

## Organizational Development: Strengthening the Capacity of Community Groups to Care for Vulnerable Children



### Limited Community Capacity

Nigeria is home to 17.5 million children considered vulnerable due to unmet needs for food, shelter, education, protection, or care. Among these children, 2.5 million have lost one or both parents to AIDS. Fortunately, many of Nigeria's orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) receive assistance from individuals in their community who come together to form support groups, raise funds, and advocate for services. Some of these efforts have led to the formation of civil society organizations (CSOs). However, in recent years, these organizations have been unable to meet the growing needs of those in their communities. In some cases, poverty impedes action, while in others, a lack of knowledge and capacity limits the CSOs' impact. Without ample resources and skills, CSOs may channel their efforts and funds into interventions that have a limited effect and are unable to sustain and expand. International donors, while eager to engage local residents and groups in development projects are often unable to find CSOs with the capacity needed to make effective use of funding and resources. The result is that some children are reached but millions remain in need. Among those reached, many regress, are lost to follow-up, or are referred for care but never arrive.

*“When CUBS engaged TYPA in 2010, we had weak structure, few staff, and could not deliver services to OVC and their caregivers. But after CUBS’ trainings on organizational capacity development, we recorded remarkable progress and can now carry on on our own. After we learned how to write proposals, TYPA became the ‘darling’ of many donor organizations who now see us as an organization with strong capacity.”*

*~ Boniface Koson,  
CEO of TYPA, a CUBS-supported CSO*

### Strengthening Community Organizations

In 2009, the Nigerian Government responded to these and other challenges by working with USAID to implement a project that would provide realistic, holistic, long-term solutions for the nation's OVC. For five years, the PEPFAR-funded Community-Based Support for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (CUBS) project provided food and nutrition advice, shelter, education, protection, health, and care to OVC and strengthened the capacity of 38 CSOs to continue meeting the needs of vulnerable children and their caregivers. Implemented by Management Sciences for Health (MSH) and its sub-contractor, Africare, CUBS helped the CSOs increase community engagement, inspire local ownership, and implement culturally-sensitive, effective OVC programming.



## Developing Organizational Capacity

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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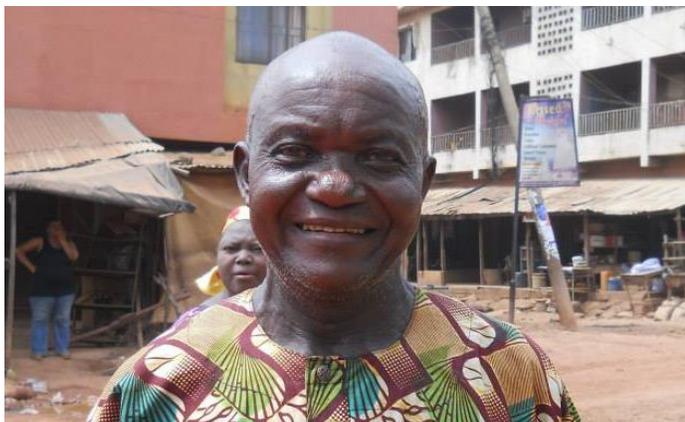


### Improved OVC Data Quality

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

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

*~ Uduak Umoh, Executive Director of WOCLIF, a CUBS-supported CSO*



### Capacity Development Training and Support Helps Community-Based Organization Earn New Projects



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

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

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

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

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

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



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## *Proposal Writing and Organizational Development Workshops Yield Results*

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

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

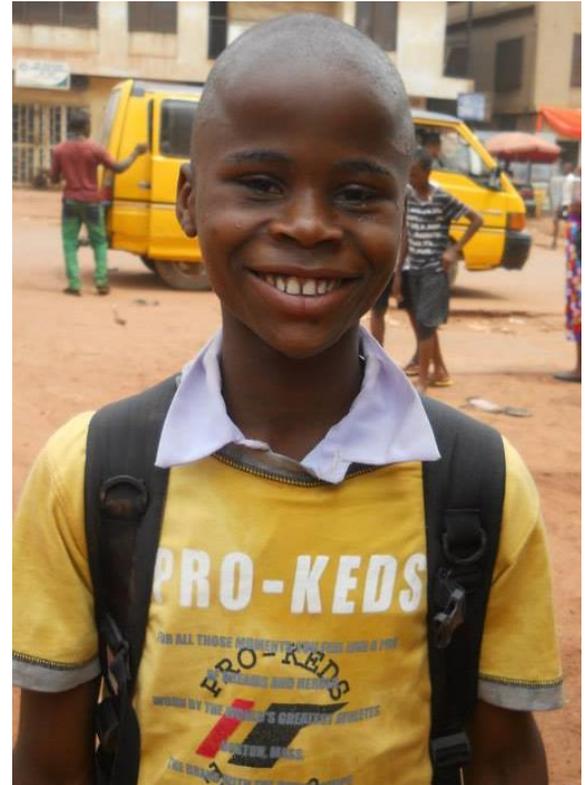
Since participating in the workshop, KAN's new proposal development capacity has enabled the organization to earn additional funding from USAID's Enhancing Nigeria Capacity for AIDS Prevention (ENCAP) project. Mr. Andah reports that CUBS training has also helped him make better use of these funds.

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

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

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

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



## *Maintaining Momentum*

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



**For more information, please contact:**

Dr. Zipporah Kpamor,  
CUBS Project Director,  
zkpamor@msh.org