASO) and Uganda Network of AIDS Service Organisations (UNASO) are increasingly developing technical support functions, although information sharing and advocacy are often prioritised over capacity building.

Networks differ from each other in terms of their geographical scope, thematic focus, membership involvement and structure. They exist at local, national, sub-regional, regional and international levels. Some examples of networks include La Red Mexicana de PVIH (national), Thai NGO Coalition on AIDS (national), Southern African Network of AIDS Service Organisation (regional), European Network of Male Prostitution (regional), Global Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (international) and International Network Sex Worker Projects (international).

Training organisations

Training organisations include organisations that provide technical support on a variety of topics and skills. NGOs and CBOs may utilise their services for developing and improving their administration (for example, accounting systems and IT) or for learning specific skills required for their work. Training organisations solely provide training on specific issues and are not necessarily involved in the NGO/CBO's ongoing activities and long-term capacity building.

1.3 Different types of NGO/CBO support programmes

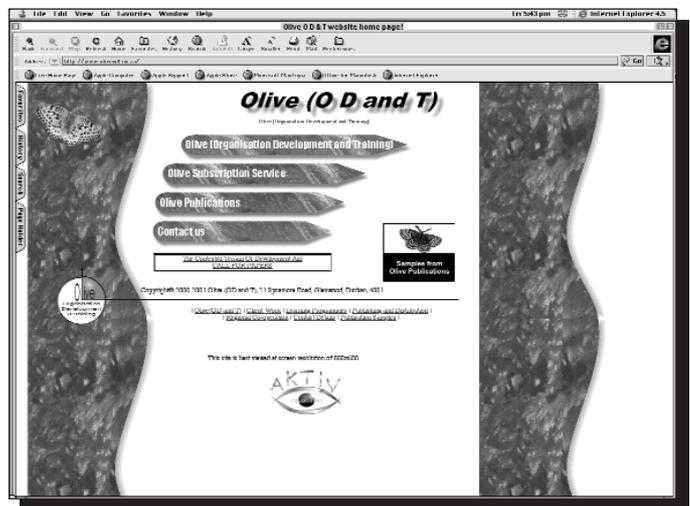
1.3.1 NGO-based NGO/CBO support programmes

Examples of training organisations include Organisation Development and Training (OLIVE), International Training and Research Centre (INTRAC) and Centre for African Family Studies (CAFS).

Issues to consider

- ➔ There is lack of research-based evidence to show the relative value-added of different types of organisations taking on NGO and CBO support functions.
- ➔ Implementing organisations that take on NSP functions are often unaware of the importance of their NGO/CBO support functions and the value of their contribution in this area. Additionally, it cannot be assumed that excellent implementing organisations will make good NSPs, as different skills, attitudes and perspectives on HIV/AIDS are required for this role. Although experience in HIV/AIDS work may help an implementing organisation in some NGO/CBO support functions (for example, technical support provision), the key to good NGO/CBO support is a commitment to helping others to strengthen their work.
- ➔ There is a potential conflict of interest for NSPs that are both implementing organisations and grant givers. Even though their grant-awarding processes may be transparent and legitimate, it is often hard to avoid the perception of bias if a grant is awarded to an NSP's own organisation. These NSPs may want to consider making themselves ineligible for their own grants.
- ➔ Similarly, there are potential tensions for membership organisations that take on a funding or grant-making role. By definition, member organisations are all involved in decision-making which affects the group. Problems may therefore arise, such as which organisations should be represented on grant selection committees. Furthermore, any perception of bias around grant giving will serve to undermine the membership.

- ➔ Implementing NGOs taking on support functions may need to pay greater attention to networking and to creating a culture that will enable the organisation to provide the services that NGOs and CBOs need.
- ➔ Sometimes the credibility of NSPs can be affected by their very close links with the government or donors, and NSPs need to be aware of the potential pros and cons of particular relationships in their own context.



www.oliveodt.co.za



www.pria.org/cgi-bin/index.htm

1.3 Different types of NGO/CBO support programmes

1.3.2 Government-led NGO/CBO support programmes

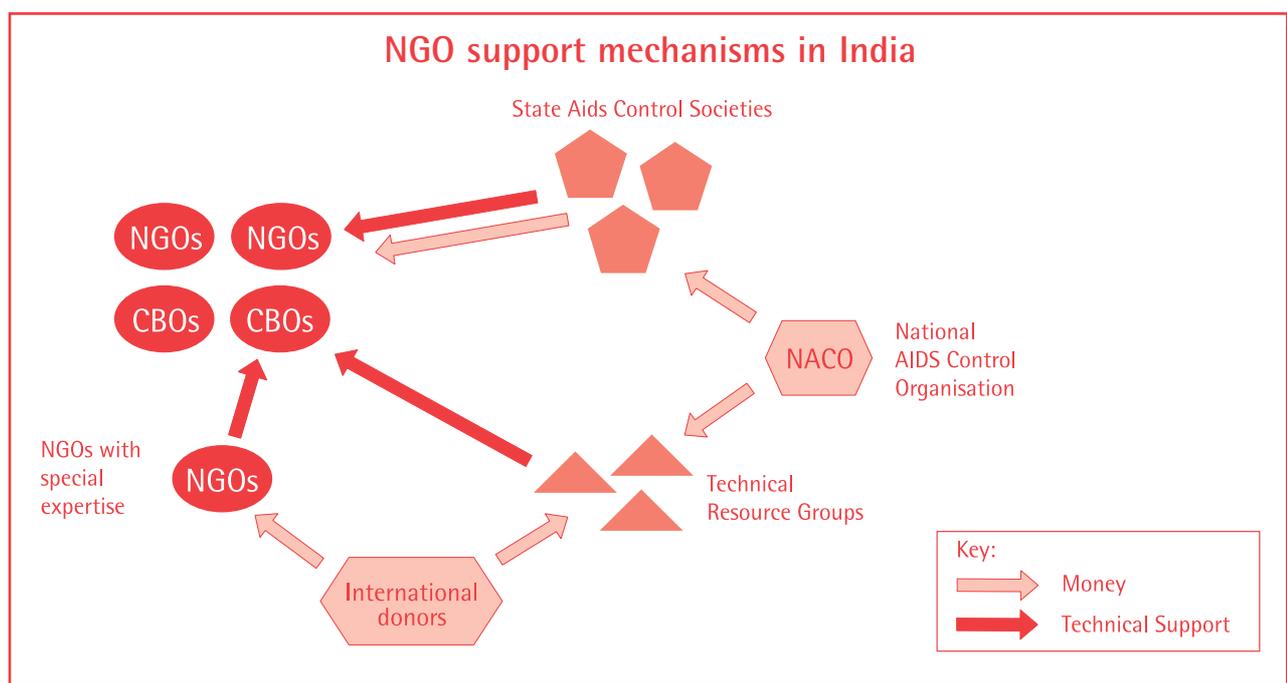
In recent years there has been an increase in government bodies taking on a variety of NGO/CBO support functions, either through direct provision of services or through subcontracting to other organisations that provide NGO/CBO support. This clearly reflects the increased recognition by governments of the importance of community responses to HIV/AIDS as well as the ongoing need for more support services in response to the growing epidemic.

As with NGO/CBO support programmes provided by NGOs, Government-led NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) also operate at multiple levels and through a variety of mechanisms. For example, the Government of Brazil in its Brazil II programme provides grants to NGOs nationwide through its NGO fund, and Guatemala has a government-led NGO/CBO support programme. In India, NGO/CBO support via the government occurs at both national and state level through a complex mechanism involving the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO), the State AIDS Control Societies and Technical Resource Groups (see diagram). This is complemented by technical support funded by other international donors and NSPs. There are also multilateral NSP functions such as the UNAIDS Accelerated Programmes Funds and

donor/government collaborations such as the Philippines Ministry of Health/European Union NGO Support Programme.

Issues to consider

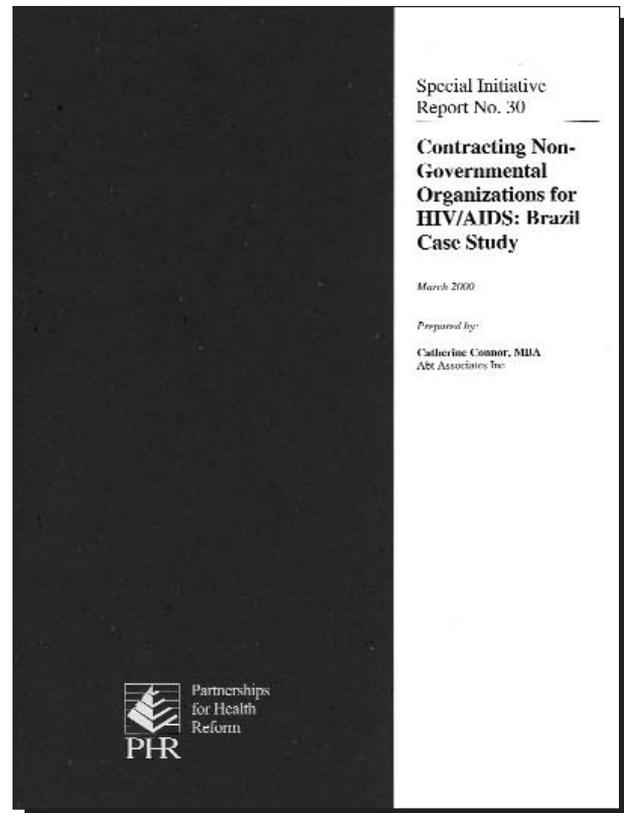
- ➔ It is important to emphasise the contribution and role that both Government and NGO-led NSPs have in providing support to NGOs and CBOs.
- ➔ To be effective, government bodies taking on NGO/CBO support functions need to build up their capacity in both staff and skills to work with NGOs and CBOs. Government staff working to provide NGO/CBO support need to develop an in-depth understanding of NGOs and CBOs: their organisational structure, how they work, their strengths and weaknesses and their relationships with communities.
- ➔ Both NGO-based NSPs and non NGO-led NSPs have important roles to play in providing support to NGOs and CBOs. Neither is necessarily more effective than the other in terms of providing adequate NGO/CBO support provision, and it is often better to have both working together constructively than to have only one involved.



1.3 Different types of NGO/CBO support programmes

1.3.2 Government-led NGO/CBO support programmes

- ➔ Many NGOs and CBOs work with populations who are marginalised and vulnerable, such as injecting drug users (IDUs), men who have sex with men (MSM) and sex workers (SWs). Often these groups of individuals engage in activities that are illegal or not recognised under the law. Work with these populations therefore risk being excluded from funding through government-led NSPs.
- ➔ The autonomy and functionality of NGOs must be recognised by the government body. While accountability is a must, flexibility should be built into the programme to allow NGOs to find innovative ways to avoid being merely subcontractors delivering government services.
- ➔ In many countries there are legal barriers to government bodies providing support directly to NGOs and CBOs. Successful strategies to overcome this need to be documented to facilitate more government-NGO partnerships.
- ➔ NGOs and CBOs have traditionally provided a 'voice of opposition' to government. When NGOs and CBOs are supported by the government there is a danger that their voice will become muted and NGO/CBO credibility within their communities weakened.
- ➔ As with grant programming implemented by NGO-led NSPs, transparency of processes is vital and financial disbursement procedures need to be flexible and responsive.
- ➔ Government-led NSPs provide opportunities for closer government-NGO/CBO collaboration across all NSP functions and roles.
- ➔ As with any dependent donor relationship, there is a danger of the government leading the NGO/CBO agenda if the NGO/CBO support is provided solely by government. This reinforces the importance of having a broad funding base to prevent dependence on any one donor – whether or not it is the government.



A clear strategic plan is central to the process of working effectively as an NGO/CBO support programme (NSP). NSPs have to make choices about a range of strategic priorities:

- what geographical areas to work in
- which aspects of HIV/AIDS prevention, care and impact mitigation to address
- how many and which types of NGO and CBO to support
- which populations to prioritise
- what working methods and approaches to prioritise
- how to position themselves in relation to other programmes.

In some cases there may be pre-existing parameters, such as level of funding, geographical remit, organisational mission, donor requirements and government priorities, that broadly determine strategic priorities. Within these parameters, NSPs' initial strategic plans usually involve three processes, mostly recorded as governing documents, which are designed to keep their work strategically focused.

- A detailed situation assessment of the 'landscape' or context within which the NSP will work, focusing on the essential features of the local HIV/AIDS epidemic, the national or regional response, and questions of capacity in the NGO/CBO sector.
- A strategic summary of the aims and objectives of the NSP and the means by which these will be achieved. These are often in the form of a logical framework (log frame) for the programme which sets out the chosen purposes, assumptions, priorities, targets, activities and indicators of success.
- A record of the enabling structures and systems for the NSP, including descriptions of the governance and organisational structures, roles, responsibilities and capacity of the NSP, one or more workplans and the evaluation plan.

Most NSPs also review their strategic planning at regular intervals (six-monthly, annually or less frequently) to take account of a range of changing circumstances such as:

- developments in the national or regional HIV epidemic
- developments or paradigm shifts in donor funding and requirements
- changes in other NGO/CBO support and government programmes
- new national or regional research, not available to previous assessments
- new information and intelligence provided by the partner organisations supported by the NSP itself – for example, from a range of participatory community assessments
- the results of monitoring and evaluation of the NGO/CBO support programme as a whole, as well as of the work of the supported partner organisations.

2.1 Assessing the situation

For NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) the purpose of assessing the situation is to gather information and evidence to inform their strategic decision-making and ensure that they put their resources to best use in the local setting.

There are various ways in which NSPs could assess the landscape. Situation assessments may differ significantly in how ambitious they are, their depth and comprehensiveness depending on each NSP's potential remit, horizon, timescale and funding level. Before beginning an assessment, the assessment team needs to be aware of the NSP's own restrictions, limitations and flexibility. For instance, the NSP has to take into account the degree of commitment by donors to the sustainability of their support, since this requires much investment. Similarly, if the NSP is intending to be multi-sectoral, the assessment must be as well.

Most NSPs will not be able to conduct major primary research as part of a priority-setting assessment before launching, or they may not wish to because of the time delays that would result. Instead, initial situation assessments usually gather data already available, assess its quality and then interpret or analyse it as far as it permits. When they draw conclusions they also record any assumptions that had to be made because of the limitations of available data.

There are many kinds of data that can contribute to a situation assessment, and the gathering of information and analysis can be grouped in various ways. Those we consider in more detail below include HIV/AIDS situation analysis, institutional response analysis and capacity analysis.

Additionally, in strategic reassessments NSPs can draw on a wider range of information, including:

- community and situation data collected by their NGO/CBO partners
- the results of monitoring and evaluation from all levels of the programme
- sometimes research especially commissioned by

the NSP itself (or by other programmes) to fill gaps that were identified in the initial assessment.

There are a number of key criteria to address in the design of a participatory strategic assessment or appraisal in order to make it as useful as possible for planning.

- Careful selection of a mixed discipline assessment team, which may include: appropriate representation from within the assessment area; outsiders who can bring a different perspective to the data; and expertise in looking critically at data quality and interpretation.
- Clear terms of reference for the assessment team, including the purpose and level of detail expected of the assessment and any pre-existing parameters and constraints on the work of the NSP.
- Clear public statements about the scope and ambition of the assessment in order to avoid raising false expectations in other agencies, which may in turn jeopardise future working relationships.
- Careful attention to identifying the different types of data that will be needed to reach valid conclusions. For example, recommendations about priorities need to take into account not just epidemiological risk but also the results of the response analysis and the capacity assessment. Similarly, it is important to balance information not only from powerful policy-makers but also from service providers and members of vulnerable community groups.
- Analysis which is fit for its purpose. It is important to understand that the objective is to identify the 'optimal role' or 'comparative advantage' of the NSP. Once an NSP begins strategic planning, it may have to choose between prioritising organisations or locations where it can most quickly and easily provide support, and sites and interventions that are the most significant to the epidemic. A good assessment will tease these out, differentiate between the two and identify possible overlaps.

2.1 Assessing the situation

The data can be presented as a table, as this example shows.

	Sites	Populations	Potential NGO/CBO partners	Intervention types
Must do				
May do				
Can't do				

- **Verification.** Much of the assessment process will involve summarising, interpreting and reinterpreting existing information, so it is important to provide an opportunity for feedback and further input from participants who have provided information for the assessment **before** the team departs from the assessment location.
 - **Transparency.** Any rapid assessment will draw on data of variable quality. It is important for the report to note clearly what is known, what can reasonably be assumed and what is not yet known. It is helpful to record the assumptions in such a way as to enable them to be revisited in a future review and replanning exercise, or be investigated through operations research. It is also useful to interpret 'trends' rather than particular points in time.
- Issues to consider**
- ➔ Each NSP will be faced with a choice about where to draw the boundaries of its assessment. For example, if NSPs cannot currently support care work there may be no point in assessing treatment needs. On the other hand, some NSPs will choose to include such an assessment in order to prepare for possible future extension of their remit.
 - ➔ Some NSPs will want to designate particular priority 'sites' within their overall region of operation (for example, certain towns, districts, neighbourhoods or border crossings) in which to conduct more detailed landscape assessment. However, this may not always be necessary. If an NSP has only a very limited budget and there is limited HIV/AIDS programming money available in the country, there may be little point in an assessment that covers all possible regions and needs in detail. On the other hand, some form of assessment is still needed in order to prioritise work in such a situation.
 - ➔ Pre-assessment desk research can prepare for an assessment process in a strategic and productive way by identifying existing sources of usable data. However, to avoid relying on preconceived ideas, it is important for the assessment team to check how well the data has been selected and the quality of the data itself.
 - ➔ In some situations one way of assessing the landscape can be to undertake initial pilot work, which can be more acceptable than the kind of formal assessment that raises expectations which may not be met.

2.1 Assessing the situation

2.1.1 HIV/AIDS situation analysis

An HIV/AIDS situation analysis identifies:

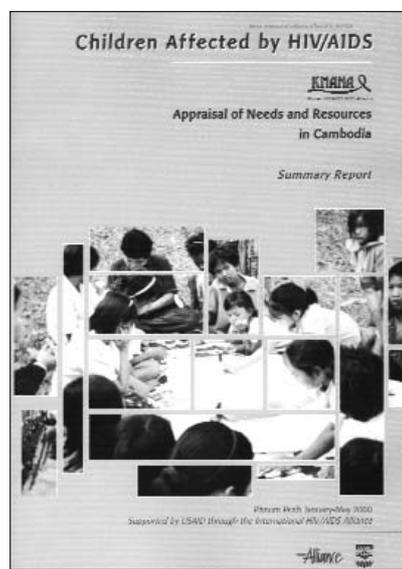
- where the HIV/AIDS epidemic is clustered
- which key populations are most affected and how they are affected
- what factors are driving the growth of the epidemic
- the main opportunities to respond effectively at individual, community and population levels.

The key types of data are discussed below.

- Epidemiological and demographic data designed to identify the populations and communities most immediately vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. This includes HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and what is known about how incidence and prevalence are linked to such factors as injecting drug use, sex work, sex between men, age and gender.
- Behavioural data used to identify modes of transmission in vulnerable populations. This includes injection practices, sexual networking, use of condoms and other contraceptives, age of sexual debut, links between sexual practice, alcohol and other recreational drugs, etc.
- Other relevant socio-economic and cultural data, including the nature of community support structures, literacy rates, health data, migration patterns, mobility, socio-linguistic divisions, class subdivisions, ethnicity, gender roles and expectations about sex and relationships.
- The wider social environment (including actors, sites and priorities) which, while not HIV/AIDS specific, will have an impact on HIV/AIDS prevention, care and mitigation. Examples might include the state of civil society, the overall condition of the health care system and cultural expectations in relation to community consultation and participation.

Issues to consider

- ➔ It is very easy to neglect the needs of certain key vulnerable populations because they come from socially marginalised or stigmatised populations (for example, injecting drug users, sex workers, gay and bisexual men, men who have sex with men). It is important to test and challenge existing perceptions about which groups of people the NSP should be working with, guided by strategic priorities rather than the 'comfort zone' of the people doing the assessments.
- ➔ It is tempting to stop assessing the landscape once the catchment area has been defined, whereas further assessments and prioritisation can improve the analysis.
- ➔ Some NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) conduct more detailed HIV situation analyses within specific priority sites, measuring key population sizes, behaviour and networks.
- ➔ Data analysis issues, such as who analyses data and from what perspective, are as important as, if not more important than, data gathering. For example, any data collection will identify a very large range of needs in relation to general health, poverty, stigma, discrimination, etc. The point is to identify how these needs affect the problems and opportunities in addressing HIV/AIDS effectively.



2.1 Assessing the situation

2.1.2 Institutional response analysis

In order to define the added-value of an NGO/CBO support programme (NSP), it is important to understand the extent of existing programmes of other key players in HIV/AIDS and related areas, as well as what major new initiatives are currently being planned.

First of all there needs to be an analysis of what is required for an effective response, based on the HIV situation assessment. This can be articulated at three levels: what kind of direct services are required; what changes are necessary at the individual level (such as hope, motivation, skills); and what is needed to provide a sufficiently supportive and enabling environment. Using this, the analysis then looks at the scope, geography, population profile, extent of coverage of needs, quality and likely sustainability of both the response to HIV/AIDS overall and also existing HIV/AIDS-related NGO/CBO support activities and resources.

For the response to HIV/AIDS overall this involves analysing:

- government plans, structures and the reality of the delivery of statutory services
- broad civil society responses (for example, media coverage, religious groups, trade unions)
- visibility and activities of people with HIV/AIDS and their self-help groups
- key actors and leaders in the commercial sector
- major donors active in the country or region
- major NGOs already working on HIV/AIDS (including non health-sector HIV/AIDS work; for example, human rights organisations).

For existing HIV/AIDS-related NGO/CBO support in particular it involves analysing:

- who offers money, what amounts and over what time periods?
- who offers technical assistance (including both financial and non-financial support)?
- what formal and informal training resources exist, including information resources, training manuals, adaptable education materials, etc?
- who offers what assistance with the supply of commodities to NGOs and CBOs, such as medication, condoms, sterile injection equipment, etc?

The range of agencies and individuals to include in such an assessment is wide:

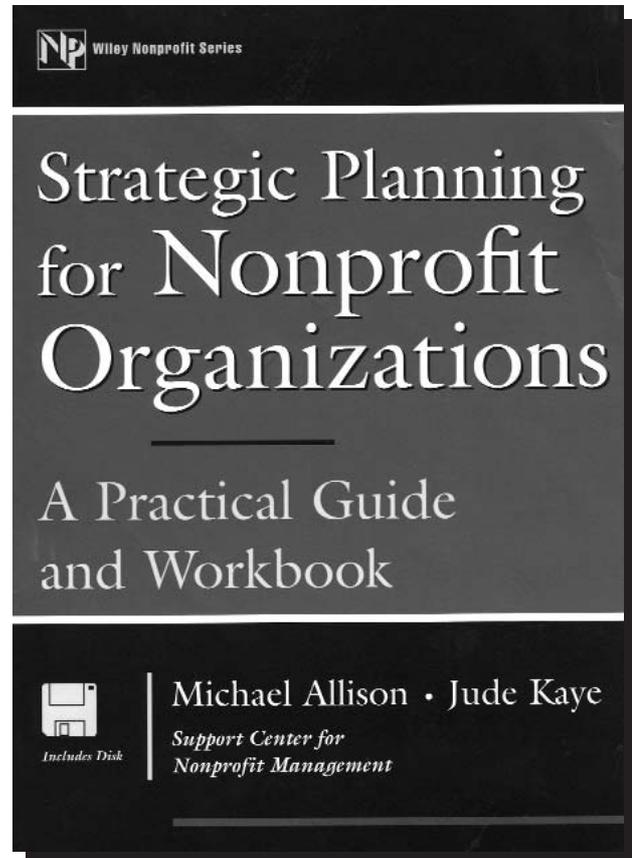
- HIV/AIDS-related NGO/CBO support organisations
- resource centres and key resource people
- individuals who are identified as leaders in the NGO/CBO and HIV/AIDS sectors
- possible providers of support from outside the catchment area of the NSP (for example, an adjoining country)
- other major providers of training or technical assistance resources, including major NGO/CBO support activities not focused specifically on HIV/AIDS. Examples might include Poverty Reduction Strategic Plan (PRSP) initiatives, 'social funds' and Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiatives. Increasingly, such social funds focus some attention to financing HIV/AIDS work for the poor.

2.1 Assessing the situation

2.1.2 Institutional response analysis

Issues to consider

- As in the HIV/AIDS situation assessment, NSPs may conduct both a general response assessment across the country or catchment area and more detailed response assessments in designated priority sites.
- Donors from outside a country (for example, the World Bank) will often have available evaluations and similar documents that can richly inform a response analysis.
- Response analysis can be very difficult because it may involve inter-organisational politicking and positioning as much as accurately reporting what is going on.
- It is often particularly difficult to get accurate quality, coverage and cost data from other programmes. Assessment teams will need to balance the level of effort required against the benefits to be gained from understanding other programmes in detail.
- The response analysis may reveal that other organisations are undertaking work using an approach that you do not support. There are balances to be made between avoiding duplication of the work being carried out by others and challenging the work of others that you judge to be substandard.



2.1 Assessing the situation

2.1.3 Capacity analysis

An initial capacity analysis involves assessing the current level and types of support required amongst NGOs and CBOs, the existing nature and level of NGO/CBO support provided (by anyone), and where and how the NGO/CBO support programme's (NSP) resources can be applied most effectively to develop the quality and quantity of support (whether directly from within the NSP itself or in conjunction with partner agencies).

Capacity analysis also enables NSPs to assess where they need to build their own capacity (technical assistance, organisational development, financial capacity) in order to achieve their existing aims or take on new NSP functions.

Factors that can affect an organisation's capacity include: the state of development of the organisation's systems and structures; the leadership and skill pool it can draw upon; and the level and range of financial and other resources available to it. Additionally, a more intangible factor, but no less important for that, is the level of existing or potential commitment to building capacity.

Capacity analysis, therefore, can be used in initial assessments to identify a number of requirements.

- The extent to which there is a pre-existing demand for capacity building amongst NGOs and CBOs, and the extent to which this demand may need to be stimulated.
- The range of existing institutions or organisations that have the interest and potential capacity to take on NSP functions.
- Other existing institutions or organisations that could make significant contributions alongside a 'core' NSP programme (for example, by providing condoms). It is useful to assess which functions could be allocated to the NSP and which subcontracted to others, and what can be guaranteed to happen even without NSP involvement.
- The criteria and processes that can be used to select NGOs capable of providing technical

support to other NGOs and CBOs ('horizontal capacity building'). These are not necessarily or only those that are strong implementing organisations, since a different set of organisational and professional skills are involved.

- Critical capacity weaknesses, risks and contingencies that may have to be taken into account in planning NGO/CBO support activities. For example, government may be an essential provider yet fail to deliver; corrupt border officials could delay delivery of drugs; there may be a lack of NGO/CBO staff who can benefit from training in 'colonial' languages; and staff may become ill.

NSPs will also be involved in ongoing capacity analysis as intrinsic to their work. For example, this may be in learning which groups can handle particular kinds of projects, activities or extra funding, and in assessing the changing technical assistance needs of partners.

In reassessing capacity once an NGO/CBO support programme is established, NSPs may also get valuable contributory information from the results of monitoring and evaluation. Key elements in capacity analysis as part of a reassessment include identifying:

- how and to what extent the types of technical and other support needs have changed since the beginning of the programme
- new sources of NGO/CBO support which may have developed in parallel with the programme, or existing sources which may have been overlooked
- the strengths and weaknesses of the various methods and approaches that have been used to develop NGO/CBO capacity.

2.2 Defining purpose

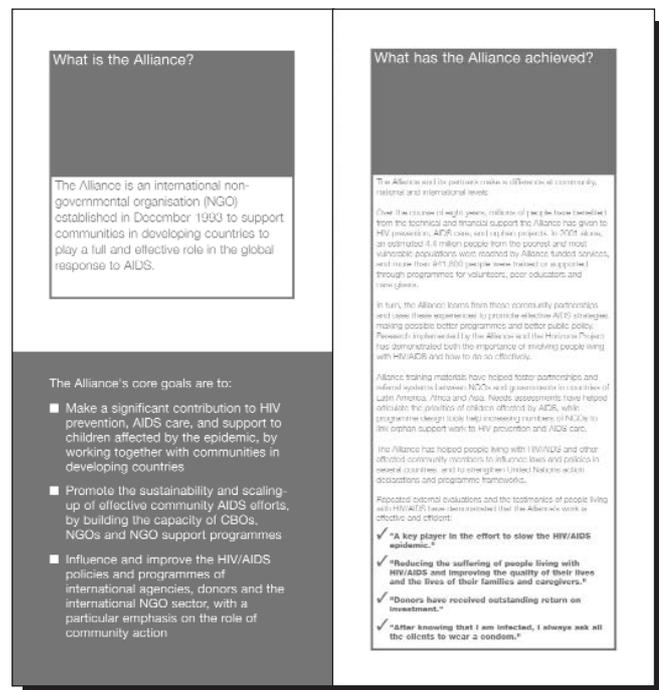
The HIV/AIDS epidemic in any country or region affects and involves many different groups of people and organisations. Moreover, the responses to it are multiple, complex and often rapidly changing and developing. The process of defining, reviewing and confirming or redefining the purposes of an NGO/CBO support programme is therefore central to both strategic planning and replanning.

For example, an element of strategic planning needs to occur before fundraising (if the NGO/CBO support programme (NSP) is not already funded). But, it would need to happen again once funds were secured since the scope, parameters and constraints could have changed according to the level of funding, the security of funding, the need for additional funding, donor restrictions etc. Similarly, the initial assessment may include assumptions that are later found to be inaccurate or no longer applicable during the course of monitoring and evaluating the first year's programming.

Once the landscape has been assessed or reassessed, there are two equally important decision-making processes required to complete the strategic planning.

- **Defining mission and objectives.** This is a process which clarifies and records what the NSP is going to do and how it will set about doing it. It includes elements such as: the priority sites and areas to work in; the number and types of NGOs and CBOs to be supported in various areas; the type and extent of support to be offered (for example, the size of grants or the balance between an emphasis on policy and advocacy work and an emphasis on technical support); and targets for the outcomes of the support programme.

- **Developing planning systems.** This process clarifies and records how the decision-making process should occur, the systems for strategic planning, review and replanning, the frameworks and format in which decisions are recorded, and the roles and responsibilities required to ensure that the NGO/CBO support programme adheres to its mission and objectives.



From the International HIV/AIDS Alliance leaflet 2002.

2.2 Defining purpose

2.2.1 Defining mission and objectives

NGO/CBO support programmes are inherently complex initiatives. First, they seek to address multiple issues of NGO/CBO support with a number of different NGOs and CBOs, each of which may work with different populations in different ways and therefore have different needs. Second, there are usually many other players at a national or regional level (such as national HIV/AIDS programmes, existing networks of NGOs/CBOs and the support programmes of other donors) with whom it is important to develop productive working relationships. Third, since the NGO/CBO support programme (NSP) acts as an umbrella initiative or intermediary, there are balances to be struck between the requirements of donors (which are often more directive or interventionist, with cross-cutting objectives) and the concerns of the NGO's beneficiaries (for autonomy and responsiveness to their local communities' expressed needs). Fourth, there are different structures and functions that NSPs can have.

Faced with this complexity, it is important for an NGO/CBO support programme to set clear priorities and define explicit objectives that everyone understands. Well-defined mission statements, linked to clear purposes, objectives and strategies ensure that:

- the NSP maintains an explicit and planned balance between its different functions rather than allowing any one function to dominate (for example, it is easy to become absorbed in advocacy and policy work at the expense of technical assistance to NGOs and CBOs, or vice versa)
- everyone involved in the programme (the NSP's governing body, management and staff, and the governing bodies, management, staff and volunteers of the partner NGOs and CBOs) can share a clear sense of purpose, understand what the NGO/CBO support programme is trying to achieve and how their specific roles and activities can contribute, and work as harmoniously as possible to support common purposes
- other organisations (external to the programme) have a clear picture of how the NSP fits into the landscape, how it seeks to avoid duplication and add value in the national or regional context, the kinds of partnerships it hopes to build, the kind of niche it provides for funding, and the opportunities for productive external relations and lines of communication
- there are clear targets for monitoring and evaluation without which it is not meaningful to attempt to measure the impact of the programme.

However, using the results of the situation assessment to set suitable objectives and produce clear and effective log frames and workplans is in itself a skilled and demanding process. It is important not to underestimate the resources that need to be allocated to make complex choices and difficult decisions. There is rarely an automatic consensus about the best format or framework for recording the top-level decisions and the lower-level choices that flow from them. Additionally, the whole process may be unfamiliar at first to management and staff of the NSP.

Above all, it is likely that the assessment or reassessment process will have identified a much larger range of both programmatic and NGO/CBO support needs, gaps and deficits than can be met realistically by a single NSP with limited resources. Key choices and considerations in the decision-making processes will therefore usually involve identifying a number of optimal balances in the overall NGO/CBO support programme between:

- epidemiological urgency and the easiest sites and settings in which to begin work or add value
- those areas of need that are well documented and others that are identified in the assessment as important but requiring further clarification, mapping or research
- prevention, care and impact mitigation
- different models and approaches to support and capacity building

2.2 Defining purpose

2.2.1 Defining mission and objectives

- spreading the programme thinly, collaborating with other programmes and deferring certain activities in order to concentrate on others in greater depth
- supporting established NGOs and CBOs in scaling up their capacity, assisting emergent NGOs and CBOs to develop and facilitating the growth of new NGOs and CBOs from embryonic community networks where there are gaps in provision
- the need for innovation in the programme to fill significant gaps in national provision and the sustainability of the NGOs and CBOs beyond the horizon of the programme.

Given the range of choices and compromises that need to be made, the complexity of data likely to have been provided by the assessment of the landscape and the skills needed to set suitable objectives, careful attention needs to be paid to the decision-making and decision-recording process.

- As in the situation assessment, there needs to be a strategic planning team with a good balance of expertise, representation and involvement in the work.
- There may be important preliminary work needed to establish a common understanding of the format and standards of a suitable log frame for the programme, which sets out the chosen mission, purposes, assumptions, priorities, targets, activities, budgets and indicators of success. A log frame format may have a number of levels of increasing detail, where the sum total of the programme's activities in a particular area can be seen to add up to a plausible contribution towards achieving a higher-level target.
- Adequate time needs to be set aside for the team to work intensively together through more than one draft of the log frames and overall workplan.
- Given that choices will be made between competing needs, a record of the assumptions used in making or justifying decisions will help future review and replanning processes.

These top-level governing documents are usually linked to more detailed plans delineating how the different elements of the organisation will work together effectively to achieve the organisational purposes.

Issues to consider

- ➔ There can be a tension between the working time that managers or staff need to reserve for the strategic planning process and the immediate demands of developing and providing support to NGOs and CBOs.
- ➔ There is unlikely to be a pre-existing consensus about the most suitable log frame format for the NSP. At set up, it may be necessary to experiment with different formats, which can be reviewed and refined in future strategic replanning.
- ➔ It is important to guard against changing purpose on a whim rather than revising purposes in response to a changing landscape.
- ➔ In defining the mission and objectives of the programme there may be a tension between the core values of some NGOs and CBOs and the priorities of fundraising and funders.
- ➔ There can be competition between NSPs for donor funds and over representation roles, advocacy and policy leadership; disagreements over programmatic approach or credit for programme impact; and complications resulting from duplication of programming, whether geographically or in relation to policy work or work with key populations. Many of these tensions are beneficial to the continued development of NSPs. However, others, such as duplication or competition in terms of advocacy, can be detrimental.
- ➔ Part of the NSPs' strategic planning and mission/scope work also can be to establish a strong 'brand' so that the role, purpose and identify of the NSP is apparent. Clear branding can also support other NSP functions such as resource mobilisation, research, technical support, policy and advocacy work.

2.2 Defining purpose

2.2.2 Developing planning systems

An NGO/CBO support programme will have set itself a large number of targets involving the co-ordination of many different strands of activity, recorded in summary form in governing documents such as log frames. More detailed planning will be necessary in order to ensure that this programme of support adheres to guiding principles.

This will require the NGO/CBO support programme (NSP) to develop a number of enabling structures and systems in order to complete its strategic planning function. These top-level governing documents are usually linked to more detailed plans, delineating how the different elements of the organisation will work together effectively to achieve the organisational purposes.

The planning system will need to define a number of processes, outputs and parameters:

- how the governance of the NSP will work
- the structure and function of the overall workplan and other plans (for example, the evaluation or staff development plan)
- organisational structures, roles, responsibilities and capacity
- protocols such as the criteria for decision-making processes
- mechanisms for collecting and feeding back the learning from the practical support work to inform the review of strategic decisions at the replanning stage
- timeframe and parameters for strategic review, including roles and responsibilities in the review process.

Planning needs to be reviewed periodically so that the NSP and its partner NGOs and CBOs apply their learning in addition to reviewing workplans and budgets. Strategic replanning can involve a fundamental reassessment and repositioning of the programme or simply refine different elements or aspects of the programme.

However, the key feature that distinguishes replanning (as opposed to initial assessment and

planning) is that it also includes an assessment of the functions of the NSP itself. Strategic review and replanning can be used to:

- review the criteria for continuing support of NGO and CBO partners and the selection of new partners
- develop a better understanding of how grants are managed and spent, and review the design of partner organisations' projects
- review the quality and capacity of the NSP's technical support themes and mechanisms
- review the work and results of the policy, advocacy and learning systems
- refine the monitoring and evaluation systems
- review the suitability of the NSP's own organisational governance, structure and financial controls.

Issues to consider

- ➔ NSPs may require different kinds of planning systems at set up, during the lifetime of the programme and in order to develop an exit strategy if the programme is of limited duration rather than ongoing.
- ➔ There is no guaranteed way of ensuring that log frames will be used as living documents rather than just sit on the shelf unread. NSPs may need to experiment with different systems for keeping their activities on track.
- ➔ It is important to define who should be involved in the planning process. For example, there is a need to look at the role of partners in strategic planning.

Once NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) have established their strategic plan defining their scope of work, they need to identify and select NGO/CBO partners to work with. This process is undertaken by NSPs when first establishing their NGO/CBO support programme or taking on an NGO/CBO support function. It also occurs periodically as they support different partners once their scope of work and strategic direction changes.

Different approaches to selecting NGO/CBO partners are used by different NSPs depending on the types of support functions they aim to provide. This section of the resource focuses on the selection of NGOs and CBOs by NSPs providing grants and/or technical support.

Careful selection of NGO/CBO partners is important in order to ensure that NSPs work with the most appropriate organisations in order to achieve their goals and objectives. The process will enable NSPs to identify which organisations have the potential financial and programmatic capacity to manage activities, but also to work with the appropriate beneficiaries in their respective communities. This may involve identification and support of organisations that are newly established and organisationally informal, especially those working with or representing marginalised populations. It is also an opportunity to fill programmatic and geographical gaps not covered by other NSPs, government institutions or donors.

There are various strategies and methods available for selecting NGO/CBO partners, the appropriateness of which will depend on the objectives of the NSP. For example, NSPs can decide to cast their net wide initially by issuing a request for proposals or a call for partnership, and from the responses received narrow the selection through a process of proposal review, capacity assessments and community checks. Other strategies may include a targeted solicitation to a smaller group of pre-identified potential organisations or piloting with a select group of organisations.

The selection process of partner organisations needs to be transparent, accessible and easy to understand, so that those with limited experience of these processes are not obstructed from applying. The process is an ongoing one in which review and replanning may lead to some partners being added, some reselected and others deselected.

Issues to consider

- There is a tension between having to show results to demonstrate the impact of the NSP's work and the time needed to build up weaker but potentially crucial NGOs and CBOs.
- There may be some gaps in the institutional response to certain vulnerable groups or specific tasks that need to be addressed – for example, men who have sex with men, people with HIV/AIDS. In some cases these groups may exist but are not recognised or supported. In this instance, NSPs may support the establishment of an NGO or CBO to address these needs once they are sure that there are no existing groups.
- NSPs will need to manage the expectations of potential partners. This is particularly difficult when there are multiple steps involved in the full grant-making process.
- Sometimes being 'selected' might result in a CBO being transformed into a NGO. For example, this might occur through the establishment of more formal working arrangements, or through the organisation growing in size, or when volunteers become paid workers through access to funding. This raises many issues needing close attention and conscious choices. For example, CBOs play a distinct and important role, and there is often a temptation to 'grow' them without thinking through the implications.
- Selecting NGOs and selecting CBOs can often be a quite different process, and attention needs to be given to developing appropriate criteria.
- Both programmatic and financial staff should be involved in the selection process of partner organisations.

3.1 Requests for proposals and targeted solicitations

NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) can use a number of different strategies to invite NGOs and CBOs to submit applications, such as requests for proposals or through targeted solicitation of specific organisations.

Requests for proposals or announcements for partnerships are formal statements and can be made through a variety of media, including newspaper articles, radio announcements, newsletters and mass mailing to organisations. NSPs may outline a priority area of work such as prevention, care of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC), and target populations or geographical preferences according to their own strategic objectives. The request or announcement usually includes criteria for selection and guidelines for preparation of the proposal, and any supporting documents that are required.

Sometimes NSPs may want to be more targeted in their partner selection, and solicitation of a smaller, select group of NGOs and CBOs is used. This strategy has the advantage of resulting in less work in screening large numbers of responses, but there is a chance that organisations with potential will be missed.

NSPs can implement community mobilisation workshops and participatory community assessments as a way to identify potential partners, and then work with them to develop project proposals. In this instance it is essential that there should be a clear logic or criteria for their choice in order to avoid resentment from those not chosen. This approach can identify NGOs and CBOs that would not usually respond to request for proposals or that do not have strong writing skills.

Issues to consider

- ➔ It is important that requests for proposals are published in appropriate media, to which potential NGO/CBO partners have access. Furthermore, some strategies may favour one type of organisation over another. NSPs needs to use the media that best targets their audience.
- ➔ The effectiveness of the media should be continually assessed when used to obtain applications in order to ensure that they reach the proposed target, are cost-effective and timely.
- ➔ Requests for proposals should be announced a reasonable time in advance to ensure that NGOs and CBOs have adequate time to prepare any required documentation.
- ➔ Requests for proposals ideally should set out clearly defined selection criteria, including programmatic and organisational elements. This will promote transparency of the process and inform inappropriate applicants not to waste their time applying.

3.2 Proposal or NGO/CBO profile review

Once proposals have been received from potential partners, the next stage of the selection process is to review the proposal or the profile of the NGO or CBO to ensure that there is both a programmatic and organisational fit. This is usually achieved using assessment criteria.

It is difficult to generalise assessment criteria as this depends on the objectives of the NGO/CBO support programme (NSP). For example, NSPs may exclude some criteria that appear important because they aim to provide capacity-building support in these areas through their NGO/CBO support provision work in the future.

Assessment criteria may include whether or not:

- the organisation is registered
- the NGO or CBO is well managed and has the potential capacity to implement a grant
- the organisation is working in close partnership with the community or the intended beneficiaries, or shows clear potential to do so
- the project the organisation has designed is an appropriate response to the identified need
- the organisation is open to change and requesting technical support in addition to financial support.

The first criterion may make selection of CBOs difficult and therefore it may not be appropriate in many cases.

A checklist of criteria together with a clear scoring system will enable NSP staff to screen the applications systematically and objectively. It can be useful to have a shorter list of 'essential criteria' for initial screening. Where there are many applications, this cuts down the number that will need in-depth screening using secondary criteria.

Issues to consider

- ➔ More than one member of staff should be involved in an NGO/CBO profile or proposal review to avoid personal bias.

- ➔ NSPs may want to consider having representatives from other organisations such as other NSPs or government on their proposal review and selection committee. The selection committee should be independent and show transparency of process.
- ➔ In order to support CBOs which may not meet all the essential criteria, the NSP can decide to apply certain criteria only for grants over a stated amount.

New Khema Partner Selection — Stage 1 — January, 2000

1. Basic Information (if don't know, put DK)

1.1 NGO Name: _____

1.2 NGO Number: _____

1.3 Location: _____

1.4 Target Group(s): _____

1.5 Current Activities: _____

1.6 Funding Sources: _____

1.7 History with Khema: _____

2. Essential Criteria for Selection (if there are No No responses, the NGO must be rejected)

The NGO:	YES	NO	DK
is not for profit			
is formally & structurally outside the government			
is Contributor and Local			
is not just one person, but is an organisation			
Yes			

3. Desirable Criteria for January 2000 Selection

The NGO:	YES	NO	DK
works in a priority province near to Khema			
works with a target group new to Khema			
works with PLWHA			
works with Sex Workers			
has an organisational structure			
has some financial systems			

Comment: _____

Checklist — Stage 2 — January 2000

When they have finished their 'interview' of the set of profiles and bring back to Khema (to be at 16 noon or possible after the visit)

Discuss:

- recruitment (experience, management structure, funding, policy, staff, external relations) (where activities, why, capacity building of staff, missions)
- key statement and vision
- a) resources: budget conditions, main problems
- b) government activities, and help in the city (budget)
- c) recent proposal writing, meeting budget, writing & evaluation, financial procedure, personnel procedures (using hand)
- d) about a relationship with Khema (after they are about Khema's location and what an NGO from Khema is selected)

participation in the NGO management and

2) comment on the work

and

with other staff

waiting so that you can make a judgement on:

work: P1 (A)

content of HIV

time

new

accept funding systems

by 31st Dec 2000, who approval, expenditure

11th Feb, and if they are selected they will be

equipment

Philippine NGO Support Program

PROJECT TITLE: _____

PROVINCE: _____

RATING:

1 = Poor

2 = Satisfactory

3 = Good

4 = Very Good

5 = Excellent

CRITERIA	SCORE	COMMENT
1. PROFILE ANALYSIS		
2. RELEVANCE OF PROJECT TO THE TARGET COMMUNITY		
3. MANAGEMENT CAPABILITY OF THE PROJECT LEADER		
4. COMMUNITY SUPPORT		
5. FINANCIAL SYSTEMS		
6. OTHER CRITERIA		

SCORE: _____

COMMENT: _____

3.3 Capacity and credibility assessments

Parallel to a review of NGO/CBO proposals and profiles, it may be necessary for NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) to carry out a more detailed capacity assessment and a community credibility check. Capacity assessments are used to assess both the organisational and programmatic capacity of potential NGO/CBO partners. Key issues for organisational and programmatic capacity assessments include whether:

- the NGO or CBO is financially sound or could integrate good financial management and systems quickly with support
- the organisation is adequately staffed
- the NGO or CBO has an appropriate level of understanding of HIV/AIDS and/or other health and development issues on which to build.

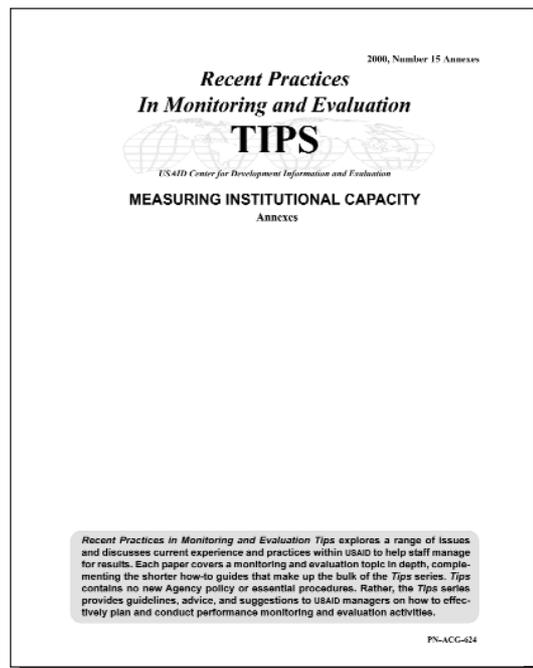
NSPs need to balance selecting organisations with a good existing level of capacity and encouraging and supporting the development of weaker, well-placed organisations that are in a position to play a key role in prevention, care or impact mitigation.

It is also important to make some kind of assessment of the organisation's credibility in the community. For example, NSPs can look for evidence of community participation in the NGO/CBO's programming and/or management, the level of respect the organisation commands in the area where they work, and perhaps the impact of past programmes.

Capacity assessments and community credibility checks require a visit to the organisation's location and can be time-consuming. It may be better, therefore, to include this step only for those organisations that have been shortlisted.

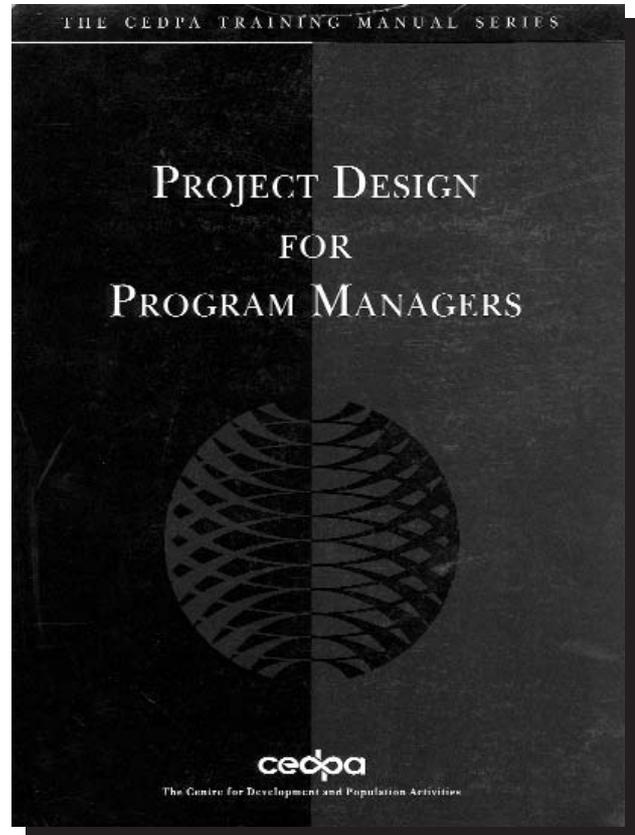
Issues to consider

- ➔ When doing a capacity check, NSPs need to decide whether existing capacity rather than the potential capacity of an organisation is a critical criterion for selection or rejection, given that capacity building is a core role of an NSP.
- ➔ NSPs may need to consider whether to give grants to NGOs and CBOs based on the work described in proposals or to take them through a process of participatory community assessments and project design based on their organisational potential.



NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) often channel considerable amounts of money from government, donors and international organisations to NGOs and CBOs to implement community-based projects. To fulfil this role effectively and efficiently, NSPs need to develop good systems and controls for the work that is supported financially and for the management of grants.

Additionally, in order to support NGOs and CBOs to enhance the quality of projects, NSPs may, where necessary, introduce the use of participatory community assessments by partner organisations, assist them in their project design and provide ongoing technical support to ensure that the organisation has the programmatic and organisational capacity to implement the project.



4.1 Project design and selection

Project design and selection encompasses a number of steps which, depending on the NGO/CBO support programme (NSP), may occur in a different sequence. Some NSPs will work with potential partners to conduct participatory community assessments before progressing to project design. This may then result in the development of a proposal that is considered in a project selection process. Other NSPs may not be involved in the project design process and may begin grant programming at the project selection stage, using proposals developed by NGOs and CBOs on their own.



Participants at an International HIV/AIDS Alliance and PHANSuP implemented youth camp in the Philippines.



Participants at an International HIV/AIDS Alliance and HASAB implemented project design workshop in Bangladesh.

4.1 Project design and selection

4.1.1 Participatory community assessments

Participatory community assessment (PCA) is a way of supporting communities to identify needs, services, resources and gaps in any area. References to participatory community assessments in this resource apply specifically to needs, services, resources and gaps relating to HIV/AIDS and sexual health. By encouraging NGOs and CBOs to incorporate PCAs into their programming, NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) can enhance the quality and impact of HIV/AIDS prevention, care and impact mitigation projects.

Using participatory tools and techniques (such as focus groups, in-depth interviews, role plays, diagramming and drawing) in community assessments can help NGOs and CBOs to identify the overall needs of the community and place sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS needs within that context. Furthermore, PCAs can help to identify vulnerability factors that put people at greater risk of HIV infection and the impact of HIV/AIDS. Involving the community, and particularly those most affected by HIV/AIDS, in this process helps NGOs and CBOs to develop programmes that are based on real needs and to address the contextual factors affecting vulnerability. It can also promote ownership of the programmes by the community, which in turn increases the chances of the activities being sustained in the long term.

Once projects have been designed and appropriate indicators established, information from PCAs can also be used to contribute to establishing baseline information against which project progress can be measured. Combined with other sources of information (for example, epidemiological data surveys), PCAs can help NGOs and CBOs and/or NSPs to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the HIV/AIDS situation and response in a given area. Furthermore, PCAs can play a role in establishing relations with the community, begin to promote the participation of those most affected by HIV/AIDS and provide an entry point for future project implementation.

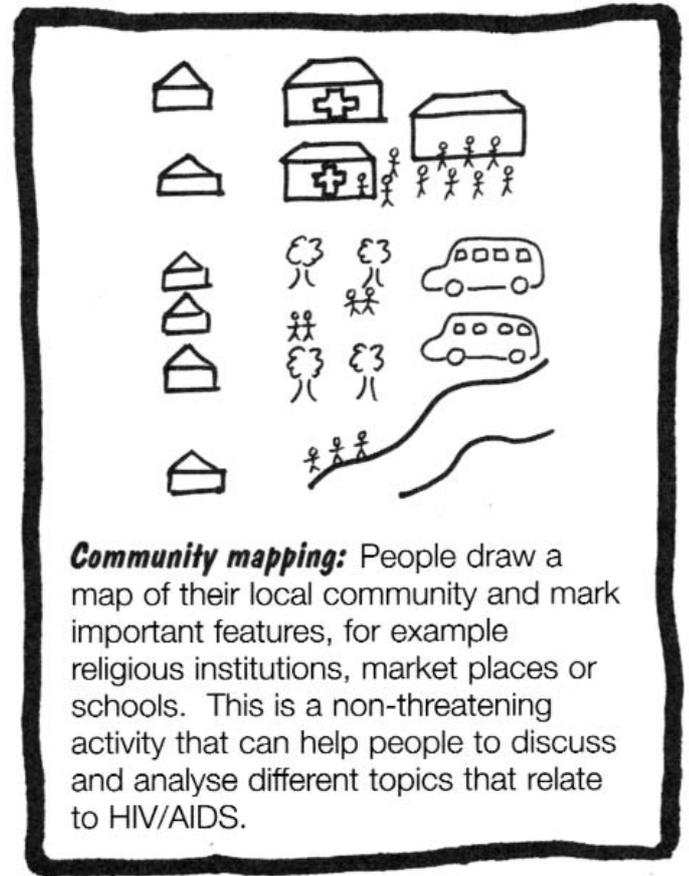
Issues to consider

- NSPs may need to change the attitudes and working practices of NGO/CBO staff and convince them that community participation makes a difference to the success and sustainability of programmes.
- NGOs and CBOs need to think about and define the population most important to the epidemic dynamic (key populations) while conducting a participatory community assessment. This will ensure that they have accurately identified and involved the relevant people. This does not necessarily mean that an NSP decides which population they will work with before the participatory community assessment. It is more to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the populations that are to be involved in the assessment.
- NSPs and their partner organisations may need to strike a balance between responding to priorities identified by communities through participatory assessments and their own programmatic priorities and strategies, those of their donors or the strategies of the national HIV/AIDS programme.
- Furthermore, NSPs need to consider to what extent they should support partner NGOs and CBOs to respond to needs identified during a participatory community assessment that do not relate specifically to HIV/AIDS. For example, it is tempting to focus solely on HIV/AIDS, given the urgency of the epidemic, rather than recognising that other needs may serve as entry points for the project or may help to establish credibility with the community.
- NSPs may need to help their partner NGOs and CBOs manage the expectations that a participatory community assessment can create in a community. It is important to recognise the role and capacity of other players and of the community itself when collectively analysing who should address gaps in the response.

4.1 Project design and selection

4.1.1 Participatory community assessments

- ➔ NSPs and their partner organisations should give careful consideration to the composition of participatory community assessment teams so that they have the right combination of skills, training and attitudes to make the exercise worthwhile.



Reference: A Facilitators' Guide to Participatory Workshops with NGOs/CBOs Responding to HIV/AIDS. (International HIV/AIDS Alliance, 2001)

4.1 Project design and selection

4.1.2 Project design

The ultimate responsibility for project design rests with the NGOs and CBOs and the communities they work with, since they are in the most appropriate position to undertake this. However, it must be recognised that organisations may need assistance in this process. Technical support in project design involves helping NGOs and CBOs to identify the steps and components involved in devising a good project and ways in which the community can become involved in the design process. Technical support is also important to share lessons about effective strategies from elsewhere so that each community does not have to reinvent the wheel.

Project design is a multi-step process that involves:

- analysis of the participatory community assessment findings
- analysis of other relevant data – for example, epidemiological data, research findings, etc.
- consideration of the approaches and good practices that exist in community responses to HIV/AIDS
- development and articulation of project objectives
- identification of priority problems
- organisational and environmental analysis, such as a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis
- selection of strategies
- development of a project plan (workplan, monitoring and evaluation plan, budget and staff roles and responsibilities) using a log frame where appropriate
- presentation of the project in the form of a proposal.

NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) can support NGOs and CBOs in this process by providing them with frameworks, tools, formats and information about good, effective practice.

The project design process can also be an opportunity for NSPs to identify and plan for the future technical support needs of partner organisations.

Issues to consider

- ➔ NSPs have a role in ensuring that both donor and community priorities are balanced and reflected in the project design.
- ➔ NSPs need to consider to what extent they should be involved in the design of a project and the extent to which partners are expected to involve affected and non-affected communities.
- ➔ NSPs' assistance in project design should focus on building the capacity of NGOs and CBOs to design projects, rather than developing the project design itself. This will help NGOs and CBOs to deliver their own strategies and design future projects without over-reliance on the NSP.
- ➔ NSPs should be aware that while frameworks and formats can assist in the development of a project, they should not be so rigid as to stifle innovation and creativity.
- ➔ It is important to build flexibility into project design by incorporating opportunities for review and replanning – not just at the end of the project but mid-term as well.
- ➔ It is important to recognise and balance the tension between supporting communities to decide on their own strategies and speeding up the response by being more directive about how the project should look.



Participants at a project design workshop in Zambia, International HIV/AIDS Alliance, 2000.

4.1 Project design and selection

4.1.3 Project selection

Project selection is a process for awarding grants for project implementation. Ideally, as with partner selection, this process is transparent and technically sound.

Selection of projects require clear criteria and these may include:

- relevance to the NGO/CBO support programme's (NSP) objectives and priorities
- geographical coverage
- suitability of approach
- appropriateness of budget
- feasibility
- potential impact
- epidemiological relevance.

In addition to project selection criteria, it is also necessary to develop mechanisms for the selection of projects that ensure fairness and avoid conflicts of interest. For example, a selection committee should comprise individuals – both from within and outside the organisation – who have expertise and knowledge but no vested interests. Committee members should be provided with explicit terms of reference so that they are clear in their role and responsibilities.

Project selection policies also need to include criteria for renewal of grants. Although some projects may require longer-term support, limited resources dictate that a balance between support to new projects and existing ones should be achieved.

The process of selection can vary and different organisations may use more than one method depending on the countries and the people involved. One common approach is a multi-stage system for selection, where an advisory committee is involved in identifying proposals with strong potential and an executive committee makes the final decision. This decision should also consider the technical support needs of the project and the ability of the NSP to meet these needs.

Issues to consider

- ➔ In selecting projects, NSPs may want to consider how each individual project relates to the others and contributes to the balance of their portfolio.
- ➔ The selection of the project may be a secondary step following an initial process of selecting NGO/CBO partners. Depending on the partner selection approach that is used, the project selection process itself can be a way for NSPs to work with partner organisations to improve the quality of project design and proposals. This not only provides an opportunity for technical support but also encourages and includes in the process NGOs and CBOs that are less confident about project design.
- ➔ NSPs may want to consider submission of concept papers prior to a full proposal in order to save time and resources on the part of the NGOs, CBOs and NSP.
- ➔ NSPs should consider providing assistance in the preparation of the proposal document, recognising that project design demands a wide range of skills that may disadvantage some organisations.
- ➔ NSPs should be aware that the selection process may cause unconstructive competition among NGOs and CBOs. NSPs need to consider ways of reducing or mitigating this.
- ➔ Repetitive renewal of projects may encourage dependency of partner organisations.
- ➔ Lengthening the timescales of project cycles helps reduce the administration burden involved in project renewal. However, it decreases opportunities to review the impact and relevance of a project.

4.2 Grant programming

One function of an NGO/CBO support programme (NSP) is provision of grants to NGOs and CBOs to implement projects with the community. These may range from small grants for short-term activities such as exchange visits, to larger grants for ongoing work such as scaling up community care and support services. The number, size and duration of grants given by an NSP will depend on the availability of resources and the NSP's strategy.

Once a grant proposal has been approved, NSPs need to manage the grant-making process. This involves drawing up contracts, administering and monitoring the grants. It is an area of work that requires close collaboration between the NSP's programmatic, finance and administration staff. Many organisations develop a grant management manual to assist their staff in this area of work.

In this section, documents relating to grant programming can be divided into two components: contracts and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreements and reporting.

Grant Agreement

Grant # _____

The Parties to this agreement _____ (hereinafter the _____ Partner) and MAMTA _____ (hereinafter known as the Lead Partner) _____ New Delhi

The conditions of this agreement are set forth below :

1. **The Purpose of the Project**
 - i. The purpose of the project is to contribute to a reduction in vulnerability to STD/HIV and to the impact of AIDS, by delivering appropriate, effective and sustainable responses in prevention and care, or in care and support, within specific target communities.
 - ii. To strengthen the capacity of _____ to implement the project, the Lead Partner undertakes to provide technical support to the _____ Partner through training workshops and one to one technical support.
2. **Assent & Time Period**
 - i. The Lead Partner hereby agrees to grant INR _____ to the _____ Partner to carry out the activities as described in the Project Proposal and Workplan, Attachment A. Funds granted are available for programme expenditures as shown in the Grant Budget, Attachment B.
 - ii. The collection period for the grant is from _____ through to _____.
3. **Obligations and Deliverables**
 - i. Deliverables will be quarterly. The 1st deliverable will be made once this agreement is signed and signed on approved Budget and Workplan for the quarter and upon completion of a Disbursement Request Form. Subsequent deliverables will be made after receipt of a Financial Report and against approved Workplan and Budget for the next quarter.
 - ii. The deliverable schedule is as follows:
 - 1st deliverable upon signature of this agreement
 - 2nd deliverable upon receipt of quarterly report by _____
4. **Financial Record Keeping**
 - i. All financial reports and statements are to be prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. All original receipts, paid bills and financial records substantiating grant expenditures must be submitted with the Financial Report. The _____ Partner will maintain copies of all receipts for their records. Accounting records with documentation for support activities, must be maintained and made available to the Lead Partner or its donors for examination for a maximum of three years after the date of submission of the final Financial Report.
5. **Financial Reporting Requirements**
 - i. The _____ Partner will submit a Quarterly Financial Report _____ (hereinafter referred to as the Quarterly Report) to the Lead Partner by the _____ day of the month after the end of a quarter for the previous quarter's expenditures, following the specified format, Attachment D.

(NGO/CBO)
Agreed _____ Date: _____
(Name)
(Position)

Agreed _____ Date: _____
(Name)
(Position)

Agreed _____ Date: _____
(Name)
(Position)

_____ (Name)
_____ (Position)

_____ (Name)
_____ (Position)

_____ (Name)
_____ (Position)

4.2 Grant programming

4.2.1 Contracts and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreements

'Contracts' and 'MOUs' mean different things to different organisations, donors and within different legal systems. Whatever they are called, there usually exists a legally binding document which outlines the respective responsibilities, budget, timeframe and the reporting requirements (financial and programmatic) between NGOs/CBOs and an NGO/CBO support programme (NSP).

Issues to consider

- Different kinds of legal documents are used for different legal systems and organisations. There is no general consistency in approach, and each NSP should find out which kind of documents are appropriate in each setting.
- NSPs need to ensure that sufficient financial controls are in place to meet the statutory requirements of the agreement.
- As NSPs are often contractually bound to their donors, they need to establish which of the donor regulations also apply to their contracted NGOs and CBOs. For example, a donor may stipulate legal restrictions or regulations that the NSP should follow. The NSP then needs to decide to what extent these issues should be added to the NGO/CBO partner legal documentation.
- It is important that NSPs ensure that partner organisations have clear governance structures (for example, clear finance liability responsibilities) to honour the terms of the legal documentation.
- NSPs and their partners need to agree on what is and is not negotiable within a legal document at the onset of the agreement.
- Legal documentation should clarify whether NGO/CBO partners need to be audited. Most NSPs need to be able to audit their financial systems, and therefore they need to be able to audit the grants provided. NSPs often have a dilemma here. NGO partners may have financial systems that can be audited, but the double-entry book-keeping systems used by many CBOs are not adequate for auditing.

In such a case, the NSP needs to decide whether they:

- cannot therefore work with CBOs
- will impose and train CBO staff to incorporate a financial system that can be audited
- can employ alternative systems which mean that CBOs do not need to be audited. For example, the NSP might provide advances for which the CBO provides documentation and recipients to the NSP. The NSP then includes the expenditure within their own accounts that can be audited.

4.2 Grant programming

4.2.2 Reporting

Reporting is a way for NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) and their donors to monitor the programmatic progress of a project as well as account for money that is spent. The increase in funds to community-level projects, coupled with the need to show impact has meant that more than ever donors are requiring a higher level of accountability from NGOs and CBOs.

In NGO/CBO support work reporting often happens sequentially with NGOs and CBOs reporting to NSPs who in turn report to their donor. For those NGOs, CBOs and NSPs who are supported by multiple donors, the process of reporting becomes more complex with the need to report to multiple organisations, who each have different regulations and requirements.

Efficient and effective reporting requires that good systems are in place to collect, collate, analyse and document the required information and lessons learned. These systems should be developed with programme indicators in mind so that the information gained will support the monitoring and evaluation process and programme development. However, reporting should not be viewed solely as a way to account to donors but also as an opportunity for staff to reflect on and to promote their work. At both partner NGO/CBO and NSP levels there needs to be clear roles and responsibilities for staff who are involved in the process of reporting.

Under the terms of a contract, or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), between partner NGOs/CBOs and NSPs, NGOs and CBOs are often required to submit a financial and narrative activity report at specified intervals, and disbursement of money may be linked to the receipt and approval of reports. NSPs need to provide their partner organisations with clear guidelines on reporting requirements and work with partners to develop reporting systems so that they are not excessively burdened in this respect. Providing feedback to partner NGOs or CBOs on submitted reports is often a good opportunity for NSPs to also provide technical support on monitoring and evaluation, and documentation.

Issues to consider

- NSPs need to ensure that reports from partner organisations include both quantitative and qualitative information.
- NSPs can use the reporting process and the information gained to make decisions about programmatic direction and required technical input.
- Financial and programmatic reporting require skills, and NGOs and CBOs often need technical support in this area.
- Partner NGOs and CBOs should be encouraged to use the process of reporting for reflection on their activities and to identify lessons learned. This will help them to improve programmes and input into the collective knowledge about HIV/AIDS.
- There is often tension experienced by NGOs/CBOs and NSP staff from the opposing pressures of needing to submit high quality reports in order to secure funds against using the time to get on with implementing the project. It is important for NSPs to highlight and emphasise to their own staff, and that of partner NGOs and CBOs, the importance of reporting in fundraising and donor relations.
- NSPs can use reports to donors as an advocacy tool to persuade them to support issues that are of importance to NSPs and their partner organisations.
- Reporting can reflect weaknesses and failures as well as highlighting successes. This is important for learning and is most likely to be possible if there is a relationship of trust and openness between NSPs and their partner organisations.
- Increasingly NGOs are funded by multiple donors and an NSP may only partially fund an NGO's or CBO's activities. NSPs will need to consider to what extent they can expect partner organisations to report on activities that might not be directly funded by them but to which they contribute.
- Often NSPs have more than one donor who requires reporting from the NSP's partners as part of their monitoring and evaluation process. Different donors may have different timelines and reporting requirements. The reporting requirements between NSPs and their partners should be synchronised as far as possible to ensure that the burden of information collection, analysis and the preparation of reports is kept to a minimum.

Technical support is a two-way, interactive process that aims to increase the skills, knowledge and attitudes of the people involved. It is a core function of an NGO/CBO support programme (NSP) to support its partner organisations in technical learning, either by providing the support itself or by subcontracting to another organisation. This could be a training organisation, another technical support organisation or a partner NGO/CBO with the relevant expertise.

A wide range of themes may be covered when providing technical support. Of these, **HIV-related topics, organisational development and programme management** are discussed further in this section.

The diversity of themes covered when providing technical support is mirrored by the range of mechanisms for delivery. Examples include **one-to-one technical support, workshops, exchange visits and study tours, training of technical support providers and jointly developing resources**. Each have their strengths and weaknesses, and the challenge for NSPs is to combine these mechanisms in order to be able to provide access to a comprehensive, synergistic and flexible programme of technical support that is developed, evaluated and redesigned to meet the changing needs of its partners. Mentoring is another type of less tangible but equally important support that NSPs regularly provide to their partners.

NSPs need to define and assure minimum standards of quality in technical support. This includes making sure that the content is accurate, ethical, up-to-date and relevant. Methodologies for learning are most effective when they are innovative, creative, experiential, and linguistically and culturally appropriate. Technical support also needs to be delivered in a timely way with dedicated human and financial resources.

The process of providing technical support to partner organisations is a cyclical one. It involves assessment of capacity and technical support needs,

design and delivery of the support, monitoring and evaluation of the support given, followed where necessary by redesign and adaptation. During a programming cycle there are a number of opportunities for NSPs, together with their partners, to identify their partners' technical support needs. For example, this may be during participatory community assessments, other trainings, periodical reporting and the review and replanning process.

Joint planning of technical support provision helps to ensure that partner organisations are not overloaded with technical support to the extent that it interferes with implementation of the project. However, often organisations that are in most need of capacity building are least able to recognise and identify their own technical support needs. As a result, there is sometimes a need for NSPs to play a more proactive role in identifying areas for capacity building during the early stages of an organisation's development.

Monitoring and evaluation of the process and impact of technical support provision is an area of work that NSPs should dedicate time and human resources to. It may be straightforward to evaluate the quality of a given technical support activity but much harder to assess its effectiveness and impact, as this may only become evident in the longer term.



A facilitator at an International HIV/AIDS Alliance and HASAB workshop in Bangladesh helps the group to explore their ideas.

Issues to consider

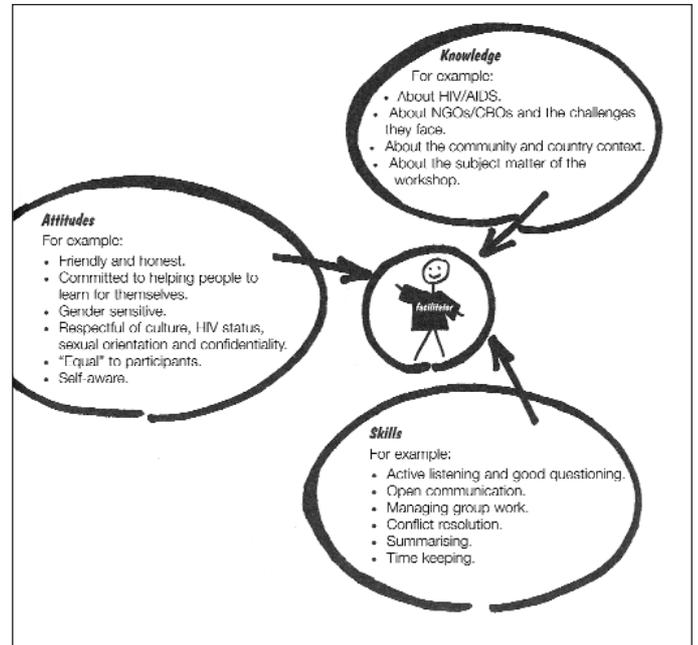
- Where many languages or dialects are used, NSPs will need to consider which language is most appropriate for technical support. During workshops this is usually decided with the participants when the ground-rules for the workshop are agreed. For workshops and other technical support activities where multiple organisations are involved, NSPs should pay attention to which organisations are included, and balance the benefits of cross-cultural learning against associated problems such as language barriers and different levels of experience, knowledge and expertise of participants.
- The success of technical support activities is largely dependent on two key components: the quality of the support given and the engagement and input of the recipient. As well as maintaining quality control of technical support, NSPs should work with partner organisations to ensure that the most appropriate people participate in technical support activities. The level of responsibility of participants, existing skills, knowledge, attitude and relevance to their work, as well as their decision-making power, should be taken into consideration.
- In order to build organisational capacity rather than the skills of individuals, NSPs should consider involving a range of staff, board members and volunteers within an organisation in technical support activities and promote the establishment of mechanisms that will help to institutionalise learning.
- There is an argument for providing a lot of technical support early on during the programme cycle. This will help to enhance the quality of the project by ensuring that the organisation has the skills and knowledge to implement the project well. There is a limit to how much an organisation can take in at any one time, so a fine balance in terms of quantity and different mechanisms is needed.
- NSPs should consider using local sources of technical support as much as possible, as this may help to promote continuity and sustainability of technical support and also help to build local capacity. Where such expertise exists, it is worth trying to identify why it may not have been tapped previously. In circumstances where it is necessary to bring in international consultants, an NSP may consider pairing them up with a local expert to provide local knowledge and perspective.
- It is important for NSPs to address the issue of how long technical support will be provided to a partner and whether it is tied to grants. NSPs have to strike a balance between responding to the technical support needs identified by their partners and their own identified technical support priorities. Furthermore, NSPs will need to decide on a programme of technical support that addresses both technical and organisational strengthening in a way that is complementary and reinforcing. For example, provision of technical support for establishing a care and support component of NGO/CBO work should be complemented with support around development of indicators for this work and ensure that it feeds into the partners' overall monitoring and evaluation plans. It is also important for partners to be given the opportunity to look at their own policies for providing care and support to staff with HIV/AIDS.
- While there is an argument for NSPs to stick to familiar areas of expertise and methodologies, innovation and creativity can only happen when they are willing to experiment and learn from others. For instance, NSPs will always have to develop innovative ways to work with people who have different literacy skills or who come from different cultural or religious contexts.

5.1 Technical support mechanisms

Technical support mechanisms are the various ways in which to share and learn both skills and knowledge. There are many different mechanisms for sharing and learning, including mentoring and peer support. In this section, however, five commonly used mechanisms for technical support are described: one-to-one technical support, workshops, exchange visits and study tours, training of technical support providers and jointly developing resources.

Workshops are a common way to deliver information and skills to multiple partners, and are one of the more cost-effective ways of providing technical support. Exchange visits and study tours provide an opportunity to see how projects are implemented, but can be very time consuming and expensive, and cater to a smaller number of organisations each time.

The process of developing or adapting resources can be a learning opportunity in itself and also provides a helpful product. Resources are most useful when developed or adapted by the people who will use them. Most NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) use a combination of different mechanisms to address their partner organisations' technical support needs. Careful consideration of the type of mechanism to be employed is necessary so that it can be appropriate to the needs and context of those participating in the activity.



Reference: A Facilitators' Guide to Participatory Workshops with NGOs/CBOs Responding to HIV/AIDS. (International HIV/AIDS Alliance, 2001)

5.1 Technical support mechanisms

5.1.1 One-to-one technical support

One-to-one technical support is when an organisation is given support on an individual basis. Often the support is specifically designed to meet the needs of the organisation and can more readily take into account the capacity and starting point of that organisation.

One-to-one technical support is clearly one of the most effective technical support mechanisms available. Although it may not be appropriate in every case, one-to-one technical support activities allow people to see and really gain an understanding of a project or opinions of a group of people (particularly if they are people affected by HIV/AIDS). As one-to-one technical support often occurs in the form of a face-to-face visit, it offers greater opportunity for interactive exchange between those involved and the establishment of a closer relationship. These kind of technical support activities allow NGOs and CBOs to actually interact with the community.

On-site one-to-one visits have the advantage of participants being able to see the organisation and its systems in practice. One-to-one technical support is useful when establishing systems (for example, when an organisation is setting up an accounts system or database), but this type of support also has great programmatic value when intensive input is required. Support for carrying out participatory community assessments and for organising peer-led activities are examples of this. One-to-one technical support simply to facilitate solving problems or during annual review and replanning is also helpful.

Issues to consider

- One-to-one technical support is very labour intensive and NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) need to take this into account when assigning staff roles and responsibilities.
- The increased access of many organisations to information technology means that more one-to-one technical support can now be provided through emails and telephone conversations. This may make visits – either from or to partner organisations – less necessary, although no less valuable.
- If face-to-face technical support is required, NSPs need to take into consideration where that should occur. Although it may be more convenient for staff from partner organisations to come to the NSP's office, often more learning takes place in the environment in which it will be practised.

5.1 Technical support mechanisms

5.1.2 Workshops

Workshops aim to exchange information and build the skills of participants by employing a mixture of participatory techniques and information provision. Participants actively contribute to the learning process and are encouraged to share information, learn from each other and work together to solve problems. Participatory approaches employ a mix of methodologies and activities such as role-plays, drawing, case studies, small group work and many more. Additionally, bringing fieldwork into a workshop can enrich the learning process and allow the participants to see theory being put into practice. For example, a workshop on advocacy may involve participants practising advocacy work with the local media, religious leader or politician.

Preparation of a workshop involves:

- identifying the participants
- assessing their current knowledge/skills level and their needs
- selecting and preparing a venue
- planning the contents, structure, schedule and individual sessions
- selecting and preparing a facilitation team and resource people
- planning for documentation and evaluation.

Within the schedule of a workshop a number of fixed activities are normally included: ice-breakers to help participants to get to know each other and to feel at ease; ground-rules to help to create an environment conducive to learning and mutual respect; and energisers to give participants more enthusiasm to learn.

Good facilitation is a critical factor in determining the success of a workshop. NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) should carefully select lead facilitators and provide clear terms of reference for their involvement. Additionally, NSPs should provide an opportunity for less experienced facilitators to build their skills by working alongside the lead facilitator.

Although workshops can be an effective way to provide technical support to relatively large groups of people, it is recognised that they are not adequate as a means on their own and should be integrated into a comprehensive process of ongoing mentoring and support.

Issues to consider

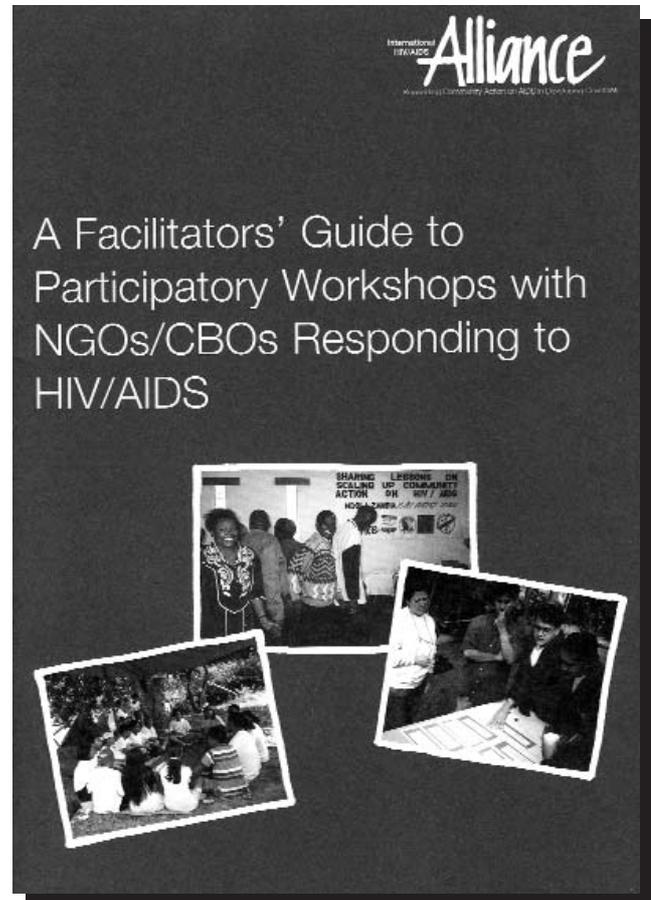
- ➔ When designing a workshop, NSPs need to set realistic objectives and recognise that skills building is a long-term process.
- ➔ Incorporating field work and project visits into workshops, combining theory with experimental learning, can greatly enrich the learning process. This has to be balanced, however, against the ethics of 'practising' what is being learned during a workshop with community members who may have little to benefit.
- ➔ NSPs often have to compromise on the number of participants attending a workshop. In particular, NSPs with a large number of partner organisations find it difficult to select which organisation should attend a workshop. Consequently, they often include more participants than would be ideal for the planned activities. This also can limit the possibility of more than one participant from an organisation attending, which reduces the potential for institutional rather than individual learning.
- ➔ Workshops are efficient mechanisms for people to build knowledge and skills, but experience shows that they need to be followed up and perhaps combined with other forms of technical support to increase their effectiveness in the long term.
- ➔ NSPs need to ensure that the knowledge and skills gained by individuals during a workshop are incorporated into their organisations afterwards. Participants should be encouraged to share their experiences, learnings and materials with colleagues on return to their respective organisations. The workshop can be designed with this in mind. Experience has shown that learning through participatory

5.1 Technical support mechanisms

5.1.2 Workshops

activities has more chance of diffusing through an organisation after a workshop than learning through more didactic methods.

- ➔ Good documentation of a workshop is useful to NSPs and the participants. A workshop report can serve as reference material for future workshops, as resource material for the participants and their organisations, and as a document to keep donors and other stakeholders informed.
- ➔ Proactively soliciting genuine feedback from partner organisations on the quality and relevance of technical support will help NSPs to improve their future work. In the case of workshops, regular daily feedback can help shape the workshop as it goes. This enables the workshop to have the best possible chance of really meeting the needs of the participants.
- ➔ NSPs need to weigh the pros and cons of holding residential workshops (at a location where participants are away from their regular working environment). The benefits include fewer distractions and competing priorities for participants, and an opportunity for those from partner organisations to get to know each other in a neutral setting. However, the cost of travel and accommodation can sometimes outweigh the benefits.



A participant at an International HIV/AIDS Alliance and AMSED/PASA implemented workshop in Morocco.

5.1 Technical support mechanisms

5.1.3 Exchange visits and study tours

Exchange visits and study tours are ways of sharing and learning by seeing how the work is actually implemented. However, there are differences between the two.

Exchange visits are particularly effective for learning about project implementation and are suited to two organisations working on the same issue or target population.

Study tours often involve visiting a number of projects. Although they tend to be less in-depth and hands-on, study tours provide an opportunity to compare and contrast the various methodologies and strategies used by different organisations. Exchange visits and study tours can occur within a country, between countries and between regions.

Both exchange visits and study tours are time-consuming for all concerned and can be very expensive. Often the logistics are complicated, particularly where inter-country tours are arranged and translation is needed. However, at best they provide great opportunities for peer learning and motivation.

Issues to consider

- When arranging exchange visits or study tours, NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) need to ensure that the objectives and expected outputs are clearly defined and articulated. This way both parties – the visitor and those being visited – are clear about their roles and responsibilities.
- Exchange visits and study tours can be very costly. It is therefore vital that NSPs have clear objectives and selection criteria for the involvement of partner organisations. The process needs to be transparent and demonstrate how the organisation or programme will benefit.
- Study tours can be an opportunity to bring representatives from different sectors together. Away from the constraints of their jobs and roles, participants can get to know each other

and form constructive relationships. This can be particularly effective for promoting multi-sectoral partnerships, especially in those countries where there is lack of collaboration across sectors.

- NSPs need to be aware of the pros and cons of promoting an organisation as a model project. Having people constantly visit an organisation takes both time and human resources and may ultimately be detrimental to the implementation and effectiveness of the project.



Members of an Indian NGO visiting Vithei Chivet in Cambodia.

5.1 Technical support mechanisms

5.1.4 Training technical support providers

Training of technical support providers is a common method of technical support used by NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs), particularly those that work through intermediaries who then go on to provide technical support. It involves building the skills and knowledge of individuals, who then share their learning with other people.

The advantage of training technical support providers is that by investing in a relatively small number of people who go on to train others, a much larger number of technical support providers will eventually reach the community. The investment in developing the skills of local technical support providers must include follow-up, supervision and support to ensure that they have the power and resources to maintain a high quality of technical support.

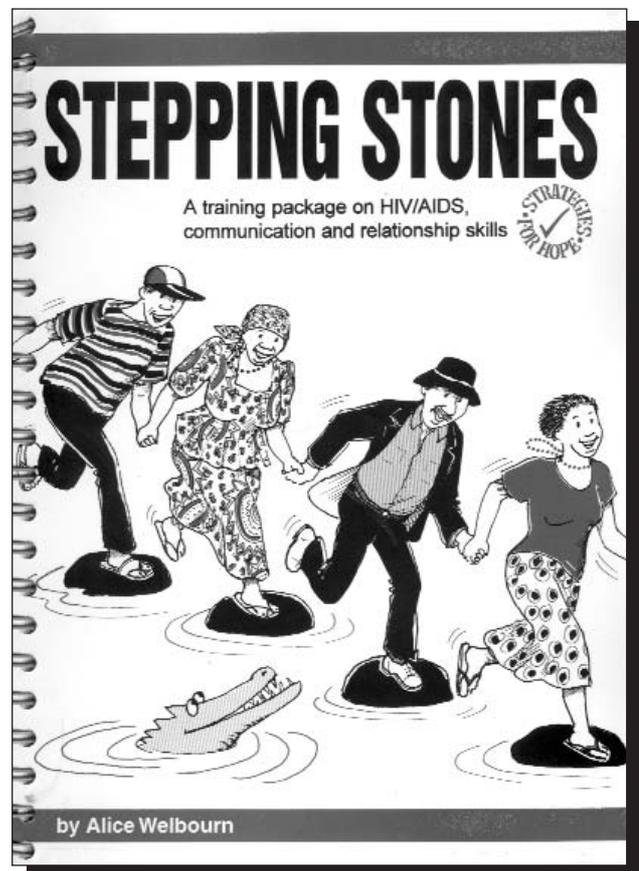
'Training of technical support providers' is a term often used to describe two different types of skills-building training, and it is important that a distinction is made between them. The first involves training local technical support providers, who in turn support the community. The second involves training of peer educators as a core group of people to go out and train people in particular areas of knowledge and skills. Like training technical local support providers, training peer educators is an effective way of scaling up the impact of technical support so that it benefits more people, and requires less investment in support and follow-up.

Issues to consider

- ➔ When developing a pool of local technical support providers or resource people, attention must be given not only to building their skills, knowledge and attitudes on a specific topic but also to supporting their ability to train or support others to gain these.
- ➔ The success of a technical support provider programme is dependent on the assumption that those trained will go on to provide technical support to others. Often it is

necessary for NSPs to encourage and provide support for them to do this.

- ➔ Quality control of ongoing technical support is hard to assure.
- ➔ Individuals need to be able to internalise the information and processes themselves before they can go on to support others.
- ➔ It may be necessary to introduce different approaches to providing technical support to strengthen the work of these technical support providers.



5.1 Technical support mechanisms

5.1.5 Jointly developing resources

There is a huge amount and variety of training and reference materials on HIV/AIDS available. Resources in the form of manuals, toolkits, books, CD-ROMS, videos and audio materials cover a wide range of topics relevant to NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) and their partner organisations, and are available all over the world.

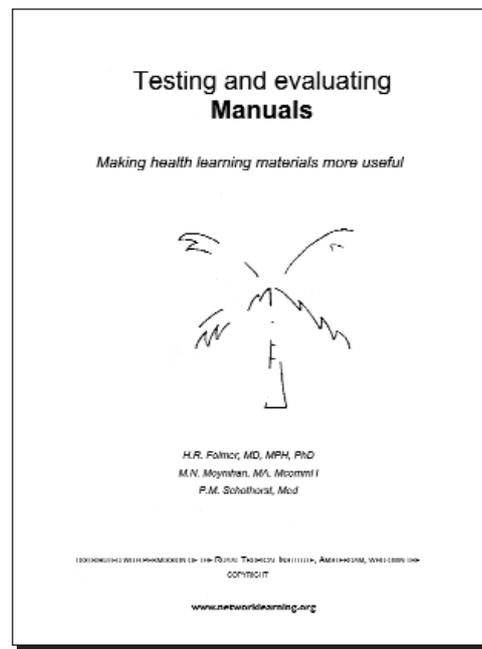
By identifying and helping partners to access key resources which are technically sound, appropriate and user friendly, NSPs can support their partner organisations in a range of topics beyond their own scope and expertise. Some of these materials need to be adapted to make them linguistically and culturally appropriate.

NSPs may decide to produce new resources, but it should be noted that the production of training materials is often a very expensive and time-consuming activity. Nonetheless, production and dissemination of key resources can be a cost-effective way for an NSP to widen its impact beyond its direct partner organisations.

To increase cost-effectiveness, NSPs can ensure that tools and materials are effectively distributed at the community level through partnerships with specialised agencies and national and regional resource centres which proactively reach out to NGOs and CBOs. Cost-effectiveness can also be increased by involving end-users in the development of resources and through strategic field testing to ensure that they are appropriate and will be used as widely as possible.

Issues to consider

- Before developing new materials to support their partner organisations, NSPs should thoroughly review existing resources to ensure that there is a genuine need for new materials.
- If NSPs are to ensure the usefulness of materials, field testing of resources with NGOs and CBOs and monitoring and evaluating their use is a key part of the resource development and dissemination process.
- When developing tools and training resources, NSPs should take into account the media in which the information is developed to ensure that their partner organisations can access and use the resource (i.e. CD-ROMs, videos, audio tapes, manuals).
- Involving the end-user in the development of tools and resources is often vital to the quality of the product and can be a capacity-building exercise in itself. However, NSPs should be wary of involving partners in developing a resource from which they will not benefit directly.
- Manuals and toolkits are most effective when the user is already familiar with the resource. For example, a toolkit used as the basis for a workshop is more likely to be used by the participants in the future.
- NGOs and CBOs often adapt tools and training resources as they use them to make them linguistically and culturally appropriate to their context. Although this may be necessary, there is sometimes a problem of quality control of the adaptation.
- Resource centres require considerable investment in terms of time and money. NSPs therefore need to be certain that a resource centre is needed and will be used before developing it.



5.2 Training themes

Since the 1990s there have been huge advances in knowledge in the field of HIV/AIDS. Concurrently, NGOs and CBOs have increased and expanded the scope of their activities to meet the greater demand for services. As a result, NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) need to support them over an ever-wider range of technical areas. In this section, a number of training themes are considered: HIV-related topics, organisational development and programme management.

Issues to consider

- There is a huge amount to learn in HIV/AIDS work, and NSPs need to recognise that a substantial investment of both time and money is required for partner organisations to take on work in this field.
- Furthermore, NSPs should not consider the learning process to be complete until evaluation shows that people have internalised the information and skills and are confident to use them.
- Often it is better to start off at a basic level on a topic and follow up with further training, rather than try to include too much information and skills in a single technical support activity.
- NSPs need to combine programmatic with organisational development training quite carefully in order to ensure that partner organisations are strengthened organisationally as well as technically. There is a danger of focusing too much on technical issues at the expense of organisational themes. Although this may yield results in the short term, it may be detrimental to the project as well as the organisation in the long term.

5.2 Training themes

5.2.1 HIV-related topics

A massive range of HIV-related topics are now being addressed, and the list is ever expanding. Themes tend to relate to the epidemiology, prevention, care, and impact alleviation of HIV/AIDS. Examples include:

- basic HIV information
- information, education and communications materials development
- sexually transmitted infections management
- gender and sexuality
- community care and support
- orphans and vulnerable children
- access to treatment
- linking HIV with tuberculosis
- working with marginalised and hard-to-reach groups.

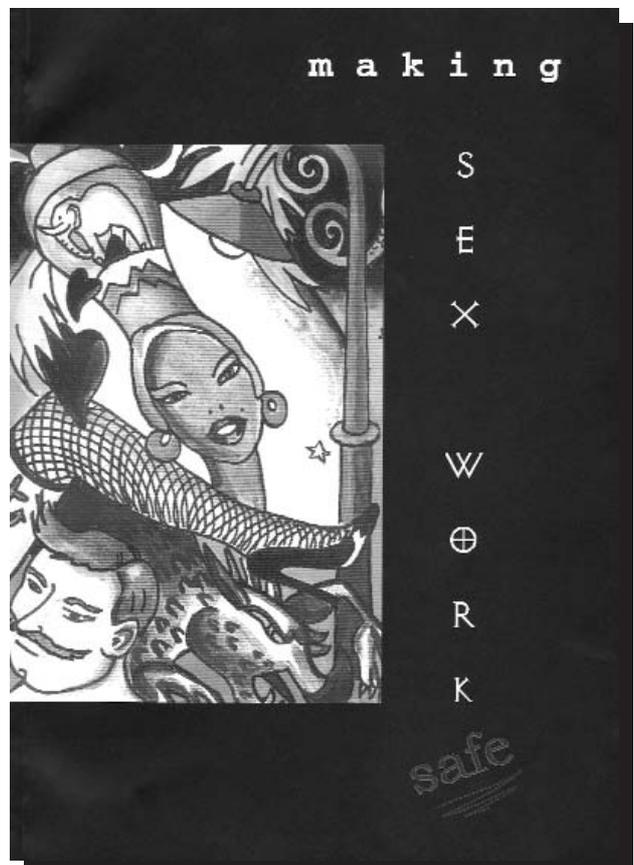
There are also a number of cross-cutting themes that need to be addressed, such as stigma and discrimination, participation and the involvement of people living with HIV/AIDS.

When delivering technical support to NGOs and CBOs on HIV-related topics, NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) need to consider:

- the context in which the information is delivered
- the level and depth of the information the NSP has
- the existing knowledge and experience of the recipients.

Issues to consider

- ➔ It is important that NSP technical support providers themselves have a good understanding of HIV/AIDS before they provide technical support to partner organisations.
- ➔ NSPs need to emphasise in their technical support the linkages between themes – for example, between prevention and care work.
- ➔ The dynamic nature of the epidemic means that knowledge, technologies and treatments for HIV are constantly increasing and changing. It is essential that NSPs keep abreast of developments to ensure that their technical support is up-to-date and relevant. NSPs need to make sure that they have good access to quality information, keep a constant, two-way flow of information to and from their partners, and maintain internal processes for information exchange amongst staff.



5.2 Training themes

5.2.2 Organisational development

The changing environment and challenges that NGOs and CBOs face mean that organisations need sound organisational structures and the ability to think strategically to enable them to adapt and respond. Investing heavily in the development of programmatic expertise without strengthening organisational capacity is unlikely to result in sustainable programmes. Therefore, NGOs and CBOs and the NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) that support them need to pay more attention to the process of organisational development.

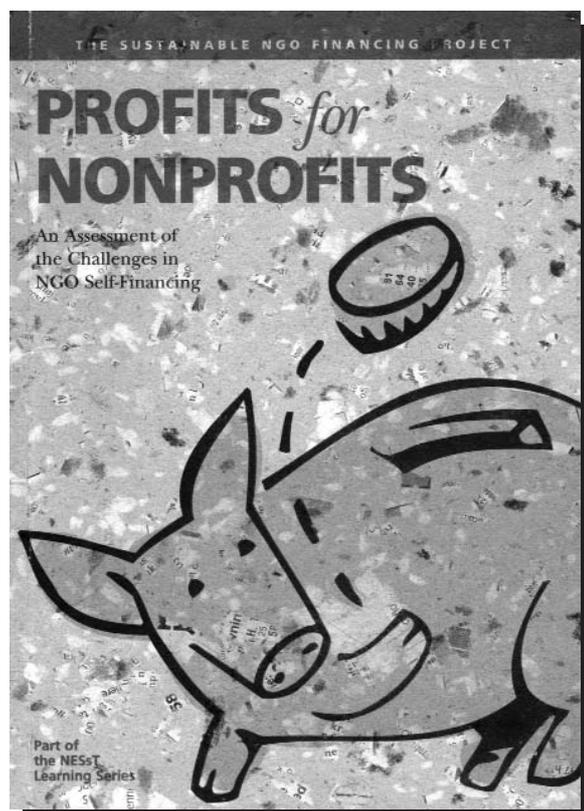
Organisational development is a long-term process that organisations need to undertake to enhance their effectiveness and sustainability. It involves strengthening an organisation's structures, systems and relationships in order that it can meet its goals more effectively and efficiently. Organisational development includes a wide range of issues such as:

- structures, policies and procedures
- good governance, management and decision-making
- management information systems and institutional learning
- critical analysis and strategic thinking
- human and financial management systems
- external relations and partnership-building
- resource mobilisation.

NSPs can provide technical support to NGOs and CBOs in these areas through training and material support. However, they should recognise that although they can facilitate and support the process, organisational development needs to be driven from within the organisation itself.

Issues to consider

- ➔ It is very important for NSPs to introduce technical support on organisational development early in a programme as it is a long-term process.
- ➔ NSPs should not assume that all organisations want to develop. Some NGOs and CBOs may not wish to change their practices as they perceive themselves to already be effective. An organisation's willingness to be open to change may be a possible criterion for NSPs when selecting partners.
- ➔ Organisational development principles apply just as much, if not more, to NSPs as to NGOs and CBOs.
- ➔ NSPs should help NGOs and CBOs to develop long-term strategies for resource mobilisation in addition to addressing their short-term needs.
- ➔ NSPs may need to help partners to develop systems for working with multiple donors who might have different requirements and practices.
- ➔ Directories of potential funding sources need to be regularly updated.



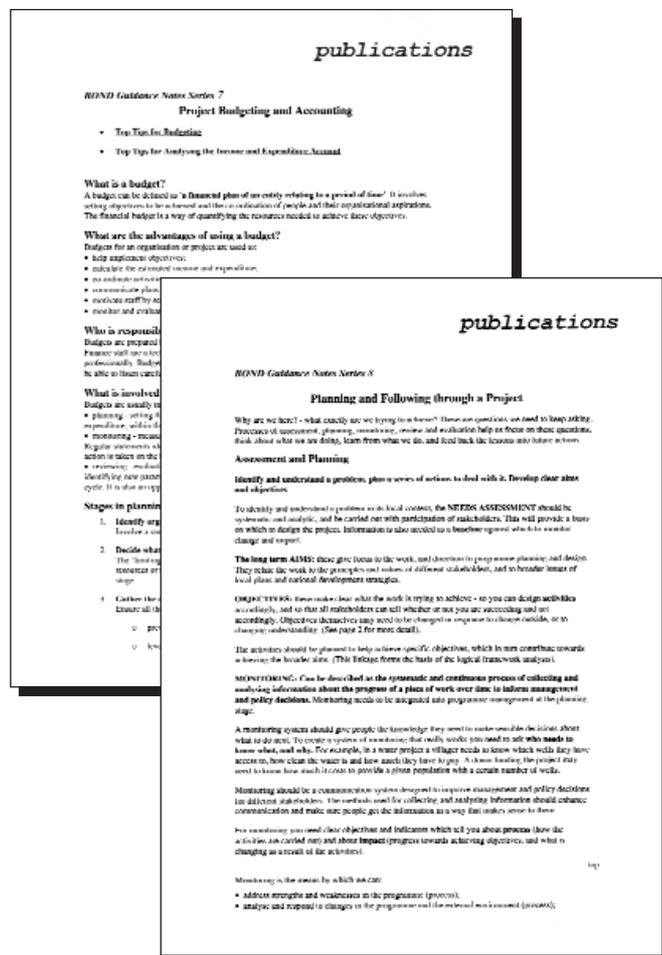
5.2 Training themes

5.2.3 Programme management

In addition to HIV-related topics, there are a number of areas of technical learning that NGOs and CBOs need to acquire in order to be able to develop and implement successful programmes. Examples include: community mobilisation, participatory community assessment, project design and budgeting, programme cycle planning and monitoring and evaluation. Skills in these methodologies and programmatic disciplines can also be applied to other development issues outside the field of HIV/AIDS.

Issues to consider

- ➔ NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) need to balance the competing priorities and needs of technical support on HIV-related topics, organisational development and programme management issues.
- ➔ Sometimes monitoring and evaluation is not addressed until later in a programme of technical support because monitoring and evaluation skills are often better absorbed by NGOs and CBOs as they mature in their understanding of programming. However it should be emphasised that monitoring and evaluation are best addressed at the beginning of a programme, as collection of baseline data is essential if change is to be measured.



Policy, advocacy, sharing lessons and facilitating information exchange are key functions of NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs). By becoming involved in these areas of work, NSPs and their partner organisations have the potential to influence the external context in which they work, affect national strategies and responses, and contribute to collective knowledge on HIV/AIDS.

Policy and advocacy work is primarily, although not exclusively, about changing the context in which NSPs, and those that they support, work. Advocacy and policy work can effect change at different levels, such as local, national and international, and can target a wide range of influential people and institutions.

The results and impact of an organisation's advocacy and policy work is often not easy to measure and can be hard to attribute directly. This can make the effective monitoring and evaluating of policy work especially challenging. However, as with other programmatic areas, monitoring and evaluation of the advocacy and policy work is crucial.

Policy and advocacy are more likely to be effective and have higher levels of legitimacy if they are directly linked to the organisation's overall mission and its programmatic activities. For example, NGOs and CBOs working with sex workers or men who have sex with men may need to advocate for a change in the legislation relating to sex and sex work in order to facilitate effective HIV prevention.

Policy and advocacy work can be strengthened through strategic partnership building. By going into partnership with other organisations, NSPs, NGOs and CBOs can potentially increase their influence and capacity to achieve change through joint action.

However, it should also be recognised that partnerships are not easily forged or maintained and take time, energy and commitment to become successful. Partnership requires consensus building and shared agendas. There are a number of crucial issues that potential partners need to take into consideration – power relations, who takes a leadership role, deciding the boundaries of the partnership, the level and extent of commitment – before they enter into partnership. In addition, before undertaking policy and advocacy work it is important to identify what other organisations are currently doing in order to prevent replication of efforts.

Sharing lessons and facilitating learning is a central function of NSPs. As with policy and advocacy work, this may be costly in time and resources and so needs to be managed appropriately. It can have multiple benefits, which include:

- defining good practice to strengthen programmatic work
- having access to the learning of others
- raising the profile of the organisation and credibility of its partners to support resource mobilisation work
- providing information for strategic planning, policy, advocacy and partnership work.

Issues to consider

- ➔ Both advocacy and policy work require an investment of time and human resources. Less well-resourced organisations should be aware of the potential impact this can have in diverting resources from their programme work.
- ➔ It often seems obvious for NSPs to concentrate on policy and advocacy work that is drawn directly from their experience of NGO support. Although this is a good principle, sometimes it is not realistic and there are times when policy work will be required on issues that NSPs have no direct experience of – for example, issues that are important to address as they have a broader impact or potential future impact on the NGO's/CBO's practical activities. These broader issues are often addressed through advocacy coalitions that have combined strength and a range of experience to draw upon.



Participants attending an International HIV/AIDS Alliance and VMM implemented advocacy workshop held in India practise giving advocacy radio interviews at a local radio station. The interviews were recorded and played back to the other participants and facilitators who provided feedback.

6.1 Policy

Policy work is about developing an organisation's thinking and position on specific issues, and provides a framework around which decisions are made. While policy work on issues outside of its programmatic work can be useful, it is often more effective for policy to be directly linked to an organisation's core activities. Policy work is a major tool for advocacy by contributing to and influencing others' policies.

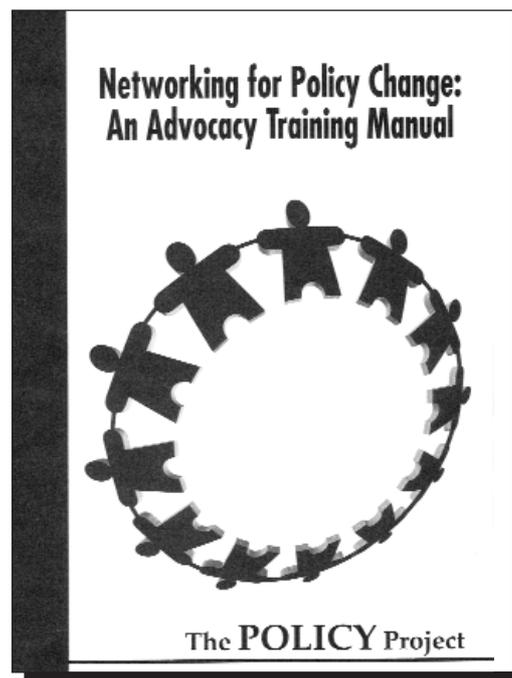
NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) have a crucial role in informing policy decision-making at both the national and international level, while their partner NGOs and CBOs may have more impact at the local level. By contributing to national and international policy-making, NSPs can help to ensure that policy decisions are drawn from practical experience and that a community perspective is raised in policy fora.

Furthermore, there is value-added in being able to present the multiple experiences and expertise of many NGOs rather than that of a single organisation. NSPs therefore can often act as a focal point for collecting and analysing information for policy decisions. Inclusion of key stakeholders such as people living with HIV/AIDS in policy decisions is extremely important in order to ensure that decisions are relevant to those they aim to benefit.

In addition to contributing to others' policies, NSPs inevitably will be developing their own policies and positions on a wide range of issues. In this regard, NSPs need to pay special attention to their own policy development as it may form the basis for their partner organisations' policies. Policy work is an ongoing process as policies need to be updated, reconceptualised, challenged and sometimes retracted.

Issues to consider

- NSPs may need to consider how much policy work should be done by the NSP itself, its partners or a combination of both. In practice it is often a combination: NSPs affecting policy at the national and international level and partner NGOs and CBOs at the local level.
- NSPs' policy work must go hand-in-hand with their NGO support work in order to be effective. This will ensure that policies are developed from practical experience and that NSPs do not stray from their mandate.
- The staff of an organisation need to be kept up-to-date with the organisation's policies to ensure a co-ordinated position and avoid giving conflicting messages. This is particularly relevant to NSPs, as different staff will be responding to many different audiences for their policy work.
- NSPs and their partner organisations should aim to involve the beneficiaries of their policy work to the greatest extent possible.
- With the advent of technology and increased access of NGOs and CBOs to the internet and e-mail, NSPs can support their partners by sharing information and contributing to policy debates on relevant discussion sites.



6.2 Advocacy

Advocacy is a process to bring about change in the attitudes, practices, policies and laws of influential individuals, groups and institutions. NGOs and CBOs have a crucial role in advocating for political and social leadership. NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) in turn have a role in facilitating collective action to address issues and ensure that their voices and experiences inform policy discussion and decision making. Furthermore, NSPs may have a role in advocating to other NSPs and NGO-sector mobilisers to change their thinking or practices where necessary. For example, they may advocate for a more constructive relationship with other stakeholders such as the government, religious bodies, the police force, etc.

Advocacy can occur at multiple levels: local, national and international. Examples of some common advocacy issues taken on by NSPs and their partner organisations include: systematic social discrimination and stigma; access to services and treatments; and, changes in attitudes, practices, laws and policies which are discriminatory or put people at increased risk of HIV transmission.

NSPs can also advocate for implementation of good practice by both their partners and the development community, and play an important role in getting donors and governments to recognise and support the work of the NGO/CBO sector.

A key target for advocacy work are the policy-makers within governments and donors, but significant change can also be instigated through targeting the policy 'influencers' who advise the policy-makers. Becoming involved in policy committees and government working groups is often one of the most useful mechanisms for directly effecting change.

Sometimes programme strategies may include an advocacy component. At its most practical level, advocacy by NSPs is about pushing for changes that will help the NSP and its NGO/CBO partners do their work better. For partner organisations, local-level advocacy may include activities such as

campaigns calling for better sexually transmitted infections service, persuading the local television station to broadcast positive images of people living with HIV/AIDS, or prevent people living with HIV/AIDS from being discriminated against and turned away by community hospitals. Whatever the cause, it should always serve to support the NGO's/CBO's programmatic activities.

There are different organisational approaches to advocacy. An organisation may work in partnership with advocacy target audiences to influence change or set itself in opposition to targets and challenge them to change. This is often described as activism. In this regard, NSPs often hold a more neutral and detached position than their partner organisations, who are at the frontline of implementation and are therefore able to reflect upon and present opposing points of view.

Advocacy can be reactive or proactive. Many NGOs and CBOs mainly carry out reactive advocacy work, responding to issues or problems as they arise. As they become more experienced, their advocacy often becomes more proactive, identifying less obvious or abstract practices that hinder their work.

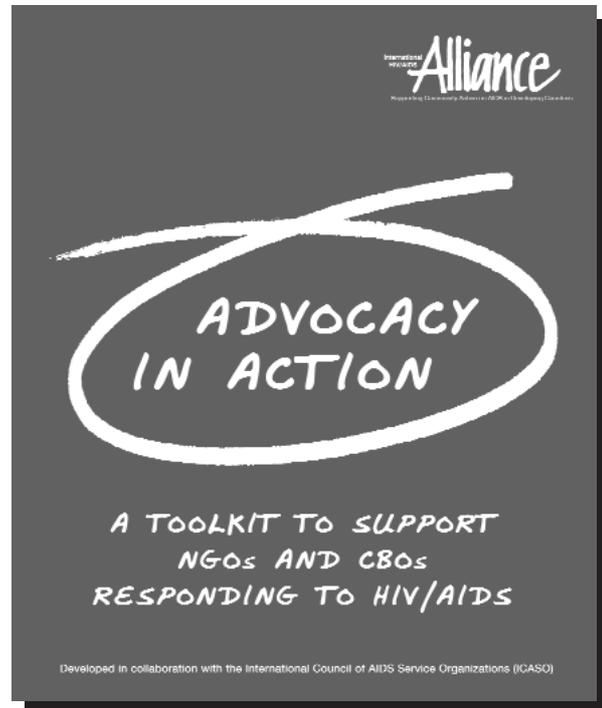
A key question for NSPs is whether to advocate on behalf of their partner organisations or build their partners' capacity to do it themselves. The latter strategy may be more time-consuming but ultimately more effective and sustainable. While there is a strong argument for NSPs to contribute to international-level advocacy, NSPs need to reflect on their own mission to determine where their energies should be focused. In the long-term it may be more effective for NSPs to focus their attention on building national and local advocacy capacity, perhaps by building the skills of a few specialised organisations.

6.2 Advocacy

Issues to consider

- NGOs/CBOs may have an opposing view to governments and donors, and advocacy work can threaten their fundraising activities. NSPs are possibly in a more neutral and detached position than their partner NGOs and CBOs to do advocacy work without facing direct repercussions.
- Issues of representation and legitimacy are important in advocacy work. NSPs should consider how representative and accountable they are to their partners and beneficiaries, and ensure that their partner organisations are aware of the sensitivities around accountability and advocacy.
- NSPs often operate within consortiums and can contribute to the advocacy efforts carried out by other organisations, and vice versa. Collaboration will facilitate delivery of clear advocacy messages and help to avoid duplicating efforts.
- Advocacy work is more effective if it is based on quality policy development, backed by operations research or documented evidence with specific recommendations for action. The use of concise, non-technical summaries are useful tools for influencing decision-makers.

The success of an organisation's advocacy work can often be hard to measure and attribute. One way is to use simple qualitative monitoring methods prior to advocacy work, such as undertaking assessments of existing policies, interviewing policy-makers and measuring funding levels. Even when a clear outcome is recognised after an advocacy campaign it may be the result of a number of factors and the combined work of other organisations' activities. NSPs need to be realistic when developing their indicators for this area of work.



6.3 Sharing lessons and learning exchange

In the context of NGO support work, the unique relationships between NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs), their partner organisations and the donor community puts NSPs in an advantaged position to share lessons and facilitate information exchange at multiple levels:

- between NGOs and CBOs
- between NSPs and other intermediary organisations
- between people working at the community level and those developing and influencing policy.

Additionally, many NSPs operate at national and international levels, where they are in a position to facilitate learning and information exchange across, as well as within, countries.

Sharing lessons is a process that involves systematic documentation of information followed by analysis, synthesis, repackaging and dissemination of the information into appropriate forms for the intended audience. In this regard, NSPs have an important mission to analyse, reflect, identify and promote good practice at multiple levels.

Lessons learned need to be focused in order to have maximum impact. This particularly applies to NSPs, as they may be sharing lessons with a wide range of audiences, from members of small CBOs to government officials. For example, NSPs can share programmatic lessons between partner organisations working with state health service providers or articulate the same lessons to donors interested in strengthening the quality of care and support services at the community level. The lessons learned are applicable to both audiences but need to be articulated in a way that makes them clearly relevant to each specifically. Furthermore, as NSPs often work with a range of organisations – development, health, youth, women's, etc. – they can facilitate cross-learning between different disciplines and sectors of society.

Sharing of lessons can happen in a variety of ways, ranging from more formal mechanisms such as conferences, seminars and study tours to informal methods such as a telephone call, an email or face-to-face meeting.

Facilitating information exchange is another key function of NSPs. Again, this can happen at various levels. It may, for example, only involve introducing one partner organisation to another. At the other extreme it could involve working closely with bilateral and multilateral donors to identify programmatic or geographical gaps in order to promote complementarity of programmes.

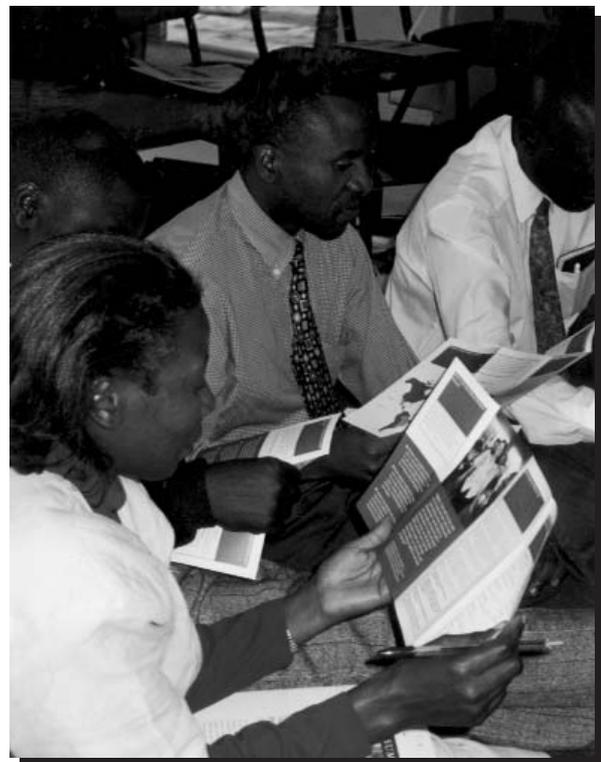
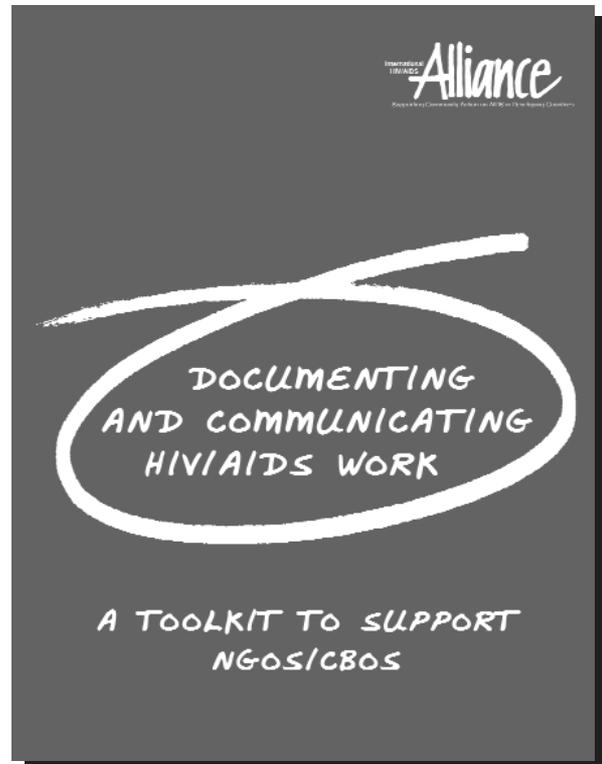
NSPs can also signpost or act as a central source of information for their partner organisations. Information such as changes in donor policy, available resources, learning materials, new technologies and treatments are of critical importance for NGOs and CBOs to enhance and sustain their programmes.

Issues to consider

- ➔ Sharing lessons and facilitating information exchange requires that all parties can see the benefit of this end goal, as it requires considerable commitment to document experiences and analyse them for the benefit of others in the hope that they will do the same. NSPs need to understand people's prejudices against learning from others and proactively break down barriers to learning.
- ➔ NSPs must be sensitive to the dynamics between organisations and promote an environment that is conducive to mutual learning and exchange.
- ➔ NSPs should internalise and implement the good practice that they promote to partners and others by acting as a good example.
- ➔ NSPs need to identify their audiences clearly for lessons learned in order to ensure that the information is focused and relevant. In addition, NSPs should understand what is context specific and what is universally applicable.

6.3 Sharing lessons and learning exchange

- ➔ NSPs often provide information to multiple audiences. Information should be written in appropriate and accessible language (whether it is in English, French, Arabic or Tagalog) and specific to the target audience.
- ➔ NSPs are often requested to share lessons and information in multiple languages. NSPs need to balance the 'cost' of multiple language resources with the potential impact and increased reach this might achieve. Crucial considerations include the nature of the resource and its importance, but also who may benefit from its multiple-language dissemination – particularly if it is aimed at people living with HIV/AIDS, community-level implementers and/or key marginalised populations.
- ➔ This type of work requires an investment of time and human and financial resources if it is to be effective. As with any other programmatic area, it should be budgeted for and have a clear place in an organisation's workplan.
- ➔ There are opportunities to learn throughout the project/programme cycle. By having systematic and periodic reviews throughout the cycle (for example, financial and programmatic monthly reporting, and annual or mid-term reviews and replanning), NSPs can proactively encourage partners to incorporate lessons learned into project replanning.
- ➔ NSPs may consider themselves be more confident, experienced or skilled at giving presentations than their partner NGOs or CBOs, and may want to present at conferences on their behalf. However, it is important to take into account the potential benefits to their partner organisations of presenting their own data and experiences. This can bring greater legitimacy to the information being shared, allow the audience to ask questions directly to the implementers and provide an opportunity for practising presentation skills.
- ➔ Since the introduction of the internet and other technologies, there is potential for information overload. NSPs need to be selective and provide only information that is relevant to their partner organisations.



Participants at an Alliance workshop in Zambia reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of publications.

At a basic level, monitoring and evaluation can be easily defined. For example, one definition might be 'measuring against previously agreed criteria in order to generate learning about the impact of interventions'.

Such learning and proof impact is generally recognised to be an essential component of any programme of development in health and social care. However, it is particularly important for an NGO/CBO support programme working on HIV/AIDS prevention and care work to generate learning about the impact of interventions for a number of reasons.

- Historically and globally (with few exceptions) what count as appropriate and effective interventions in response to HIV/AIDS have been subject to controversy and a lack of consensus.
- In countries where NGOs and CBOs have only recently developed there is often a lack of documentation of the specific benefits and advantages of NGO approaches as well as the factors that facilitate or inhibit their effectiveness.
- By contrast with other areas of development, where there may be decades of local experience, in many countries there is relatively little experience of working with the populations most vulnerable to the effects of HIV/AIDS.
- In many countries there may be very limited resources for effective NGO work in the context of a rapidly developing epidemic, which may increase the urgency of learning what works best, how and why.

In generating learning with maximum practical application for supporting the work of their NGO and CBO partners, it is important for NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) to distinguish clearly between different types and levels of monitoring and evaluation which have different purposes and different resource implications. They need to make choices about the level of effort it is appropriate to devote to monitoring or evaluation.

- NSPs first have to decide how they will balance donor requirements with the learning that the organisation itself wants to generate for its own use and for others'. Donor reporting is actually a major driving and defining force for monitoring and evaluation by NSPs, NGOs and CBOs alike.
- It is important to identify whether the monitoring and evaluation systems of NSPs are designed to generate learning at an international, national, programmatic or individual NGO/CBO level. Each of these will address different questions about different types of intervention and different levels of impact.
- At each level of the programme it is important to distinguish between monitoring and evaluation, since they often involve developing very distinct data-gathering and learning systems.
- It is important for NSPs to clarify the ambitions of the different aspects of the monitoring and evaluation systems of the programme. This should be in agreement with their partners and based on a mutual understanding of the learning they want to generate, given the specific local context. This will involve prioritising criteria for what needs to be measured and how carefully, intensively or accurately it needs to be measured.

There are five types or levels of monitoring and evaluation in which NSPs might become involved.

- Monitoring and evaluation as a cross-cutting issue, using relatively high-level outcome indicators designed to be comparable from one country's NSP to another and intended for the international donor community.
- National AIDS programme monitoring and evaluation (often behavioural and epidemiological surveillance), frequently about the joint impact of all governmental and NGO/CBO programmes at a national level.
- Internal monitoring and evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of the NGO/CBO support work of NSPs themselves: how well they have built

the capacity of their partners and how much and what kind of value has been added.

- External monitoring or evaluation of the work of individual NGOs and CBOs to answer comparative questions such as: which methods of working appear to be more effective; how efficient are different ways of organising the work; how cost-effective are different ways of spending money; and how fair or equitable is the use of resources?
- Developing the capacity of individual NGOs and CBOs for internal monitoring and evaluation of their own work in order to help them identify mid-stream changes and improvements in particular projects, the strengths and weaknesses of different methods and approaches, and organisational developments that would improve the quality or quantity of their work, etc.

Any of these levels of monitoring and evaluation can contribute to and overlap with the others, but none can simply replace another. Each is likely to involve different kinds of indicators and different methods of measuring change, drawn from a very wide range of research methodologies and data collection methods.

While it is common to couple monitoring with evaluation as 'M and E' in the technical support literature, this tends to obscure the important distinctions between monitoring and evaluation in practice. This is compounded by the coexistence of different demarcations between monitoring and evaluation and different terminologies in practice. For instance, what some programmes describe as monitoring, others will describe as formative evaluation.

Monitoring tends to address relatively straightforward questions: the extent to which a given activity is going according to plan; whether something did or did not happen; what obstacles have been encountered, and so on. For example, NSPs may monitor their partner organisations' work to ensure

that they are complying with grant requirements, or to identify technical areas of weakness and where they need support, or to look out for unexpected obstacles in particular areas of work. In turn, NSPs may monitor their own work to check that their grant management is fair and legal or to identify if they are helping to scale up NGO/CBO work in line with the targets in their strategic plan. There may be external monitoring of the overall performance of NSPs (sometimes called an 'external review'), to check that donor monies are being spent as intended.

Evaluation (sometimes called impact assessment) tends to address more searching questions that are harder to answer but arguably more important: how well did something work, how could it work better, and, how does an approach compare with alternative methods?

Participatory evaluation can also be seen as a tool: to promote effective communication between various stakeholders; to enhance accountability to stakeholders (including donors and programme beneficiaries); and to empower project participants by developing new skills. For example, NSPs may commission external evaluation of their NGO/CBO partners' projects for advocacy purposes, either to demonstrate the effectiveness or efficiency of the NGO/CBO sector or to validate particular strategies. They may support the development of the capacity of their NGO and CBO partners to evaluate aspects of their own work in order to share learning about how to improve the quality and quantity of NGO/CBO work generally. Equally, NSPs might evaluate particular aspects of their own work, such as the quality of the technical support they provide or the effectiveness of their selection of partners. NSPs occasionally take part in larger international evaluations that compare the impact of different programmes as a whole.

Within any of these chosen types or levels of monitoring or evaluation, NSPs will need to identify criteria for measurement or indicators of success based on their assessment of the specific challenges of NGO/CBO support in the local situation and the wider context in which they operate.

For example, in many countries (developed or developing) there is relatively little matured experience of monitoring and evaluation being used to change working practices or substantially alter programming. As a result, there may be some initial scepticism amongst NGOs and CBOs about the genuine usefulness and value of monitoring and evaluation.

Complex, multiple and overlapping interventions can also make attribution of impact and effect more difficult. While it may be simple to monitor how much of a particular intervention was delivered to how many people, it is often less easy to evaluate the extent to which people have changed their behaviour or even what may have caused them to perceive things differently.

Equally, there may or may not be national, regional or local consensus about what counts as learning or what kind of learning is highest priority. For example, in some countries it may be important to evaluate peer education in order to convince sceptical public officials about its value; in other countries such a basic evaluation may be superfluous.

Consequently, the development of suitable indicators will involve careful balancing of the need for some cross-cutting measures of success with a careful assessment of what the priorities for learning are locally. Factors affecting these choices will include:

- the expectation of donors who may suggest or provide indicators
- the balance in NSPs between support for tried-and-tested NGO/CBO activities and projects versus new and experimental ones
- the local, regional or national consensus about what is already known to work and what remains in dispute
- the existing local capacity for monitoring and evaluation which will affect the degree of ambition of the criteria to be measured
- the local culture of expectations about research: who does what, what accountability there is, and what counts as credible.

Not only are there multiple criteria to choose from but there is also a lack of international consensus about what monitoring and evaluation are for, exactly where to draw the boundary between them and which types and methods of evaluation are more useful. Each NSP therefore should consider its options at the strategic planning stage, based on the initial situation assessment of both the local context and also the wider national and international context in which it operates.

It is important to begin by establishing a common understanding and clear agreement both within an NSP and with their NGO/CBO partners to prevent confusion, to distinguish between the different types of monitoring and evaluation, and to establish their role in the work of the programme. There are a number of questions important to clarify.

- What is the purpose of monitoring and evaluation within the support programme? Is it to: demonstrate the value of NGO work to outsiders; compare different projects for future programme development; ensure the work is going according to plan; test how well innovative or experimental methods work; or to improve the quality of routine work at the local level?
- How do NSPs define monitoring and evaluation and distinguish between the two? What monitoring data will they contractually require from their NGO/CBO partners, and what kinds of evaluation will they encourage and support?

- What is the expected level of investment in monitoring and evaluation? Is it five per cent, 10 per cent or a variable proportion of each grant? How comprehensive will monitoring and evaluation be?
- Is it explicit what will not be expected? For example, some NGOs may have expectations based on grounded experience that monitoring and evaluation are essentially about discipline or control rather than learning. NSPs can provide valuable support by clarifying what burdens they will not place on their NGO and CBO partners.

This section of the resource demonstrates the great variety of different valid choices and approaches that have been used in NSPs and in different aspects of NGO/CBO support and NGO/CBO activities in the HIV/AIDS field. In addition, there is considerable documented experience about the evaluation of NGO/CBO responses to complex social and health problems in other fields, which can provide transferable learning for NSPs and their partners.

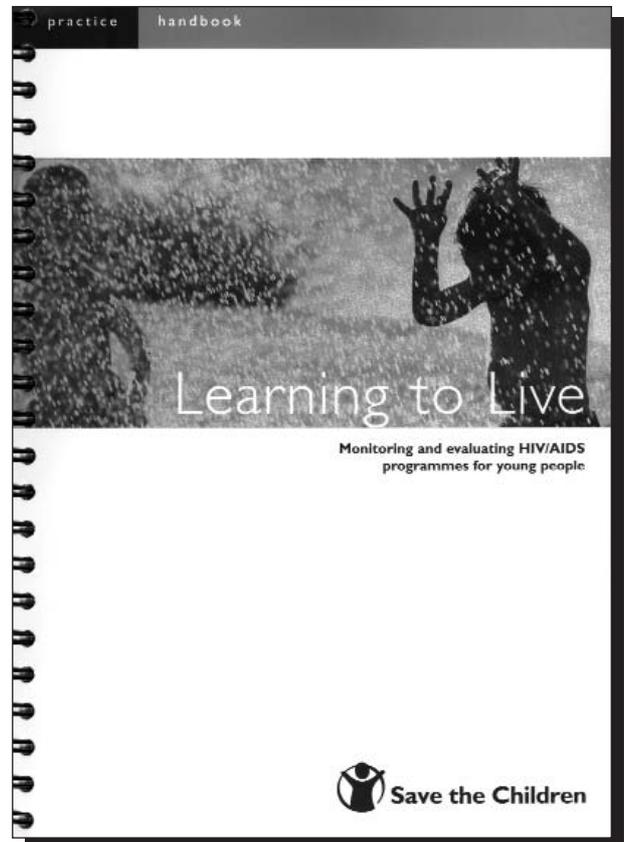
However, the accumulated knowledge needs to be adapted and made accessible to individual NGO/CBO partners. It is easy to underestimate the cost, time and effort needed to provide adequate support to develop the capacity for evaluation, both within NSPs themselves and also for their partners. Key areas of technical assistance that may be particularly valuable are:

- defining the purpose of monitoring and evaluation and its role in overall programming, and choosing and developing a design that is fit for its intended purpose
- technical issues involved in the implementation of internal evaluation, such as choosing relevant sources of data, using appropriate data-gathering methods, and analysing, interpreting and using monitoring and evaluation to improve working practices.

Issues to consider

- ➔ It is unlikely that NSPs can offer effective technical support on monitoring and evaluation to their partner NGOs and CBOs until they have gone through an internal process of clarification and shared learning about their own monitoring and evaluation functions.
- ➔ NSPs can develop an integrated **monitoring** system across programmes of NGO/CBO support to avoid duplication and reduce the burden of data collection. On the other hand, the imposition of uniform indicators to evaluate would tend to reduce the usefulness of the evaluation for partner NGOs/CBOs themselves and prevent it being used as a tool for local learning. Aiming for flexible, dual systems that encourage NGOs and CBOs to define additional indicators that will be useful for their work, while also measuring against uniform indicators, can turn this 'imposition' into a potential system for building capacity in monitoring and evaluation.
- ➔ It is important for NSPs to acknowledge and address various possible underlying anxieties that NGOs and CBOs may have about evaluation. These may include a fear of a 'hostile' evaluation that could potentially damage the reputation or credibility of the work, or a fear of insufficient technical support to help manage the complex choices involved in evaluation. Again, enabling ownership and interest in the monitoring and evaluation system at the NGO/CBO level can overcome this.
- ➔ As evaluation is often not seen as an integral or necessary part of a programme or project, it may be worth considering ring-fenced budgets for evaluation at every level (NSP, intermediary NSP, individual NGO/CBO partner, each major NGO/CBO activity). Without these, evaluation is usually the least important target in the workplan and therefore the most likely to slip ('no one ever got fired for failing to evaluate').

- There is a danger that monitoring and evaluation (in practice) may not address the most important questions – for example, the quality of the relationships between NGOs/CBOs and NSPs.
- There are many competing monitoring and evaluation toolkits, each with a different frame of reference. And there is a shortage of people in either NGOs and CBOs or NSPs with the experience and confidence to distinguish between more or less useful and applicable examples.
- There is relatively little tailored and detailed guidance on the specifics of monitoring and evaluation of NGO/CBO support functions in the HIV/AIDS field.
- Developing indicators or proxy indicators of 'built capacity' would enable NGO/CBO support programmes to evaluate their impact.



7.1 Monitoring and evaluation design

It is a widely accepted principle that for monitoring and evaluation to be a valuable part of a programme or a project, they need to be designed at the same time as the rest of the project or programme and integrated early on into the planning cycle – essentially at the pre-planning stage. This applies equally to the work of NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) themselves as much as to the work of their partner NGOs and CBOs.

However, there are specific choices to be made in designing monitoring and evaluation systems that are suitable for different activities at each level of an NGO/CBO support programme:

- how can the design of monitoring and evaluation be integrated into the planning cycle?
- how to choose between different types of valid design?

One of the best ways of developing a suitable design is to ensure that during the strategic planning process appropriate indicators are identified which can act as the criteria that monitoring and evaluation will measure. One way of doing this is to define specific monitoring objectives and evaluation objectives in relation to each strategic objective. These evaluation objectives can be recorded directly on the log frame or in a separate evaluation plan.

Decisions will need to be made about the comprehensiveness of monitoring and evaluation in relation to each strategic objective of the NGO/CBO support programme. Will each objective be monitored? Will each objective be evaluated? Or are there particular aspects of the programme which do not need to be evaluated at this time?

Often it will be possible to clump together the evaluation of different strategic objectives into a single evaluation design. But sometimes it may be more practical to think of the evaluation of different kinds of strategic objective as separate projects, each requiring a different kind of design.

For example, it is likely that different things would be monitored and evaluated in the scaling up of an existing model of care, in the development of a new prevention initiative or in the establishment of a resource centre.

In relation to the design of monitoring, the reduced burden of collecting standard data from all NGO and CBO grantees will need to be weighed against the relevance of this data to different areas of activity on a case-by-case basis. If possible, a compromise between these competing demands should be reached. The resulting standardised data collection by NSPs, and the skills and ownership of the process at the NGO/CBO level, should make this a process worth investing in.

Technical assistance will usually be needed to help NGOs and CBOs make similar decisions about their own work.

7.1 Monitoring and evaluation design

7.1.1 Integrating monitoring and evaluation into the planning cycle

If the point of monitoring and evaluation is to generate learning to improve the quality of the work of NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) themselves and of their NGO/CBO partners, then:

- the questions addressed by monitoring and evaluation need to be demonstrably relevant to the work
- the collection and analysis of data needs to be convincing to those involved in the work
- the interpretation and reporting of results need to be fitted into the cycle of project or programme work in such a way as to be able to influence decision-making.

Similar criteria apply if the intention is to influence the work of organisations external to the programme itself. For example, if the purpose is to demonstrate the effectiveness of NGO/CBO work to government or funders, it is usually a good idea to identify in advance what questions or doubts these bodies may have and report relevant results in a timely manner designed to fit in with their decision-making and funding cycles.

Therefore, the first step in designing monitoring and evaluation at each level (overall support programme, individual NGO/CBO activities) is to define in some detail how the monitoring and evaluation fit into the different stages of the strategic planning process. A number of activities are necessary to achieve this.

- Assessing whether draft objectives are sufficiently precise for evaluation of them to be possible, and where necessary reformulating objectives to make them more measurable. ('Unpacking' seemingly intangible outcomes can identify what aspect of the changes could be measured. For example, ask what the objective aims to change, then what the situation is now; benchmarks for change can then be set within the difference.)
- Developing detailed indicators or 'success criteria' for measuring results and impact in relation to those objectives. For example, if the

overall objective were to increase effective condom use in a given population, then examples of relevant criteria could include: understanding of the effectiveness of condoms as a prophylactic against HIV and other sexually transmitted infections; availability of condoms at sites of sexual encounter and to those most vulnerable to sexual transmission; knowledge of how to use condoms effectively; and the proportion of the population reporting condom use at the last sexual encounter.

- Working out early on what kinds of baseline data need to be collected to be able to measure the impact of interventions. For example, if the overall aim is to increase the capacity of NGOs and CBOs in a given city or region, then it would be important to measure aggregate capacity at the very beginning of the programme of support. This could include such measures as: numbers of staff; numbers of volunteers; knowledge and confidence of staff or volunteers in providing relevant and effective advice; numbers of clients; the state of development of organisational structures, etc.
- Identifying in advance the most effective ways of reporting results and conclusions in order to influence future decision making.
- Identifying what resources (human and financial) will be allocated to monitoring and evaluation and scheduling data collection, analysis and reporting into the workplan.

Issues to consider

- ➔ There is often strong pressure to set up or scale up NGO/CBO capacity with limited resources in the face of an epidemic. Also, there may be considerable pressure to begin the work as soon as possible. Consequently, what should be ideally initial steps in designing monitoring and evaluation may in practice be addressed only retrospectively.
- ➔ There can be a fear that the choice of actual programme activities will be based on their ease of measurability rather than needs on the ground. So it is important for NSPs to reassure

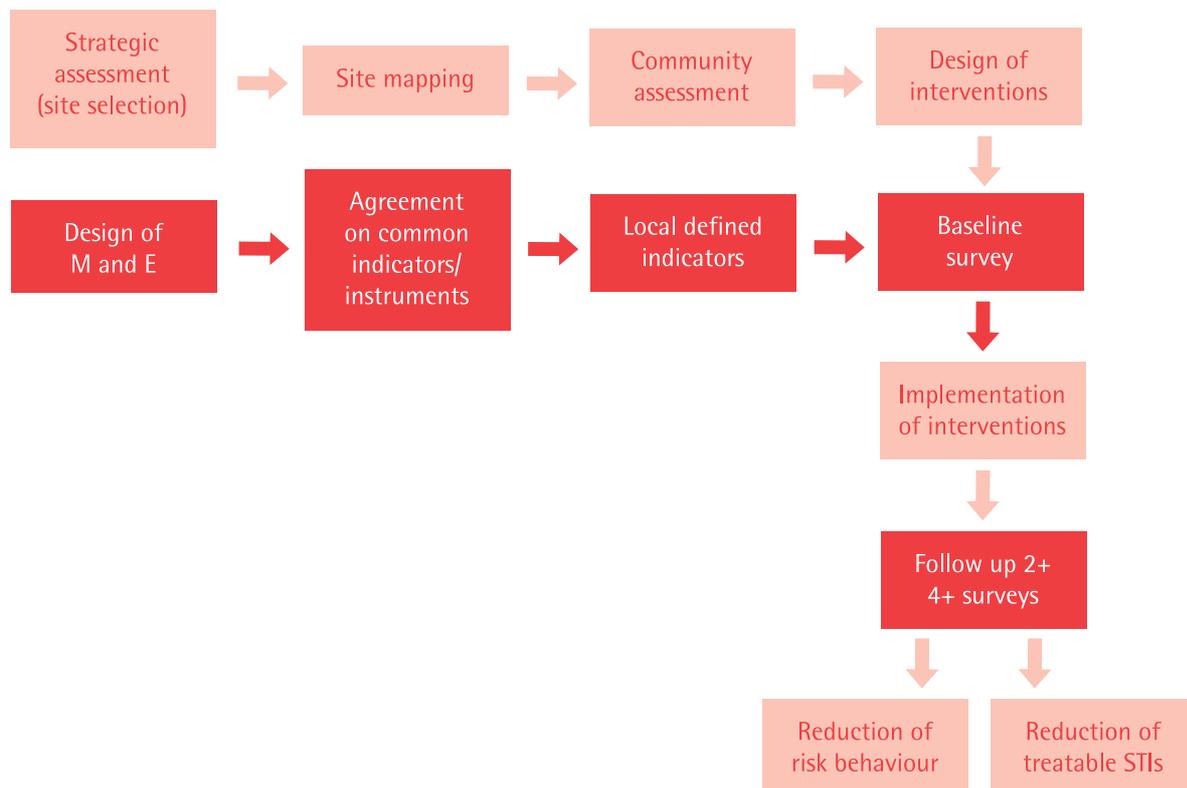
7.1 Monitoring and evaluation design

7.1.1 Integrating monitoring and evaluation into the planning cycle

NGO/CBO partners that the aim is to evaluate the impact of interventions on the needs that they jointly identify and to show how there are always valid ways of measuring the impact of the response to any well-defined need.

- ➔ Evaluation is multi-disciplinary. People involved at a number of different levels have to develop a consensus vision (as a result of a process of discussion and negotiation) to make evaluation work. This takes time and resources, which need to be budgeted for within the overall grant costs.
- ➔ An often neglected issue is reviewing the effectiveness and usefulness of the evaluation design itself, either mid-stream during the implementation or during the replanning process. Does the evaluation design need to be revised if the results and conclusions are not particularly informative or helpful for improving the quality of the work?

Parallel operational and Monitoring and Evaluation rollout



7.1 Monitoring and evaluation design

7.1.2 Monitoring and evaluation design approaches

There is a wide choice of design for the monitoring and evaluation of different aspects of NGO/CBO support work and the work of NGOs and CBOs themselves. Once the purpose of the monitoring and evaluation has been clarified by identifying how their results and conclusions are intended to fit into the project planning and decision-making cycle, there remain some choices to be defined.

- Is the monitoring to verify compliance with contractual obligations?
- Is the monitoring to identify unexpected obstacles, outcomes or opportunities in the implementation of an unfamiliar programme of work?
- Is the monitoring data collected from NGO/CBO grantees for the internal use of NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) themselves or is it for aggregation and reporting to donors?
- Is the emphasis on quality or quantity or both?
- Is the emphasis on inputs, outputs, processes or outcomes?
- Is it to provide a continuous assessment of the functioning of project activities against schedules and an integral part of day-to-day management?
- Key criteria that need to be established for each evaluation include whether the evaluation is formative (i.e. intended to influence and improve working practices during the lifetime of the project or activity being evaluated) or summative (i.e. intended to influence future work by establishing what did and did not work, and why). In practice, stakeholders in the evaluation may want both.
- Is the emphasis on what does and does not work or on finding out how and why things do or do not work?
- Who is the evaluation for? Whose practice is it intended to inform? Who will use the findings? Is it an internal or external evaluation or a mixture of the two?
- Is the evaluation results oriented? Or is it seen more as a process of facilitating negotiation and communication between stakeholders to create a dynamic and reflexive tool to enhance learning and empowerment?
- How ambitious will the evaluation be? Will all aspects of the activity be evaluated or only a sample of them? For example, an evaluation of a prevention project may include all or some of the following questions: the quality of the information, the quality or quantity of commodities provided, the degree of scaling up of peer education, etc.
- What is the focus of enquiry, i.e. which of many possible areas of enquiry are the most interesting or important ones for this particular evaluation? For example, an evaluation of the support offered by NSPs could focus on a number of different areas of enquiry such as whether the amount of support was adequate, what could make the support more useful or what the strengths and weakness of different methods of providing support are.

Clearly recorded definitions of these criteria and appropriate budgets and workplans need to be developed for monitoring and evaluation at each level. Technical assistance may be needed on any of these areas of the application of design criteria, both for NSP staff and also for NGO/CBO management and staff.

Additionally, on a wider scale NSPs may have a crucial role to play in developing a culture of the 'reflective practitioner', where those involved at every level of NGO/CBO support and NGO/CBO work feel confident and rewarded for integrating evaluation into their routine activities.

Issues to consider

- ➔ It is important not to choose the same form of evaluation for every project or every activity, since it is not the case that some are simply 'better' than others. For example, it is a common view that more can be learnt about how to improve the quality of work from low-key, internal evaluative procedures than from large, 'formal' external evaluations. On the other hand, external evaluations can lend objectivity and credibility.

7.2 Implementing monitoring and evaluation

Once design decisions have been taken, there are a number of key areas of implementation for which technical support is often needed by NGO/CBO support programme (NSP) staff as well as by those in NGOs and CBOs:

- identifying the combination of sources of data most relevant to the design
- choosing data collection methods that will gather appropriate, valid and mutually complementary data
- analysing, interpreting and reporting data so as to provide valid conclusions that inform working practices at the relevant level.

NSPs may need to ensure that in-depth technical assistance is provided, not because these areas are necessarily difficult in themselves but often because they may seem daunting simply because they involve unfamiliar tasks and activities. For example, it may be that a particular set of data collection methods are being used in some NGOs and CBOs simply because they are familiar, even though they may not be the most appropriate. It is very common, for instance, for surveys to be used as the data collection method because they can efficiently gather large amounts of quantitative data. However, they are not particularly suitable ways of gathering qualitative information about processes.

A further source of complication is that in order to fully understand and evaluate an activity, a combination of different kinds of data may need to be brought together (input, process, output, and outcome data). Input, process, output, and outcome data can be defined developing a log frame for projects.

For each area of enquiry in the monitoring or evaluation of any intervention, whether at the NSP or NGO/CBO level, there needs to be a process of identifying what specific kinds of data need to be collected. From these decisions, logical procedures can be applied to choose how the data can be collected and how it can be analysed.

7.2 Implementing monitoring and evaluation

7.2.1 Sources of data for monitoring and evaluation

There are many kinds of information and many sources of data relevant to understanding fully the impact of not only NGO/CBO support activities but also the NGO/CBO activities themselves.

To some extent, the range of different possible sources of data will have been narrowed down by careful definition of the kinds of questions the data is expected to answer. For example, sources of qualitative data are more appropriate for understanding the processes involved in developing a supportive relationship between an NGO/CBO support officer and a manager in an NGO/CBO partner, and this might involve a series of in-depth interviews. On the other hand, if the objective is to measure the growth in capacity of the NGO/CBO sector as a whole, then quantitative data may be the priority. This might be gathered either from existing information that NGOs and CBOs are collecting for themselves or by asking NGOs and CBOs to collect a standard data set at regular intervals.

Choices need to be made in relation to four key areas.

- Will dedicated data be collected directly from beneficiaries (more costly to collect but usually more revealing)? Or will secondary data be used instead (i.e. using data that is collected for other purposes)?
- What kind of sample will be used and of what size?
- What baseline data, how often and at what points in time does it need to be collected?
- What combination of data needs to be gathered? What other kinds of data need to be collected so that the main data can be understood? For example, in measuring the growth of capacity and accurately attributing what has caused it, it is important to factor in the effects of other NGO/CBO support programmes that may have been working in the same region.

Issues to consider

- ➔ Probability ('random') samples are harder to get but more robust for generalising to a larger population. However, they can only be used if there is a complete list available of the population to randomise from. Such lists are, of course, not available for certain key populations most vulnerable to HIV, which are very often socially stigmatised and consequently often hidden from view.
- ➔ Also relevant are the different systems of information collection that NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) and NGOs and CBOs use – for example, quarterly reports, annual review and replanning, case studies, site visit reports, etc. Careful planning and forethought can ensure that the information provided by these activities can contribute data to an evaluation.



Another way of collecting data is through a system of community monitoring or participatory monitoring and evaluation. This is a community monitoring group supported by the International HIV/AIDS Alliance programme in Cambodia.

7.2 Implementing monitoring and evaluation

7.2.2 Methods of monitoring and evaluation data collection

Once the sources of data that are required by the evaluation or monitoring design have been identified it will be possible to choose from among a range of quantitative and qualitative (or combined) methods, such as structured and semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, participant observation, focus groups, counting, literature reviews, etc.

Few NGOs and CBOs in developing countries will have extensive experience of using these methods. NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) can help by providing resources and training about key factors affecting the choice of methods.

- The strengths and weaknesses of different methods for collecting various types of data (the quality and credibility of data, costs, ease of use, timescale).
- The pros and cons of internal versus external evaluation (and ways of combining them). To what extent can different methods of data gathering be integrated into routine work?
- How the data will be recorded and how its accuracy will be verified.
- The forms of data collection that encourage community participation in the monitoring and evaluation of programmes.
- A common mistake is to decide on a particular method of data collection before identifying the types of data required by the end purpose of the monitoring or evaluation.

7.2 Implementing monitoring and evaluation

7.2.3 Using monitoring and evaluation

NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) can be important in promoting the value of monitoring and evaluation by demonstrating how the findings of evaluation can be used to inform replanning and improve future programming.

This will usually involve programming time in advance for reflection and analysis in order to enhance the learning potential from the process of monitoring and evaluation. It will also entail agreeing in advance what kinds of decisions will be informed by the results of monitoring and evaluation.

It is important to differentiate the ways in which monitoring data will be used, as opposed the ways in which evaluation data will be used, for different stakeholders. For example, monitoring data are primarily used to help NSPs better implement support programmes and make ongoing adjustments to their portfolio of activities. Evaluation data are primarily used to look at broader questions such as effectiveness and impact, and may be used to influence or inform the work of many different stakeholders.

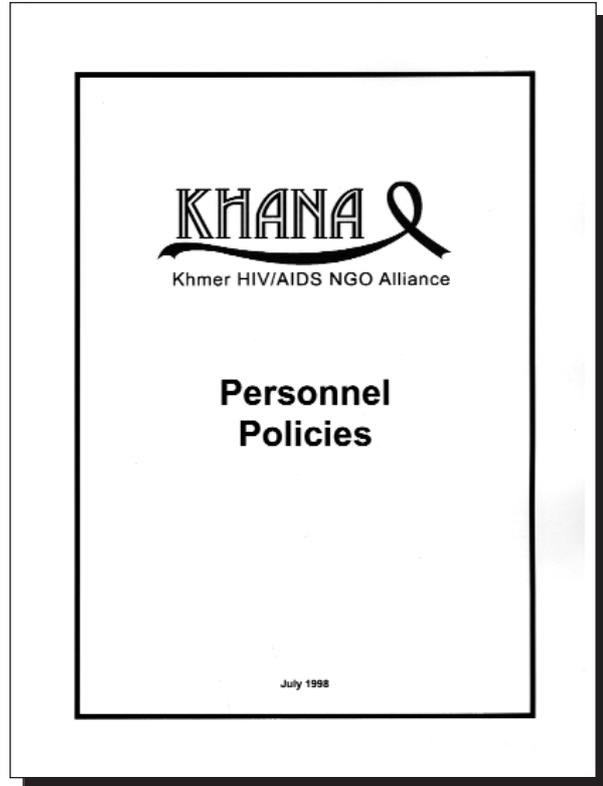
NSPs can also play an important role in helping develop the capacity amongst NGOs and CBOs to monitor and evaluate in a way that is used to inform the work.

Key areas of technical support that this entails include:

- analysis of qualitative and quantitative data
- identifying and drawing on sources of evaluative and analytical expertise
- understanding the limitations of different data collection methods, samples and sources, and drawing valid conclusions from the data
- structuring evaluation reports for different audiences and purposes and using feedback to refine evaluation
- integrating the presentation and reporting of results and recommendations into planning and replanning processes.

NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) need to establish their own governance, management, administration and financial systems to ensure that support provided to NGOs and CBOs is based on a sound decision-making process and with mechanisms for accountability and other appropriate systems in place.

This section covers a wide range of topics that are relevant both to NSPs and NGOs and CBOs. They include **organisational governance and structure** (including governance, organisational structure and policies and procedures) and **finance** (including internal control systems and procedures, accounting systems and record keeping, grant management systems, financial reporting, and audits).



The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the homepage of 'The Manager's Electronic Resource Center'. The browser's address bar shows 'http://erc.msh.org/'. The page has a dark background with white text and images. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Back', 'Forward', 'Stop', 'Refresh', 'Home', 'Autofill', 'Print', and 'Mail'. Below that, the address bar and a toolbar with various icons are visible. The main content area is divided into several columns. On the left, there's a 'Quick Links' section with links to 'The Provider's Guide to Quality & Culture', 'The Health Manager's Toolkit', 'The Guide to Managing for Quality', 'International Drug Price Indicator Guide', and 'The Manager Online'. The middle section is titled 'Content' and lists various topics like 'Managing Human Resources', 'Managing Your Organization's Finances', 'Managing Information', 'Keeping Your Organization Sustainable', 'Managing Community Health Services', and 'General Management'. On the right, there's a 'Contact' section, a 'Join us!' section, a 'Member Community' section, a 'Training Center' section, and an 'Email Resources' section. At the bottom, there are logos for MSH, UNICEF, and the U.S. Agency for International Development, along with text indicating the site is produced by Management Sciences for Health with support from these organizations.

<http://erc.msh.org>

8.1 Organisational governance and structure

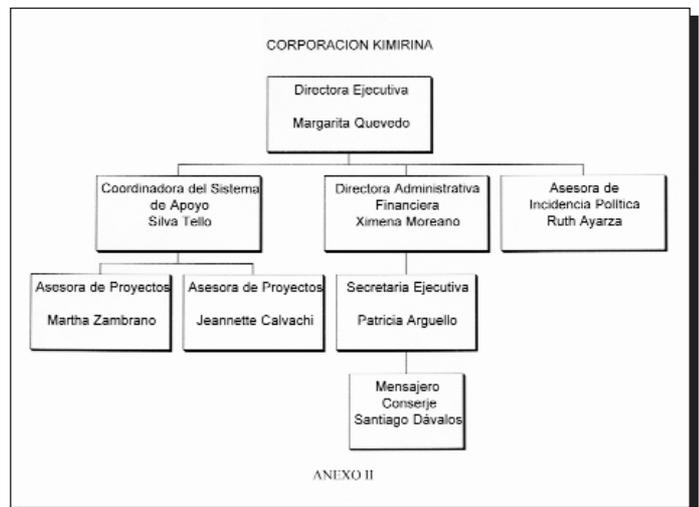
All organisations need a clear governance structure and a broader organisational structure in order to allocate responsibilities, tasks for the implementation of work, and day-to-day management and accountability of the organisation.

NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) need to ensure that resources are used to fulfil their mission as effectively as possible and that they are accountable to the donors and other stakeholders. The organisational governance and structure of an organisation is described under three key topics.

- **Governance:** the leadership and decision-making structures which ensure that the organisation implements its mission and range of NSP functions, responds to the changing needs of those responding to the epidemic and to the context in which the organisations work, and ensures that there is financial liability and accountability.
- **Organisational structure:** the organisation of different roles within an organisation and how the different roles interrelate to contribute to the implementation of the work, allow continual learning and input into decision-making, and encourage the evolution of the strategic direction of the organisation.
- **Policies and procedures:** the processes by which an organisation ensures that it functions in a systematic, efficient and consistent way within the local legal context.

Issues to consider

- ➔ In some cases, specific NSP functions are added to existing implementing organisations. This can lead to leadership styles, governance structures and finance systems that are not adequately tailored to the needs of the decision-making process associated with NGO/CBO support provision. For example, there may not be structures in place concerning selection of partners, strategic thinking and external representation relevant to NGO/CBO support.



8.1 Organisational governance and structure

8.1.1 Governance

Governance is the decision-making process that ensures that it implements its mission, that it addresses the changing needs of those responding to the epidemic and the context in which the organisations work, and that there is financial liability and accountability. Governance often revolves around leadership and a legal framework for accountability.

Legally, most registered NGOs and CBOs are governed by a board of trustees or governors, who may be appointed or elected by a wider membership or by a number of stakeholders. Boards of trustees are known by different names in different countries, and some of their functions and responsibilities are often dictated by the local legal system.

Boards of trustees are not the only way to secure good governance for an NGO. The nature of some NGOs and CBOs and some country legislation may mean that a board of trustees is not required. The important point is that whatever the structure, at least one person, or more usually a group of people, needs to take responsibility for the governing functions described in this section.

It is important to distinguish between the roles and responsibilities of the board or governing body and the day-to-day management and operational matters that are usually delegated to staff.

Generally, it is the board's responsibility to:

- agree policy changes for the organisation and establish organisational strategies and priorities in line with its mission
- ensure that the organisation is fulfilling its legal and contractual responsibilities and that appropriate financial systems are followed (often a personal legal financial liability of board members)
- supervise the executive director or chief executive officer
- ensure the organisation is being well managed and operating within agreed policies, bye-laws and its budget

- evaluate its own performance and ensure that it acts in accordance with its own terms of reference and the strategic governing documents
- provide strategic input in the development and activities of the organisation.

Usually the board will delegate responsibility to:

- staff (and usually the executive director) to take operational decisions and report on the management of specific risks
- third parties, such as auditors or lawyers, to give sound advice on technical and professional matters
- specific board sub-committees, which may be ongoing or temporary committees, and can consist of board members, staff, volunteers and sometimes other co-opted individuals (who can contribute particular skills or expertise)
- volunteers to take operational decisions (in more volunteer-led CBOs).

Key questions to consider in the composition of the board and selection of the board members for both NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) and their partners are:

- does it include the ideal range of skills and experience?
- does it include people with HIV and/or representatives of the communities most vulnerable to HIV?
- is there an appropriate balance of gender, ethnicity, sexuality?
- is the size of the board conducive to decision making?
- how many office bearers (such as chair, vice-chair, secretary and treasurer) are needed?
- should the executive director be a member of the board or not?
- how to avoid or minimise (professional, programmatic or financial) conflicts of interest?
- what curriculum of training and induction is needed to make the board effective?

8.1 Organisational governance and structure

8.1.1 Governance

Terms of reference for a board might include:

- definitions of 'governance' and rules of proper conduct for members of the board
- clear job descriptions, both for ordinary members of the board and office bearers
- frequency of meetings and expectations of time commitment
- how long members will serve on a board before, and under what circumstances, they can be re-elected or re-appointed
- whether board members are paid (country specific) or given training allowances
- what professional and administrative support the board can expect
- the code of conduct for members (i.e. their rights and responsibilities) and actions to be taken if they are not fulfilled
- protocols for representing the organisation (for example, relations with media, conflicts of interest, attendance at conferences, etc.)
- terms of reference for specific committees (for example, audit, human resources, etc.)
- the scope of delegated authority, and lines of access and communication between the board, staff, volunteers and clients of the organisation.

When establishing NSPs there are specific choices to consider in relation to appropriate governance.

Issues to consider

- Different styles of leadership are appropriate to different types of NGO/CBO support programmes (NSP) in different contexts. However, the age and stage of development of NSPs can also have a bearing on choices in relation to appropriate governance. For example, often there is an important transition to be negotiated from a first phase of 'charismatic' leadership to a second phase of managerial leadership.
- Leadership styles can vary along a spectrum from democratic and inclusive to hierarchical. This is often determined by cultural, personal or organisational historical factors. Attention should be paid by the board of trustees to ensure that an appropriate style of leadership is adopted for an organisation and that this leadership is effective in achieving the mission of the organisation and retaining and motivating staff.
- Recruiting an executive director to lead an NSP can be challenging, and decisions will depend on the different NGO support functions that are being provided. The executive director needs to have a wide range of skills and experience to manage the implementation of functions relating directly to NGOs and CBOs. They also need to have good representation skills for advocacy and policy work, self and sector-wide resource mobilisation work, and information gathering and networking. Consequently, an adequate balance of skills and experience is required, but careful consideration should be paid to which skills are essential and which ones can be part of a balancing equation.
- Some NSPs are largely the creation of a single outside entity (for example, the International HIV/AIDS Alliance established some of their linking organisations) and these may have different kinds of governing bodies than more 'independent' NSPs.
- Since board members often establish the by-laws and governance structure of an organisation, models of board procedures are frequently adopted from the previous experience of board members. Although this can work well, it may mean that there is insufficient thought and consideration given to designing a governance structure appropriate to the organisation being established.
- NSPs may also direct some technical support to their partner NGOs and CBOs for addressing issues of governance, organisation structure and policy and procedures. This will help ensure that partner NGOs and CBOs are accountable, so that in turn the NSP can be accountable to their other stakeholders and supporters.
- There may be conflicts of interest for boards of NSPs that are grant-givers if they are composed of representatives from partner organisations who might be recipients of grants from the NSP itself.

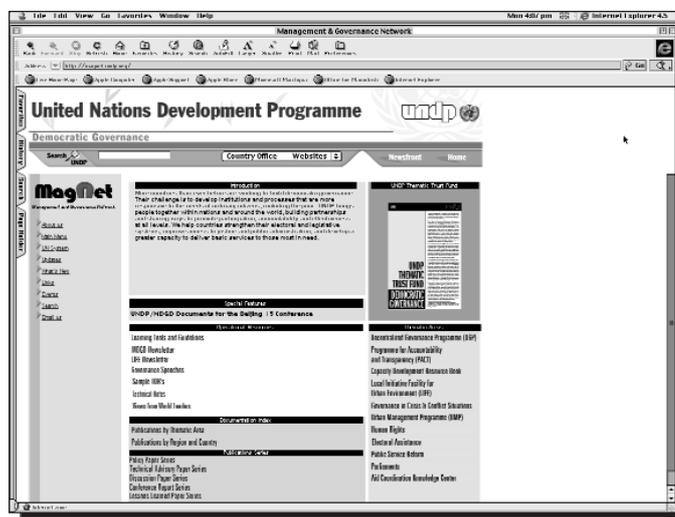
8.1 Organisational governance and structure

8.1.1 Governance

- ➔ For NSPs that work with intermediary NSPs, there is an inherent tension between allowing intermediary NSPs some independence when the lead NSP is trying to maintain some overall coherence of programming. To some extent this also applies to NSPs working directly with NGOs and CBOs.
- ➔ NSPs often need to balance the composition of their boards so that they include people with community-based experience as well as those with more formal or long-term NGO/CBO-sector management experience. The composition will depend on the nature of the organisation, but a mix of experience often provides the right solution.
- ➔ NSPs can help NGOs and CBOs clarify from the outset how much control they want to mandate to their board. Often an NSP has helped to establish an NGO or CBO. In this case it will support a committee of potential board members or a group of key potential staff or volunteers to define the mandate of the prospective board and draft terms of reference as part of the organisation's bye-laws.
- ➔ Boards can be involved to different degrees in each area of management. However, a recurring theme is that less experienced board members will sometimes want to micromanage (i.e. specify decisions outside of their mandate or put inappropriate 'pressure' on staff). Clear mandates and delegation of tasks will help avoid this.
- ➔ In countries where payment of board members is an option, the potential adverse consequences of this need to be carefully considered. For example, payment per meeting can lead to more meetings than are necessary. There is a need for clear term lengths to avoid financial dependence and compromised objectivity, and equity in levels of payment to avoid resentment from beneficiaries.
- ➔ NSPs can help NGOs and CBOs clarify the extent and nature of the liabilities of the board (for example, joint and individual responsibility).
- ➔ The role of board members is likely to develop as the organisation grows. For example, board

members may govern the organisation and do all the work – especially in new NGOs and CBOs. As most NGOs and CBOs grow, the role of the board tends to become one of pure governance. It can be an important part of an NSP's role to assist the board in supporting managers of NGOs and CBOs to take on more responsibility for running the organisation themselves. These changes should be defined, agreed and documented as part of an updated mandate for the board members.

- ➔ Some boards will be confident in setting clear objectives and establishing systems and procedures for organisational management. Less experienced boards may need support in defining the vision and direction of the organisation.
- ➔ It may be important for NGOs and CBOs to consider that selecting board members can be controversial and impact upon the reputation and potential of the NGO or CBO.



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8.1 Organisational governance and structure

8.1.2 Organisational structure

Good governance and effective boards are necessary but not sufficient to ensure that an organisation is maximising its potential. NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) also have to establish structures for decision-making, reporting and accountability that are transparent and effective. A clear organisational structure will also enable people both internal and external to the organisation to understand the boundaries of roles and responsibilities among the different posts, including:

- who is involved in decision-making at various levels
- who is managed by whom and why
- what are appropriate channels for communication.

This will enable them to take clear responsibility for accountability and quality control of the implementation of NSP functions.

Organisational structures are designed to support the long-term development of the programme, in addition to meeting its day-to-day operational needs. NSPs can have many different structures. Generally, larger programmes are likely to be more formal with specialist functions, whereas smaller programmes are likely to be informal with generalised functions. NSPs change their organisational structures as they change the combination or emphasis of the NGO support functions they provide over time.

The structure of an NGO/CBO support programme will need to be reviewed regularly to ensure that the needs of partner organisations and the NSP's mission continue to be met in a changing environment. The review should take into account the pace of growth of the programme, the developing relationships with partners and the external context in which the NSP works.

There is an increased need to codify and document policies and practices as an organisation grows – for example, in the form of staff manuals and organograms.

Issues to consider

- ➔ The organisational structure should take account of the key functional areas in the organisation, including how these functions should be implemented and, crucially, how they should be supported and funded.
- ➔ Organisational structures need to take into account not only how people are managed in teams, but also how the teams (programme and finance) interrelate and share information and learning so that the organisation functions coherently.
- ➔ Volunteers need to be integrated into the organisational structures in such a way as to encourage engagement, involvement and information sharing.
- ➔ Although organisational structures are often focused on roles and responsibilities, they can also help develop logical delegation of tasks, budgets and day-to-day responsibilities.
- ➔ Organisation structures should reflect logically how decisions are made in the organisation and how individuals can contribute their ideas within the decision-making structure.
- ➔ Organisational structures and decision-making processes should be transparent so that staff and volunteers understand roles and responsibilities and how they can contribute to decision-making.
- ➔ New staff and volunteers should ideally be properly 'inducted' or introduced to the organisation. Inductions can cover a wide range of introductory information, from the history and mission of the organisation to who to go to for pens and paper. A complete range of information will allow the new staff/volunteers to be able to focus quickly on their work rather than to try and understand how the organisation functions.

8.1 Organisational governance and structure

8.1.3 Policies and procedures

Policies and procedures promote consistency and equity and communicate clearly how partners and staff can expect to be treated. They will also facilitate compliance with employment legislation, fundraising constraints and regulations, financial reporting requirements and tax regulations.

- Policies need to be developed within the legal framework of the host country. They should be broad enough to reflect differences in legislation and by-laws across regions and be sensitive to local cultural contexts.
- Procedures identify the key steps to be followed in order to implement a policy. Whereas a policy may describe the management/organisational thinking, a procedure will describe clearly how to interpret and act on it. It is important that policies and procedures are documented and widely communicated to partners and staff.

There are a range of detailed policies and procedures necessary to ensure that human resources are developed and used effectively. Most of them are identical for NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) and NGOs and CBOs. They are usually documented in bye-laws and personnel or procedures manuals. The following types of issues may be addressed.

- Legal framework of employment: individual or collective agreements; recruitment procedures, induction and probation; contracts of employment; redundancy and retrenchment provisions; and other requirements of specific legislation in each country.
- Pay and reward: salary structures and scales; pensions; other benefits and incentives; pay review procedures; contractual terms of full-time, part-time, temporary staff, seconded staff or interns, volunteers, and consultants.
- Performance development and training: training assessment and opportunities; career progression; promotion; skills development; and training plans.

- Employee terms and conditions: job descriptions; hours of work; holiday entitlement; sick leave; maternity and paternity leave; payroll; working environment and conditions; and temporary cover.
- Internal communication and interactions: meeting structures; reporting structures; and organisational review systems.
- Management, participation and consultation: line-management systems; appraisal systems; grievance and disciplinary procedures; and teamwork procedures.
- Staff turnover: notice periods; exit interviews; and staff succession arrangements.
- Equal opportunities: specific provision to prevent discrimination against people with HIV in the workplace: education for HIV negative or untested staff and volunteers; medical benefits for people with HIV; and provisions for diversity in recruitment and against discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnicity, language, religion, sexuality, gender, disability, etc.
- Travel procedures, restrictions and processes.
- Health and safety: use of helmets when riding motorcycles; use of universal precautions; availability of first aid; and fire procedures.

Issues to consider

- ➔ Specific issues to consider in developing pay structures and levels in NGOs and CBOs include: how to identify comparative salary scales; degree of differentiation of salary levels; the balance between financial and other rewards; and the strengths and weakness of performance-related pay.
- ➔ There can be a tension between individual development and organisational delivery.
- ➔ Staff and volunteer turnover can be beneficial when it brings 'fresh blood' into the organisation but destabilising if it happens too rapidly or on too large a scale. So it is important for NSPs to help NGOs and CBOs understand why people leave the organisation, anticipate burnout, review how to keep staff or volunteers and plan for appropriate turnover.

8.1 Organisational governance and structure

8.1.3 Policies and procedures

- The appropriate balance between specialist and generalist staff may shift as an organisation grows. NSPs can help NGOs and CBOs plan for this development (for example, by creating systems for developing the skills of generalists).
- Induction of staff should include a period of time (perhaps one to three months) spent working with the organisations the NSP supports (for example, International HIV/AIDS Alliance secretariat staff work with linking organisations, linking organisation staff work with an NGO or CBO partner) in order to understand them better.

8.2 Financial systems

In order to achieve their objectives, all organisations need to make the most efficient use of their financial resources. In terms of finance systems, NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) are no different from other organisations. However, two key issues that distinguish NSPs from NGOs and CBOs are how they will establish and deliver:

- grant programming systems
- finance and administration technical support to partners.

More generally, financial systems and procedures are designed to help an organisation:

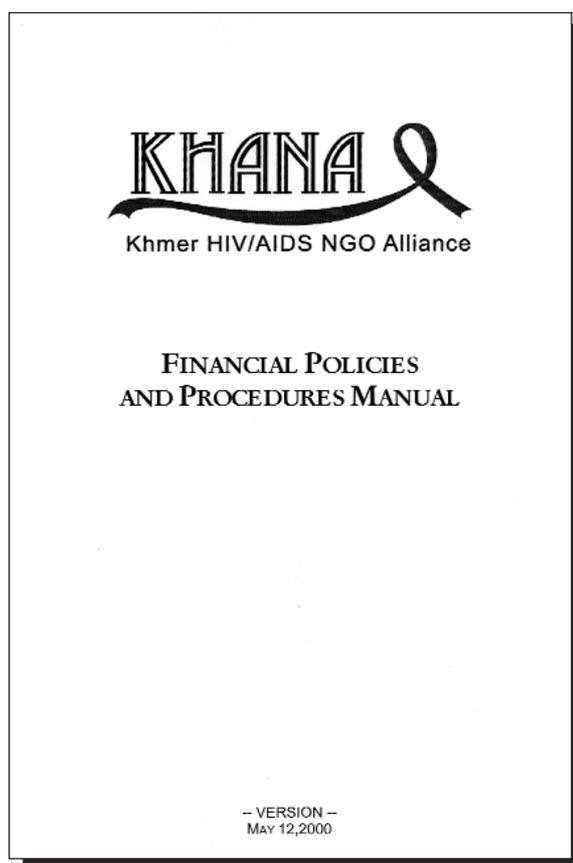
- maximise its use of resources by tracking and comparing the cost-effectiveness of the various elements of the project so that efficiencies and financial problems can be identified early on and management be based on accurately tracked costs
- maximise donor funding by demonstrating responsible, transparent and efficient use of previous funds
- minimise the mismanagement of funds or loss of money by ensuring that decisions are checked and that more than one person is involved in each financial transaction. This also involves having contingency procedures to deal with loss of money or mismanagement of funds.

Areas to take into account that are applicable to any organisation are:

- internal control systems and procedures
- accounting systems and record keeping
- grant management systems
- financial reporting
- audits.

In addition, NSPs need to consider how to follow up and monitor the activities of the local NGOs and CBOs they support. For this, they need to develop a grant management system.

NSPs have a crucial role in helping to improve or develop the financial systems of the NGOs and CBOs they support. Newly formed or emergent NGOs and CBOs may lack understanding or experience of the importance of sound financial systems and internal controls and procedures. They may become impatient with bureaucracy that appears to hinder real work, viewing financial controls negatively as indicating lack of trust or intended only to prevent theft. It can be helpful, therefore, for NSPs to make the rationale for them explicit rather than assuming any existing consensus.



8.2 Financial systems

8.2.1 Internal control systems and procedures

Internal control is synonymous with management control. It is control by management of the internal affairs of the organisation. An internal control system is the entire system of controls, financial or otherwise, established by management in order to carry out the aims of the organisation in an orderly and efficient manner.

The main objectives of internal control systems are to:

- safeguard assets
- secure the relevance, reliability and integrity of information
- minimise waste, errors or fraud
- ensure compliance with laws and regulations
- ensure adherence to management policies in order to achieve the organisation's objectives
- protect those responsible for handling the financial affairs of the organisation.

Organisations adopt different internal control models and approaches, but they share certain key features if they are to be used effectively.

- Segregation of duties and responsibilities. Different people authorise purchase orders, sign cheques and check the accuracy of the financial transactions.
- Simple, effective and practical book-keeping. Accounting and record-keeping systems need to be tailored to the capacity, size and complexity of the NGO or CBO.
- Documentation of all financial procedures in accessible manuals which are followed rigorously, but with procedures for review and adaptation of the rules (for example, as the NGO or CBO grows or as tax laws change).
- Consistency. Financial systems should be consistent over the years so that comparisons can be made, trends analysed and transparency facilitated. This does not mean that the systems may not be refined. Inconsistent approaches to financial management could be viewed as an indication of manipulation by individuals.

Examples of systematic consistency in the application of procedures would include:

- accounting for all funds
 - exceptions not being made without recorded explanation
 - uniform recording of expenses or transactions regardless of seniority in the organisation.
- Regular reporting. These will help in the internal decision-making process and provide vital information to report to donors and other parties, such as the government.

Issues to consider

- ➔ Identification of the basic skills and experience required for key finance staff of NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs).
- ➔ Identification of the basic skills and experience required for key finance staff of NGOs and CBOs.
- ➔ Balance the pros and cons of hiring staff who are already 'professionally qualified' against training up administrative or clerical staff.
- ➔ NGOs and CBOs may need to be provided with a 'float' so that funds are available to continue programme activities until a new disbursement is received.
- ➔ Financial procedures may need to be developed or adapted to support different or overlapping reporting systems and requirements – for example, when an organisation needs to report to two donors at different periods of time and using different reporting formats.
- ➔ There are different local 'cultures' of financial management and control, with both different expectations and different terminologies. NSPs need to be sensitive to these.
- ➔ Compliance tends to be best when systems and procedures are seen to be useful and relevant to the actual work of the NGO and CBO.
- ➔ It is important to help NGOs and CBOs develop contingency plans (for example, for managing money loss) before they are needed.

8.2 Financial systems

8.2.2 Accounting systems and record keeping

Every organisation must keep an accurate record of financial transactions to show how funds have been used. Accounting records also provide valuable information about how the organisation is being managed and whether it is achieving its objectives.

The recording of all financial transactions in a consistent, practical and accessible format is at the heart of good financial management. All funds should be accounted for.

NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) need to develop appropriate accounting and filing systems, where every transaction is:

- authorised (approved by budget holders or linked to budget lines)
- recorded in a common format conducive to transparent reporting (which could be manual or electronic)
- linked to relevant documentation (purchase orders, invoices, receipts, delivery notes)
- verified (by cheque signatories, the internal treasurer, auditors).

NGOs and CBOs may need help in developing or improving their own systems. The complexity of such systems will depend on the size and capacity of each NGO or CBO and should allow them to generate financial information for analysis and decision making as well as to report back to NSPs.

Issues to consider

- ➔ The most appropriate means of recording financial transactions will depend on factors such as the size and level of development of NGOs and CBOs, the volume of transactions and the capacity of staff.
- ➔ Manual systems may be easiest for new NGOs and CBOs but will require modifications as the organisation grows.
- ➔ Spreadsheets in computer software such as Excel can be a pragmatic transitional method.
- ➔ Dedicated accounting software tend to be most efficient for large NGOs and CBOs with multiple projects and budget lines.

- ➔ Special attention may be needed for controlling cash transactions, especially for newer or smaller organisations. This involves developing an imprest system, where cash-in-hand and valid receipts always add up to a fixed sum.

What is an imprest system?

This means that if you hold a cash float of, say, \$100, at any one time the total value of cash plus receipts should add up to \$100. For example, assume you have a petty cash float of \$100 and you pay \$10 to person A for travel expenses and \$30 to person B for accommodation. You should have receipts totalling \$40 in the petty cash tin and cash totalling \$60. When your cash balances fall to, say, \$20, you may decide to reimburse the float. At that point you take all the receipts out of the tin, add them up (they should total \$80), check the remaining cash (should be \$20) and raise a payment voucher for \$80 to which you attach the receipts. You then pay \$80 into the petty cash tin so that your float is once again \$100. This is referred to by accountants as an imprest system.

- ➔ Regular reconciliations are important to ensure procedures are being followed correctly.
- ➔ NSPs need to help NGOs and CBOs develop accounting principles which balance the requirements of:
 - 'common sense', so that systems and procedures are seen as relevant and practical
 - double-entry book-keeping, so that growing organisations can keep track of different budget lines
 - national accounting standards and requirements
 - international accounting standards and requirements
 - donor standards and requirements (both international and local).

8.2 Financial systems

8.2.3 Grant management systems

When NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) give financial support to local NGOs and CBOs, agreements between the NSP and the local organisations should be prepared in the same way that an agreement or Memorandum of Understanding is drawn between a donor and an NSP.

NSPs need to develop procedures and systems to manage the disbursement and monitor the use of grants to ensure they are in compliance with donor restrictions and statutory obligations. This is especially important for new NGOs and CBOs without experience of receiving formal grants, and in countries where the legal status of NGOs and CBOs is changing or developing rapidly.

In relation to each grant there needs to be a clear agreement between the NSP and NGO/CBO grantees about:

- how budgets and workplans should be developed and in what format
- the start and end dates of the projects covered by the grant
- the amount of the grant and the schedule of disbursement
- contractual details, including organisational responsible signatories
- monitoring, reporting, accounting and audit requirements
- donor restrictions on the use of the grant, and how to adhere to these.

It is important for NSPs to be able to adapt the agreements and financial requirements according to the capacity of the NGO or CBO receiving the grant.

NSPs will also need to identify statutory restrictions in relation to:

- opening bank accounts.
- whether or not advances can be made
- whether or not organisations have to be registered
- what is taxable and who is responsible for paying tax
- who should keep original documentation of financial transactions.

Issues to consider

- ➔ The degree of hands-on financial support and control offered by NSPs may need to be tailored to the strengths and weaknesses of individual NGOs or CBOs.
- ➔ For less experienced NGOs and CBOs, it may be appropriate to make advances before financial systems are fully developed, and request monthly reports and original documentation of financial transactions.
- ➔ NGOs and CBOs with stronger financial systems can be expected to report quarterly. Such reports may not be supported by original documentation of financial transactions.

8.2 Financial systems

8.2.4 Financial reporting

A system of clear financial reporting assists the development of a more productive partnership **between** donors, NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) and NGOs and CBOs, as well as more effective financial planning and control **within** NGOs and CBOs, by identifying:

- the extent to which financial assumptions are on track
- where there are significant variances, unforeseen costs and cost-effective opportunities (for better future financial projections and grant-making)
- evidence of the proper use of funds
- a summary of the broad picture (as opposed to the multiplicity of individual transactions), including explanations of variances from budget.

It is important to link financial reporting to the programmatic reporting and to the monitoring and evaluation framework in order to match the money spent to the beneficial results achieved.

NSPs have an important role in helping NGOs and CBOs clarify what needs to be reported and with what regularity in different contexts, so that the collation and manipulation of the financial data and the analysis and writing can be structured into the workplan.

NGOs and CBOs normally undertake three kinds of routine financial reporting:

- internal reports to the management, governing boards and membership
- reports to donors (generally via the NSPs as intermediaries)
- statutory reports required by in-country legislation.

NGOs and CBOs should comply with the reporting requirements from NSPs and other donors, since very often the financial reports are linked to the next disbursement of funds.

Issues to consider

- ➔ Internal reporting tends to be dependent on the size, complexity and experience of NGOs and

CBOs. In the case of new or small organisations, internal financial reporting should be as regular as required, normally concentrating on:

- analysis of expenses by main budget categories to identify levels of budget utilisation
 - cash analysis to ensure solvency and identify cash-flow needs.
- ➔ As organisations become larger and more experienced they normally expect to provide monthly internal reports showing:
 - detailed analysis of income and expenses, subdivided by cost centres, projects and donors (showing actual expenditure and variances)
 - detailed cash-flow projections for the year (showing forecast expenditure and variances)
 - the follow-up actions taken as a result of feedback to previous reporting.
 - ➔ Donor reporting may be quarterly, six-monthly or annually. It does not normally involve direct communication between individual donors and NGOs and CBOs, but rather data collected from NGOs and CBOs by the NSP and passed on to the donor in an aggregate form. The range of information included in such reports would cover:
 - specific financial information in relation to donor requirements in the agreement or contract
 - notes to the accounts explaining anomalies and variances
 - information about delays in spending or implementation
 - requests for amendments to the budget.
 - ➔ Statutory reporting requirements will depend upon the specific provisions of different authorities such as:
 - tax authorities
 - government departments with the responsibility for NGOs and CBOs
 - social security departments
 - statutory pension schemes.

8.2 Financial systems

8.2.5 Audits

Audits are procedures for independently verifying the accuracy and fairness of the accounting and reporting systems.

The best preparation for external audits is for an organisation to have developed its own internal audit systems and procedures. Usually, this involves a specially appointed audit committee. The benefits for the organisation include the learning process and reassurance about the accuracy of the financial records and reports.

Annual external audits are usually required by in-country legislation, but can be initiated by the NGOs and CBOs themselves, or occasionally by donors (at any time to test anything).

The benefits of an external audit are that it gives credibility to an organisation, it offers a more in-depth learning process for the organisation and reassurance about the accuracy and fairness of the financial information, since the auditors will generally have extensive comparative experience. External auditors should also provide advice on improving financial systems and procedures. Usually this is offered through a post-audit management letter.

Issues to consider

- Local legislation, which could indicate that NGO/CBO support programmes (NSPs) or NGOs and CBOs need to have an external audit every year.
- The quality of, and hence reassurance offered by, the audit depends on the quality of the auditors. So selection criteria for auditors need to be carefully addressed.
- Not all firms of auditors will have sufficient experience of the particular issues involved in auditing NGOs and CBOs (as opposed to commercial organisations). It may be helpful for NSPs to develop lists of auditing firms with relevant experience.
- Donors sometimes provide particular audit guidelines that NSPs need to comply with.



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