



AFRICA CHA PLATFORM



ACHAP Capacity Brief

**Institutional Capacity
Strengthening**

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Christian Health Associations (CHAs), and other Civil society organizations (CSOs), including NGOs and CBOs, have increasingly become strategic players in delivering healthcare services in Africa. They have exhibited great potential for better service delivery, especially at the community level, particularly in rural and hard-to-reach areas. This makes them an important partner in addressing issues of community linkages, community mobilization, advocacy and other factors that enhance demand and utilization of health services in these areas. ACHAP's organizational capacity strengthening objective is to strengthen local partners[1] organizational and technical capacity to enable them to enhance their organizational capacity to fundraise, mobilise and empower communities, advance advocacy efforts, and enhance their footprint in their local and national health systems space.

[1] The local organizations consist of CSOs, CBOs, NGOs, FBOs, and private sector organizations selected through a competitive process.

ACHAP Institutional Capacity Strengthening Approach

ACHAP is primarily a subgranting organization for its member CHAs when it comes to project implementation. It therefore engages these partners that require capacity strengthening to effectively implement a project. Outside the project implementation space, ACHAP has the mandate to support CHA members in their capacity-strengthening initiatives. In addition, ACHAP also acts as the technical lead for capacity strengthening in various multicounty health projects.

ACHAP defines capacity as the ability or potential of individuals, communities, organizations, and institutions to perform their roles or contribute, towards health programming and service delivery in an effectively, efficiently, and sustainably in a resilient manner. Our Capacity strengthening refers to the structured support/ assistance provided to individuals, communities, organisations and institutions that need to develop certain institutional systems, processes, guidelines, resources, skills, and competence to improve their overall performance in health programming and service delivery. ACHAP's capacity strengthening adopts a whole systems approach that focuses on understanding the broad project implementation players and context. It considers and adapts its approaches, principles and tools to the context of the broader health systems environment of the local partners and project countries.

Our institutional capacity initiatives are guided by a robust institutional capacity strengthening framework and strategy that aims to: establish a common MHIR' language' for capacity building among ACHAP secretariat staff, CHA members and other local partners to understand and utilize the principles, concepts, and practices of capacity strengthening; provide a general framework for capacity strengthening that can be adapted to different areas of capacity strengthening within the wider ACHAP mandate; describe the process of designing, implementing, measuring, and documenting capacity building interventions; provide strategies for embedding and mainstreaming capacity strengthening into wider health programming and services delivery; and communicate ACHAP's capacity aspirations, motivations and strategies to internal and external audiences.

ACHAP is a beneficiary of the New Partner's Initiative (NPI) and with support from USAID, which has in the last three years significantly built its organizational capacity as a grant manager. The organization has developed structures, processes, tools, and human resource capacity to support its subgrantees.

In addition, being a local organization with membership in different African regions, ACHAP has a clear understanding of the local context of the different operating environments.

ACHAP's strategy for capacity building is premised on accompaniment to continuously build the skills as well as support the development of structures and processes in the organizations it supports. ACHAP has also developed and adapted various capacity-strengthening tools that help strengthen the capacity of its members.

Our guiding principles and implementation Approaches

Guiding Principles

- Demand-Driven Support – local partners identify and own the interventions and commit to the capacity-strengthening process.
- Evidence-Based interventions - All capacity-strengthening Interventions are based on thorough systems assessments and reviews.
- Results-Oriented. – Planned Interventions target to attain specific results and outcomes.
- Partnership: - Trust-based relationships with local partners in the decision-making
- Contextualized Interventions: - Intervention crafted to be responsive to the local socio-cultural, geographical, economic and political context within which the local partner.
- Adoption of Systems Approach – We adopt a "systems approach" that embraces all aspects of organizational and health systems functionality.
- Knowledge Management and Learning - We emphasize the generation of documentation on capacity-strengthening implementation experiences, learning, and promising practices.

Implementation Approaches

- Focus on Relationships Building - Building mutual trust, confidence and respect with local partners.
- Promotion of Local Leadership and Ownership. We ensure that the capacity-strengthening initiatives are led, owned and driven by local partners
- Promotion of Active Participation of Local Partners - to ensure we build tangible local capacity when the initiative ends.
- Settling for Practical Solutions – We combine solid technical skills with a good understanding of the local context
- Institutionalizing the Process of Change - Incorporating positive changes into existing systems and processes.

ACHAP's Capacity Strengthening Process Model

Entry Activities

At the onset, the emphasis lies on fostering partner engagement and consultation, facilitated by disseminating capacity assessment tools. Formalizing partnerships entails signing MOUs with local stakeholders. This phase is marked by meticulous scrutiny to identify potential bottlenecks and seize advantageous opportunities, ensuring optimal process efficacy.

Facilitation and Support

This phase initiates technical assistance for local partners, featuring the deployment of ACHAP staff/consultants, conducting capacity assessments (NUPAS, OCA, OPI), crafting organizational capacity strengthening plans (CSP), and delivering tailored TA aligned with CSP. This includes training, job aids, mentorship, peer learning, and optimizing partner support.

Continuous Measurement

This collaborative effort involves partner organisations to integrate measurement and feedback into project implementation. It encompasses assessing the performance and effectiveness of capacity-building initiatives, assisting partner teams in creating and utilizing pertinent monitoring tools such as performance dashboards, and aiding in enhancing partner teams' knowledge management and learning processes.

Transition

Local partners who have successfully addressed all identified capacity gaps based on the reassessment results will transition from active capacity-strengthening support. However, they will still receive support as needed. By this stage, the local partner will have satisfactorily resolved all identified gaps.

Continued Support

ACHAP will maintain ongoing technical assistance as required and aid the partner by reviewing deliverables before submission. Additionally, ACHAP will offer relevant online courses and provide on-the-job mentorship, guidance, and accompaniment to local partners to ensure continued support and capacity building.

Key Areas of Institutional Capacity Strengthening

ACHAP focuses on the key organizational parameters that need to be present for local partner organizations to function effectively and sustainably. They include Legal and governance structures; Strategy and planning; Financial management and internal controls; Grants management; External relations; Procurement systems that will support efficient delivery; Human Resource Management to ensure quality implementation; Project Performance Management; and Sustainability.

Capacity Portfolio and Experience

One of ACHAP's greatest strengths is its ability to mobilize its members in different countries to share their skills, capabilities, and resources. This has enabled ACHAP to implement several USG and non-USG-funded projects across sub-Saharan Africa. ACHAP possesses internal capacity as an institution as well as leverages the extensive technical capacity of its members through shared learning.

ACHAP has implemented the USAID-funded ACHAP Afya project (2020-2023) which included a major component of Institutional capacity strengthening of 2 CHA local partners (Christian Health Association of Kenya and Uganda Catholic Medical Bureau). ACHAP has also implemented an IMA-funded project that focused on strengthening the organizational capacity of 7 Christian Health Associations (CHAs)

ACHAP is currently managing 25 multi-country subgrants in 18 countries in Africa and is the technical lead for capacity strengthening in the global USAID Momentum Integrated Health Resilience Project (MIHR) that is being implemented in South Sudan, Sudan, DRC, Yemen, and Haiti. ACHAP has successfully supported TRISS, a local partner in South Sudan to qualify and receive direct funding from USAID to the tune of USD 2 million for five years.



The Africa Christian Health Associations Platform (ACHAP) is a regional faith-based organization providing a platform for advocacy, networking, and capacity building for Christian Health Associations (CHAs) and Church Health Networks in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Established in January 2007 through a declaration of commitment by the 3rd Africa Christian Health Associations Biennial Conference held in Bagamoyo, Tanzania, ACHAP brings together about 40 national level faith-based networks providing services in 32 countries across Sub-Saharan Africa to share resources, establish technical working groups (TWGs), and provide ongoing training and Technical Assistance (TA) to its members.

Members of ACHAP play a critical role in public health as they partner with their governments towards achieving equitable access to quality healthcare in Africa.

CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION

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