



Communities Responding  
to the HIV/AIDS Epidemic

# CBO/FBO Capacity Analysis:

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



# Introduction

The **Communities Responding to the HIV/AIDS Epidemic (CORE) Initiative** is a five-year global program supported by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The **CORE Initiative** partners with community and faith-based groups to advance multi-sectoral responses to the HIV/AIDS epidemic through grants, capacity building, and networking. Leading this initiative is **CARE** in partnership with the **International Center for Research on Women (ICRW)**, **International HIV/AIDS Alliance**, **Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health/Center for Communication Programs (CCP)**, and **World Council of Churches**.

Organizational and technical capacity-building is a cornerstone of the CORE Initiative approach and helps ensure that grantees and southern and strategic partners have the necessary skills and strategies they need to implement effective community-based HIV/AIDS programs. The Initiative's capacity-building efforts focus on issues of organizational effectiveness such as planning and management, as well as technical HIV/AIDS issues including behavior change communication, monitoring and evaluation, micro-credit/finance, gender issues, partnering, and advocacy.

The CORE Initiative developed this tool to enable community and faith-based organizations (CBOs/FBOs) to analyze levels of capacity in different organizational and technical areas. It is based on an existing toolkit for nongovernmental organizations by the International HIV/AIDS Alliance, the CORE Initiative consortium partner providing expertise in organizational capacity building for HIV/AIDS programming.

## Acknowledgements

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**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



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# Introduction

## 1. What is this tool?

This tool can be used with community organizations to identify capacity-building needs, plan any technical support needed by the organization, and monitor and evaluate the impact of capacity-building support.

## 2. How can this tool be used?

This tool is designed to facilitate group discussions between members of community organizations and external facilitators providing capacity-building support. Alternatively, the tool may be self-administered by the implementing community organization. The profile section has questions that can be asked to establish a basic description of the organization. There are seven further sections relating to specific areas of capacity.

In each capacity section, one open-ended question is followed by specific questions which have corresponding possible responses. Each suggested response indicates a different level of capacity that might be found in the organization. The facilitator uses the suggested responses to ask the group how they would score their organization on a scale of one to four. By this method, participants assess their own strengths, weaknesses, and capacity-building needs, but also develop their understanding of how they might strengthen their capacity or improve the way they work. It is highly recommended that the questions and suggested responses be adapted to suit the local context, with the participation of the community organizations involved, before using the tool.

## 3. How to organize a visit with a community organization

If working as external facilitators, there should be a team of two people, with roles assigned from the beginning so that one person facilitates and the other documents the analysis. A meeting should be arranged with five to ten members who represent different levels within the organization and include a balanced gender mix.

The process should take about four hours. Arrange a convenient time and location for the meeting. Check how far members and volunteers will have to travel to attend the meeting and if they need to be recompensed for this.

Refreshments may also need to be provided, not only during the meeting but also to sustain people for their journey home.

## 4. How to facilitate a discussion

The facilitator is central to the success of the session. This may be someone external, or someone from within the organization who takes on the role of facilitator for the meeting. The facilitator holds a very powerful position in a meeting. To impose her or his own views is to abuse that power. *Facilitators should only ever encourage, clarify, or help expand other people's views.*

General responsibilities of the facilitator also include:

- Ensuring that **everyone** (including less confident or less dominant members e.g. women and young people) contributes to the discussion and not all questions are answered by the leaders of the organization.
- Ensuring the discussion remains focused on the questions. Do not let people get distracted by side issues or become embroiled in details or an ongoing disagreement.
- Generating discussion and interaction, probing for further information, and asking the group to respond to each other's views (using questions such as, 'What do the others feel about that?').
- Encouraging critical reflections and guarding against the group tendency to provide only positive responses.
- Ensuring that everyone understands all language used. Participants may not be familiar with some terms like 'mission', 'technical skills', 'book-keeper', etc.

## 5. Starting the discussion

- Introduce yourself and ask everyone to introduce themselves and their roles. Document people's roles to ensure there is a variety of people from across the organization.
- Explain that the main purpose of the meeting is not to find out information from them, but to enable participants to discuss and decide how to improve the way their organization works, for their own benefit.
- Make a contract about time - the process should take about four hours. Use regular breaks to ensure people stay engaged when participating in the discussion.

## 6. Conducting the analysis

The assessment is a tool for starting discussions and for keeping discussions focused by returning back to the series of questions in the tool.

- If all participants have a high level of literacy, it may help to provide copies of the tool for participants to follow during the discussion. If some participants find the language difficult, they may be disadvantaged in comprehending the written tool, and oral translation and discussion may be better.
- The profile provides questions to help describe the organization. To save the group's time, this should be completed with the help of key members of the organization, before the group meeting. If time is limited, consider splitting up participants into two smaller groups and discussing different sets of questions with each group.
- In each capacity section, ask the open-ended question first. The group's response may help answer some of the specific questions, but use the specific questions and suggested responses to ask the group where they would rate the organization on a scale from 1 to 4.
- The suggested responses should be used in an informative way. Participants may ask for explanations and even challenge the assumptions in the tool. This encourages participants to reflect critically on the way they work and what needs to change.
- For organizations with very low or very high capacity, the answers to certain questions may be obvious (e.g. if it has its own office or computer). These questions could be completed by the facilitator without asking participants, to avoid repetition or the risk of discouraging a group with low capacity. The judgement of the facilitator is important in deciding which questions to ask and how to ask them.
- At the end of each section, ask the group if the discussion has made them think of any improvements or changes that could be made to the way they work. Try to come to an agreement on any specific actions or plans. Consider or suggest any external technical support that might be needed, such as additional resources, further advice, or training materials and literature.

## 7. How to document the discussion

Start by getting consent for documentation to take place and explain how the information will be used and by whom. Explain if a report will be written, and how copies will be shared with them. Also remember to:

- Record the main points of the discussion as they are made, on a flipchart if available or otherwise in a notebook.
- Summarize key actions agreed at the end of each section.
- Ask questions to clarify when necessary.
- Try to write up notes and flipcharts into a report as soon as possible after the meeting.

## 8. How to follow up the assessment

At the end of the meeting, go back to the objectives discussed, ask participants if they have found the process useful and how it could be improved. Before finishing, discuss how the assessment will be followed up with next steps, including:

- Who will document and share the final report? For example, would it be useful to share the report with other partners of the organization e.g. donors, support providers, or community organizations facing similar challenges?
- How will agreed actions and plans be implemented? For example, who will take responsibility for them and how will they be monitored?
- How can technical support be provided? For example, are there useful publications or training resources that can be obtained for the organization? Are there organizations or people who could provide advice or share experiences with participants?

We hope to learn from lessons as this tool is used, and incorporate any suggestions or improvements in future versions of the tool. Any comments or feedback from users should be sent to [publications@aid alliance.org](mailto:publications@aid alliance.org).



**7. Key achievements and main challenges**

Key highlights/successes of the CBO's work; main problems/issues it faces.

**8. Sources of funding**

Financial, material, or in-kind support received from a) within the community; b) outside the community.

**9. Future plans**

What are immediate needs/priorities? Does the CBO have any plans to scale up? If so, how?  
If the CBO received more funding, how would they use it?

**10. Date and name of person completing profile**

# A Leadership, governance, and strategy

		Capacity score			
		1	2	3	4
<b>How do you select leaders, make important decisions, and resolve conflict within the organization?</b>					
Question		1	2	3	4
<b>1. Constitution</b>	<b>Do you have a written constitution accepted and approved by all the members of the organization?</b>	No constitution	Some rules/principles written down	Written constitution exists but wasn't widely approved	Written constitution approved by representatives of the community and organization
<b>2. Governing committee/board</b>	<b>Do you have a committee/board that meets and makes decisions that guide your organization's development?</b>	No committee, no meetings	Committee established, but it never meets	Occasional meetings, but rarely agree on any decisions	Regular meetings (quarterly), with useful guidance and decisions made for the organization

## Question

## Capacity score

1

2

3

4

### 3. Mission and values

Do you have a mission and set of values which are clearly understood, agreed and approved by all the members of the organization? If so, how are they used?

No clear mission/values

Can describe the mission/values of the organization, but they have never been agreed or written down

Mission and/or values written down long ago, but few people were consulted or understand them now

Mission and values were agreed by all stakeholders, and are regularly used to guide decisions about projects and activities

### Capacity-building needs

### Plans for action or change

### Suggestions for technical support

		Capacity score			
		1	2	3	4
<b>How does the organization plan and manage its finances and budget?</b>					
Question		1	2	3	4
<b>1. Finances</b>	<b>Does your organization keep accounts of money that can be presented on demand?</b>	No accounts kept	Records kept of money received and spent, but difficult to know how much money is held at any one time	Accounts kept up-to-date and balances and statements are prepared at the end of the year	Balances and statements prepared quarterly. At year end, presented to external stakeholders for approval
<b>2. Bank account</b>	<b>Does your organization have a bank account to hold its funds?</b>	Organization has no bank account but manages all funds in cash	Someone's personal account used for any funds	Bank account registered in organization's name, which requires dual (or specific authorized) check signatories	A manual record of all payments (cashbook) is kept and compared with all bank statements
<b>3. Supporting documents</b>	<b>Do you maintain supporting receipts and invoices for every expenditure from the grant?</b>	No – receipts/invoices are only asked for when claiming or using money to justify expenses	Receipts/invoices are needed to justify expenses sometimes, but rarely kept on file	Receipts/invoices are needed to justify any use of grant money and these are kept on file, but rarely reviewed by anyone	All receipts/invoices and other supporting documents filed for three years, and regularly reviewed by authorized person

## Question

## Capacity score

1

2

3

4

<p><b>4. Budgets and cash flow planning</b></p>	<p><b>Does your organization prepare, monitor, and review a budget?</b></p>	<p>Budgets are prepared for every proposal but not used for anything else</p>	<p>Budgets are prepared to decide how much to spend on all project and organization costs, to ensure there is enough money for all future plans</p>	<p>Budgets are presented annually for approval to a board or representative group of members</p>	<p>Every six months budgets are compared to money already spent and planned cash flow, to make sure there will be enough cash to keep the organization running</p>
<p><b>5. Reporting requirement</b></p>	<p><b>Do you provide accurate financial reports on time to donors?</b></p>	<p>No experience of having to submit donor reports</p>	<p>Reports are submitted, but always late and with incomplete information</p>	<p>Some reports get submitted on time but are often incomplete or get queried by the donor</p>	<p>Reports always submitted on time and always meet all donor requirements</p>

Capacity-building needs

Plans for action or change

Suggestions for technical support

# C Administration and human resources

How do you organize for your work?		Capacity score			
		1	2	3	4
1. Staff/volunteer organization	Does your organization involve a number of salaried staff and volunteers who have different areas of responsibility?	Fewer than five volunteers run the entire organization	Five to fifteen volunteers with different roles, some who lead/manage the organization	One full-time staff person is paid a salary and organizes all the other volunteers	One to two full-time staff are paid salaries, and volunteers all have different, fixed areas of responsibility
	How do you ensure that staff and volunteers support and motivate each other and have sufficient skills?	No meetings or trainings. Low skill levels, as volunteers only do basic work	Few meetings. Volunteers sent for training only occasionally	Occasional meetings to share lessons and support each other. Training is provided informally and externally	Regular meetings (monthly), training and team-building activities to keep staff and volunteers motivated
2. Staff and volunteer development	How do you ensure that staff and volunteers support and motivate each other and have sufficient skills?	No meetings or trainings. Low skill levels, as volunteers only do basic work	Few meetings. Volunteers sent for training only occasionally	Occasional meetings to share lessons and support each other. Training is provided informally and externally	Regular meetings (monthly), training and team-building activities to keep staff and volunteers motivated

## Question

## Capacity score

1

2

3

4

**3. Office and equipment**

**Does the organization have its own office, meeting space and equipment for handling administration and writing reports? What equipment does the organization have?**

No office, no equipment

Occasional access to another office and equipment

Office & equipment (computer plus printer) shared with another organization or individual

Own office and equipment (computer plus printer)

**Capacity-building needs**

**Plans for action or change**

**Suggestions for technical support**

# D Project design and management

<b>How do you develop, manage, and evaluate your projects?</b>		<b>Capacity score</b>			
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1. Activity development and planning</b>	<b>Does the organization plan the development of its activities, involving all people concerned?</b>	Organization mainly responds to immediate needs, with little planning	Occasional short-term planning, e.g. major events or monthly activities	All the organization's on-going activities are normally planned in advance with all staff and volunteers	Annual plans are always developed and agreed with community members, volunteers, staff, and board (if one exists)
<b>2. Project and proposal development</b>	<b>Are you satisfied with the quality of the projects you develop?</b>	Organization responds to immediate needs, with no project framework or funded proposals	Funding has been received for one successful proposal mainly developed by an outsider	Funding has been received for at least one successful proposal in the last three years written and developed within the organization	Funding received for at least two proposals developed internally in the last three years, each with needs assessments, activity plans, and budgets
<b>3. Targeting</b>	<b>What type of people do you try to reach with your HIV/AIDS activities?</b>	Always try to reach the entire community	Work with whomever we can, but try to take care of the more vulnerable people	Work with specific groups of vulnerable people (e.g. orphans, or women-headed households)	We seek out people who are especially vulnerable or affected by HIV/AIDS, and together with them design our work relevant to their needs

## Question

## Capacity score

1

2

3

4

**4. Monitoring and evaluation 'M&E'**

**Does your organization have a functioning M&E system?**

No – organization does not do monitoring and evaluation for any of its activities

Organization mainly responds to immediate donor requests for M&E data, ad hoc, with little planning

Organization has an M&E system, is collecting data on an on-going basis and is reporting to donors

M&E system is documented and data is used to inform management decisions, and to provide feedback to the community

**Capacity-building needs**

**Plans for action or change**

**Suggestions for technical support**

# Technical capacity

<p><b>What experience does the organization already have in HIV work?</b></p>		Capacity score			
		1	2	3	4
<p><b>1. HIV/AIDS knowledge and skills</b></p>	<p>Does the organization train all its staff and volunteers in general HIV/AIDS knowledge and the technical skills necessary to do their duties well?</p>	<p>A few people know basic facts about HIV such as methods of transmission, prevention, care and support</p>	<p>Staff and volunteers know the skills needed for their tasks</p>	<p>HIV/AIDS issues well understood such as causes of vulnerability, effects of stigma, availability of treatment, but members get no regular training</p>	<p>HIV/AIDS issues well understood, staff and volunteers trained for the work they do and often provide training and support to others</p>
	<p>How do you create messages to raise awareness or change people's thinking?</p>	<p>Do not use any materials, tools or activities</p>	<p>Use some printed pictures or posters to illustrate messages and keep the attention of a group</p>	<p>Use materials or activities aimed at specific groups with specific messages, sometimes developed within the organization</p>	<p>Develop or adapt own materials and ensure their effectiveness by pre-testing or involving targeted groups in the production process</p>
<p><b>2. Information, Education and Communication (IEC) development and utilization</b></p>	<p>What do staff and members understand about the relationship between gender and HIV/AIDS?</p>	<p>No understanding</p>	<p>Know that women are more vulnerable but do not know what to do about it</p>	<p>Have changed the way the organization works to ensure women get equal participation, and benefit from its activities</p>	<p>Always analyze how gender is affecting vulnerability to HIV and access to services within the community, and respond with appropriate strategies</p>
	<p>What do staff and members understand about the relationship between people's rights, legal protection, and HIV/AIDS?</p>	<p>No understanding</p>	<p>Understand people living with HIV/AIDS are often discriminated against and have rights that should be protected</p>	<p>Understand how abuses of human rights can make people more vulnerable to discrimination and risk of infection, but not sure how to use rights in the work or to help others</p>	<p>Actively use explanations of the law and people's rights to help inform, defend or protect vulnerable people, or to advocate to others e.g. the police</p>
<p><b>3. Gender and HIV/AIDS</b></p>	<p>What do staff and members understand about the relationship between gender and HIV/AIDS?</p>	<p>No understanding</p>	<p>Know that women are more vulnerable but do not know what to do about it</p>	<p>Have changed the way the organization works to ensure women get equal participation, and benefit from its activities</p>	<p>Always analyze how gender is affecting vulnerability to HIV and access to services within the community, and respond with appropriate strategies</p>
<p><b>4. Human rights and HIV/AIDS</b></p>	<p>What do staff and members understand about the relationship between people's rights, legal protection, and HIV/AIDS?</p>	<p>No understanding</p>	<p>Understand people living with HIV/AIDS are often discriminated against and have rights that should be protected</p>	<p>Understand how abuses of human rights can make people more vulnerable to discrimination and risk of infection, but not sure how to use rights in the work or to help others</p>	<p>Actively use explanations of the law and people's rights to help inform, defend or protect vulnerable people, or to advocate to others e.g. the police</p>

## Question

## Capacity score

1

2

3

4

<p><b>5. (For non-AIDS Service Organizations) Integrating HIV/AIDS into core activities</b></p>	<p><b>How do you identify and respond to the challenges of HIV/AIDS in your core activities (or non-HIV specific work)?</b></p>	<p>Have not begun to look at specific impact of HIV/AIDS</p>	<p>Have added some HIV-specific activities to existing work (e.g. HIV awareness sessions, condom distribution, etc.)</p>	<p>Have identified how core activities can be changed to help minimize risk of infections or address the extra impact of HIV/AIDS on community, but still mainly just do add-on HIV work</p>	<p>Have modified all core programs with strategies to help minimize risk of infections or reduce impact. We might also do some add-on HIV specific activities</p>
<p><b>6. Access to new HIV/AIDS information</b></p>	<p><b>How do you encourage and enable members to learn and develop their knowledge about HIV/AIDS?</b></p>	<p>No mechanisms for improving HIV/AIDS knowledge</p>	<p>Some leaflets and information is made available. Occasional informal discussions</p>	<p>Information regularly accessed through a variety of sources and actively distributed among members</p>	<p>Regular internal discussions to learn and share knowledge; information regularly accessed from a variety of sources; and access to an internet/email connection</p>

Capacity-building needs

Plans for action or change

Suggestions for technical support

# F Networking and advocacy

**What relationship does your organization have with other local, national, and international players in HIV/AIDS, and how do you work together to influence others?**

**Question**

**Capacity score**

**1**

**2**

**3**

**4**

**1. Advocacy**

**Do you carry out advocacy activities to influence those in power to change conditions or policies that form barriers to your work in HIV/AIDS?**

Haven't thought about local policies or conditions. Little or no targeted advocacy work done in the past

Have only mobilized general public for support or awareness raising, but nothing targeted at key people or institutions in power

Have developed targeted activities towards certain groups or policies but have lacked evidence, community voice, or strength of numbers

Have done convincing evidence- or consultation-based advocacy, mobilizing allies and using many different communication methods

## Question

## Capacity score

1

2

3

4

**2. Broader context and potential partnerships**

**Does your organization work with local government, private, or community organizations?**

Work in isolation. No knowledge of local policies, strategies, or work of others

Some knowledge of local government policies and of other local organizations who are mainly seen as 'competitors'

Understand national and local policy and strategies of other organizations working in HIV/AIDS. Have personal contacts with a few other relevant people/organizations

Have effective partnerships working together, sharing resources or referring clients to local government, private, or community organizations

**Capacity-building needs**

**Plans for action or change**

**Suggestions for technical support**

# G Community ownership and accountability

<p><b>What roles do members of the community play in the organization and how does the organization communicate with the community?</b></p>		Capacity score			
		1	2	3	4
<p><b>1. Involvement of people living with HIV/AIDS in the activities, work, and major decisions of the organization</b></p>	<p><b>Do people living with HIV/AIDS participate fully in the activities, work, and major decisions of the organization?</b></p>	<p>No positive people involved, except to receive services</p>	<p>Positive people act as volunteers but in no paid/decision-making roles</p>	<p>Positive people fully represented in decision-making/paid roles and are on the governing board/committee</p>	<p>Some training and policies exist to prevent discrimination, and to provide support and benefits for positive members of the organization</p>
<p><b>2. Involvement of vulnerable people in the activities, work, and major decisions of the organization</b></p>	<p><b>Do vulnerable people (e.g. sex workers, men who have sex with men, injecting drug users, poor women, young people) that you work with participate fully in the activities, work, and major decisions of the organization?</b></p>	<p>Don't identify particular vulnerable people</p>	<p>Work with particular vulnerable people as volunteers but none are in paid/decision-making roles</p>	<p>People from specific vulnerable groups are involved throughout the organization as paid staff and on the governing board/committee</p>	<p>Vulnerable people are fully involved throughout organization; vulnerable groups of people are involved in designing projects and are widely consulted on major decisions</p>

## Question

## Capacity score

1

2

3

4

**3. Gender**

**How does your organization respect, encourage, and promote equal participation from people of all genders?**

Organization has never actively considered this – more than 70% of members are from one gender

While gender balance exists at some levels, over 70% of people at management and decision-making levels from one gender

No more than 70% of one gender at all levels. Work practices are flexible to ensure childbirth and childcare are no obstacle to involvement

Organization develops and uses gender-sensitive approaches in its work and promotes equal respect and rights for male, female, and transgender identities

**Capacity-building needs**

**Plans for action or change**

**Suggestions for technical support**

# Notes



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