

- Manuals on the three key areas of organisational capacity were developed. National project facilitators were trained in their use, which will enhance sustainability of the project in each country.

Because funders believe that CBOs lack institutional capacity to manage large amounts of financial resources effectively, few have access to resources. However, this project has demonstrated that:

- CBOs have the capacity to reach more people with services and use relatively fewer resources for programme implementation.
- CBOs can comprehend important concepts and make substantial improvements in institutional capacity, such as RBM, planning, alignment, good governance, and financial management.
- Many donors do not consider organizational capacity building as a critical area. However, stronger institutions, especially CBOs, are essential to the national HIV response and can contribute to the achievement of SADC and individual country key results.
- Alignment of donor support and civil society programming to regional and national HIV priorities are essential for SADC to achieve desired results.

- PMS' interactions with stakeholders revealed that capacity building in the same three key areas is needed, especially for network organisations, NACs, local nongovernmental organizations, and other CBOs.

- This SADC-funded PMS initiative can be replicated in other SADC countries as well as other regions in Africa and beyond.

- Such an institutional capacity strengthening project is relevant to the HIV and AIDS field as well as CSOs working in other development sectors.

**Primson Management Services** is an international social development consultancy firm which also offers institutional governance, programming, and financial management capacity strengthening in systems of civil society organisations, especially indigenous NGOs and CBOs.

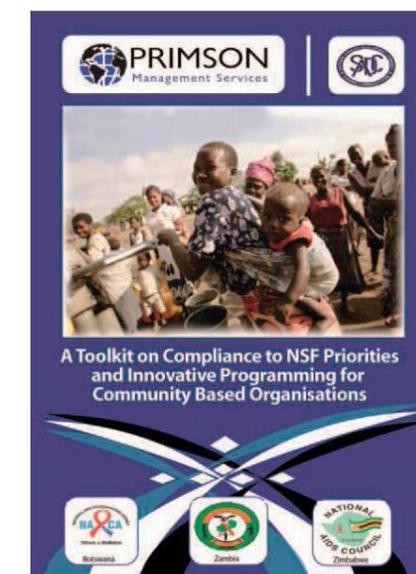
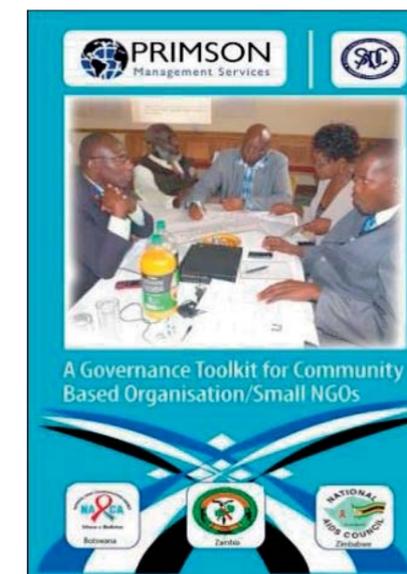
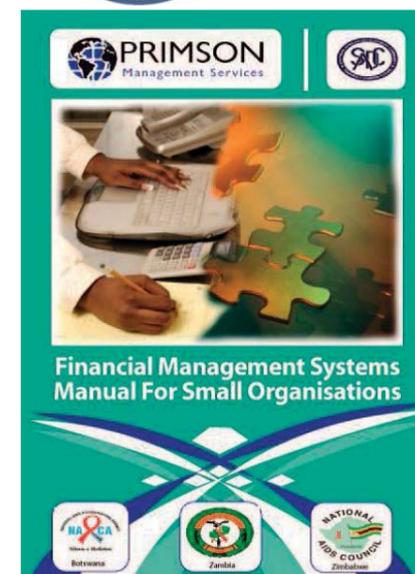
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## Strengthening CBO Capacity in Botswana, Zambia, and Zimbabwe for Improved HIV Response

Funded by SADC HIV and AIDS Fund

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*The Southern African Development Community (SADC) is a 15-country intergovernmental organisation established in 1992. Its purpose is to enhance the development and economic growth of Southern Africa, alleviate poverty, and improve the standard and quality of life of the region's people through regional integration. SADC further seeks to promote coordination and cooperation between national and regional strategies and programmes.*

*The SADC HIV and AIDS Fund supports short-term research and interventions by government and civil society partners that: expand or complement existing programmes; involve three or more countries across a number of sectors; and are cost effective. The projects are endorsed by Ministries of Health and national AIDS authorities.*

### Background

The HIV and AIDS epidemic calls for a multi-sectorial response. Civil society organisations (CSO), including community-based organisations (CBO), are key players, and therefore regional entities, such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), are increasingly working with them as partners in HIV prevention, care, and support. However, gaps in organisational capacity affect CSOs' ability to contribute to the national HIV response. They face common institutional challenges, including: relatively weak financial management systems; governance structures and systems marred by conflict of interest and non-compliance with governance standards; and the lack of results-oriented organisational strategies aligned to national HIV priorities.

### Intervention

Through the SADC HIV and AIDS Fund, Primson Management Services (PMS) implemented a two-year institutional capacity development programme for CBOs that

addressed four priority areas: (i) strengthening financial management systems; (ii) building functional and transparent governance systems; (iii) developing capacity in a results-based management (RBM) approach to programme planning, implementation, and evaluation; and (iv) developing results-based strategies aligned to national priorities. Thirty CBOs involved in HIV prevention, 10 each in Botswana, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, were selected:

**Botswana:** Bobonong Home Based Care, Fountain of Life, Positive Living Helper Cells, Gabane Home Based Care, Otse Home Based Care, Pelegano Support Group, Central Association of the Blind, MAMAROPA, BORNUS, and AheEme

**Zambia:** Chongwe NZP+ District Chapter, Mumbwa Home Based Care, Masaiti Women's Lobby Group District Chapter, Mutua OVC Support Project, TubombelePamo PMTCT Group, Kalomo NZP+ District Chapter, Lufila HBC, Youth in Action, Zambian National Association of the Disabled Women, and Petauke Youth Empowerment

**Zimbabwe:** Gweru AIDS Prevention Association, Midlands Children Hope Centre, Pakame Children's Home, Kurainashe, Pamumvuri Orphan and Comfort Care, Lower Guruve Development Association, Mufudzi Wakanaka, Tony Waite Foundation, New Vision, and Chiedza Home of Hope.

PMS promoted country ownership by meeting with National AIDS Councils (NAC) to introduce the project and get buy-in. NACs contributed to the selection of CBOs and the refinement of the programme plan. Dedicated Project Steering Committees were established in Zambia and Zimbabwe, while Botswana used existing committees, with the Ministry of Health monitoring project implementation.

Baseline evaluations were conducted for each CBO using PMS capacity assessment tools on governance, financial management systems, and innovative programming. The assessment results helped to define tailored capacity building interventions for each CBO.

The project was implemented during August 2011 to July 2013. Illustrative project activities included:

**Strengthening Financial Management Systems:** Finance personnel and project managers received training in computerized accounting, with the installation of the Quick Books Pro accounting package. To improve their understanding of financial matters, a national-level workshop on Finance for Non-Finance Persons was conducted for CBO directors and programme managers.

**Building Functional Governance Systems:** A total of 120 board members from the 30 CBOs received training on various aspects of good governance.

**Innovative Programming:** PMS organized 29 two-day workshops to develop CBO capacity in RBM that included the preparation of results-based strategic plans, 95% of which have subsequently received board approval.

**National-Level Workshops:** The CBOs and their strategic development partners, NACs, and government and donor representatives participated in national-level stakeholder sharing workshops. End line assessments of the CBOs' governance, RBM, and innovative programming practices were conducted at these workshops. Post-project assessments of financial management will be conducted on-site at each CBO, as they were for the baseline.



- There have been significant changes in governance practices. CBOs have stronger boards that meet regularly and know their responsibilities. For example, 50% of the CBOs are conducting quarterly meetings compared to 0 at start of the project, and 33.3% are now holding at least two board meetings annually. Approximately 75% have standing sub-committees and 85% of the CBO boards effectively understand their role. There has also been an increased understanding of “founder member syndrome” and conflict of interest among the organisations.

**“Our board had a lot of founder member syndrome and conflict of interest issues. We went through board restructuring which led to three members stepping down, and they understood the change” – Botswana CBO Board Member**

- All 30 CBOs developed results-based strategic plans that are aligned with national HIV and AIDS priorities, reflect community needs, and allow them to maintain a results-oriented perspective in their work. The strategies facilitate CBOs' reporting to their NACs at the district level. Moreover, by using costed action plans, budgeting and monitoring/evaluating progress based on set targets are easier.

### Strategy Formulation in Process

**“We have desisted from operating in traditional areas, but we learned that we should occasionally change our programme design and activities to cater for new challenges.” – Botswana CBO staff member**



**Table 1: Pre- and Post-Project Assessment Results**

		Governance Assessment		Innovative Programming	
Level of capacity	%	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Advanced	75+	0	9	0	6
Intermediate	50-74%	3	15	2	12
Basic	31-49%	15	4	10	10
Pre- Basic	<30%	12	2	18	2
<b>Total</b>				<b>30</b>	

### Results

Table 1 summarizes changes in CBOs' performance in the areas of governance and innovative programming. A significant number of organizations had higher levels of capacity in governance and innovative programming in the post-project assessment.

The following illustrative outcomes were realised:

- Selected CBOs attracted additional funding due to development partners' confidence in their strengthened capacity.

**“This programme has been an eye opener, as we feel that we were not even following any of the requisite financial management procedures before this bold initiative came to us. We understand the voucher system, electronic accounting systems, segregation of duties and so much more”- New Vision finance personnel**