

## **AIDSTAR-Two Project Trip Report – Burundi 01/21/11**

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HIV/AIDS, CSOs/NGOs, AIDSTAR – Two, Burundi, assessments

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## AIDSTAR-Two Project Trip Report

### **1. Scope of Work:**

Destination and Client(s)/ Partner(s)	Bujumbura, Burundi
Traveler(s) Name, Role	Constant Kabwasa, Independent Consultant
Date of travel on Trip	January 21 to February 14, 2011
Purpose of trip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To review and finalize the capacity building assessment tool to evaluate the current status of the financial, management and administrative skills, systems and processes of 6 CSOs/NGOs that provide HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment services in three provinces in Burundi.</li> <li>• To administer in the field the assessment tools in a participatory manner, analyzing and presenting the findings and recommendations in final report.</li> </ul>
Objectives/Activities/ Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To identify the strengths and weaknesses of these organizations on key corporate governance, management, administrative, financial and technical areas regarding HIV/AIDS service delivery;</li> <li>• To identify and rank organizations based on existing capacity; and</li> <li>• To propose capacity building interventions to strengthen these institutions for the delivery of high quality services, effective management of financial and other resources, and compliance with domestic and international donor requirements, particularly those from USG agencies, including proposed time-frames.</li> </ul>
Background/Context, if appropriate.	Several Burundian CSOs/NGOs receive USAID funding for HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment services. The bulk of funding is indirect and managed by US-based international NGOs. Because of the importance the new PEPFAR legislation places on strengthening the capacity of recipient countries to carry on the services post-PEPFAR, USAID/Burundi would like to include in its activities the strengthening of local CSOs/NGOs capacity to deliver HIV/AIDS services and become, overtime, prime recipients of donor funding.

### **2. Major Trip Accomplishments:** Should include the major programmatic goals realized, relevant metrics, and stories of impact from the trip.

The assessment covered both the technical/programmatic and financial and administrative management aspects of these institutions. However, it should be noted that this trip report covers only the aspects related to the financial and administrative management of the assessment.

After the orientation provided by the AIDSTAR-Two team in the Arlington Office about this assignment, the assessment team (Felicia Price, HIV/AIDS Technical Assessment Consultant and I) met in Bujumbura, Burundi to review the scope of work, the assessment tools and finalize the planning of activities starting with a briefing with USAID/Burundi and then with the management team of each of the 6 CSOs/NGOs to explain in more details the objectives of the assessment and the expected outcomes (final report). The CSOs/NGOs assessed were: RBP+, SWAA, ABS, CPAJ, ANSS, and ABUBEF. In addition, the assessment team sought the participation of the CSOs/NGOs management teams based in their headquarters offices in Bujumbura and their field offices (7) in 3 provinces (Kirundo, Muyinga, and Kayanza).

In Kirundo, the team conducted the capacity building assessment at ANSS, RBP+ and SWAA. The same was done in Muyinga at ABUBEF, ANSS, CPAJ and RBP+. In Kayanza the same assessment was undertaken at SWAA and

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CPAJ offices.

Prior to the start of the assessment, the assessment team organized focus group meetings with the CSOs/NGOs management team involving their key technical/program and financial staff. They all actively participated during the meetings after which the management team was split into two teams; one composed of technical/program staff and the other of financial and administrative staff for the application of the assessment tools (questionnaires).

The “QuickStart” Tool designed by Management Sciences for Health (MSH) was used for the financial and administrative management components of the assessment. The tool covers resource management and is divided into two parts. Part one addresses the design of the organizations’ systems using a list of targeted questions while part two addresses internal controls and processes in place to avoid financial and administrative risks.

In general, the assessment findings and recommendations were similar, and in some instances, the same across the CSOs/NGOs that were assessed. The final assessment report will include the specific findings and recommendations per CSO/NGO. Some of the major financial and administrative findings (that apply to all or some of the assessed organizations) are summarized as follows:

- Most organizations had only **one accounting staff** and in some cases a program staff was handling financial/accounting functions.
- Most **accounting staff** had limited skills in resources or risk management.
- **Accounting records**, check books, payroll documents are kept in unsecured locations.
- Although some donors allow the use of their proposed **rates for indirect costs** in the project’s budgets and for billing, these organizations do not have their own indirect costs rates to cover operational costs.
- The **accounting system software** “TOMATE TOMPORO” or “Sagy Saari” are not being fully used due to the lack or limited skills staff have on how to operate them appropriately.
- **Paid invoices and their related supporting documentation** were not always cancelled with a “PAID” stamp.
- **Capital assets** marking, tracking numbers, location, labeling is not fully implemented.
- **Timesheets** are used for some staff members based on donor requirements, but are not universally implemented across the organizations.
- They **maintain several separate bank accounts and petty cash**, both at the central office and in the field offices, for each program funded by donors.
- All the organizations **heavily depend on donors funding** to support the implementation of activities and delivery of services.
- **Lack of annual staff performance appraisals.**
- **Salaries budgeted for the same staff varies from donor to donor**, this causes tensions among staff.
- Overall **audits** of the organization financial operations have never been done.
- **Not all cash receipts, purchase orders are numbered.**
- **All accounting transactions are done in excel.**

Based on the above financial and administrative findings, the related preliminary recommendations are summarized as follows, in the same sequence:

- Hire additional accounting staff for internal control and segregation of duties.
- Organize training sessions for finance staff (on-the-job training, mentoring, and exchanges) or refresher training in resources management in general, project administration, financial management/accounting, compliance, and risk management in particular.
- Procure secure safe to store accounting documents and other bank records.
- Initiate talks with auditors to compile actual indirect cost rates (provisional or audited) for the organizations and provide the organizations with a statement, which would justify the use of the indirect rates for

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budgeting and billing purposes.

- Negotiate with the accounting system software suppliers or other qualified institutions to provide training for finance/accounting staff at the central and field offices.
- Apply the “PAID” stamp consistently on all paid invoices and related documents.
- Review and streamline the system of inventory.
- Introduce timesheets for all employees.
- Procure or implement the existing accounting software package to set up costs centers and assign accounting code for each donor receipts and expenses to facilitate the segregation of the reporting requirements and reduce the number of separate bank accounts and petty cash.
- Diversify source of funding to foster sustainability of the organization’s operations.
- Staff annual performance appraisals should be done in order to provide timely feedback on their performance, address performance gaps and to identify ways for promoting professional development and increasing staff’s efficiency.
- Provide the rationale and back-up documentation to donors during the budget negotiations for the use of the approved salary given to each staff included in the contract to ensure consistency and fair treatment, as well as compliance with the organization’s human resources policy and procedures.
- Apply noted findings in order to get prepared for the overall audits of the organizations.
- Number all cash receipts, purchase orders manually in sequence.
- Follow up with the procurement of or the implementation of their existing accounting system software in order to facilitate the reporting requirements and the efficient management of accounting transactions and other functions.

During the assessment, participants noted that their dependency on donors makes it difficult for the sustainability of their activities, which most of the time end along with their grant or contractual agreements and also leads the contracted staff being terminated, creating high turn-over of key program and financial staff. There is a need for these CSOs/NGOs to: (1) diversify their sources of funding; (2) seek new funding opportunities; and (3) organize income generating activities to secure their own sources of funding. In addition, proposal writing trainings could greatly benefit these institutions to seek additional funding locally, regionally and internationally.

At the end of each assessment, the assessing team debriefed the CSOs/NGOs management team and their technical/program and financial and administrative staff on the outcomes and recommendations generated through this participatory process. A final debrief with USAID/Burundi including the Mission Director and his team, was conducted and the overall results and outcomes of the assessment as well as the recommendations for both the technical/programmatic and the financial/administrative aspects were discussed.

The complete assessment report is being drafted and will be submitted in the next couple of days to the AIDSTAR-Two team for internal review prior to finalization.

### **3. Next steps:** Key actions to continue and/or complete work from trip.

Description of task	Responsible staff	Due date
Develop and submit the draft Assessment Report to AIDSTAR-Two	Felicia Price and Constant Kabwasa	February 25, 2011
Complete internal AIDSTAR-Two review of draft report	AIDSTAR-Two	February 28, 2011
Submission of draft report to USAID/Burundi for review and input	AIDSTAR-Two	March 1-4, 2011
Incorporate the input received and submit final Assessment Report	Felicia Price and Constant Kabwasa	March 7-10, 2011
Copyedit final report and translate the executive summary into	AIDSTAR-Two	March 11-13, 2011

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French		
Submit final Assessment Report to USAID/Burundi and Washington	AIDSTAR-Two	March 14, 2011

**4. Contacts:** List key individuals contacted during your trip, including the contacts' organization, all contact information, and brief notes on interactions with the person.

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**5. Description of Relevant Documents / Addendums:** Give the document's file name, a brief description of the relevant document's value to other staff, as well as the document's location in eRooms or the MSH network. Examples could include finalized products and/or formal presentations, TraiNet Participant List, Participant Contact sheet, and Meeting/Workshop Participant Evaluation form are examples of relevant documents.

File name	Description of file	Location of file
N/A		