

SECTION 9

Conclusion

The Small Grant Programme provided NGOs with new skills and experiences. It did the same for the POLICY Project. Here's a summary of the key learnings we took away with us.



At the beginning of a capacity building programme, facilitators need to be clear about what they want to achieve, what their indicators for success will be, and when their job as facilitator is over.

In the workshops we kept telling NGOs to be rigorous about knowing what their indicators of success would be, and yet we were less disciplined about setting these for ourselves. This made it difficult for us to know when our work was complete and when it was appropriate to hand over our capacity building role to other organisations.

When identifying NGOs you want to support, make use of local networks to guide your own understanding of the needs of that community.

As a capacity building agency it's important to make use of local expertise to inform you of what the HIV/AIDS and development needs of the region are. This will ensure that you offer appropriate support to the community.

NGOs need more time and opportunity to transfer the theory they have learnt in workshops into practice in their organisations.

This can be done through:

Workshops: Sufficient time needs to be allocated in the workshops to allow participants to explore how they could use the information provided in their day-to-day work in their community. A good balance between time for theory and time for practice ought to be considered in the workshop programme.

Site visits: Frequent site visits can be extremely beneficial as they provide an opportunity for hands-on support. Site visits are especially valuable if the NGOs are in isolated rural areas. But, be aware that site visits can be costly!

Mentoring: Mentoring has proven to be a valuable resource. It links strong NGOs with emerging organisations, it builds partnerships in local communities and provides on-site capacity building – especially if the NGO is far away from a facilitator and there are other strong NGOs close by.

The SGP requires NGOs to write proposals and reports, but initially many NGOs battled to produce documents of a reasonable quality.

The more opportunities NGOs are given to document their work and reflect on their practice, the better they become at producing high-quality documents that help them in illustrating their interventions both to their community as well as to potential funders.

Measuring impact on the ground is an essential element of the capacity building process.

Many NGOs battle to identify the impact that their particular intervention has made on HIV/AIDS at a local level. Monitoring these interventions and measuring the difference ought to be an integral part of building the capacity of NGOs. This will provide them with the necessary tools to critically assess the effectiveness of their own programmes and practice.