

# An Integrated Approach to Capacity Strengthening of CSOs Working with Key Populations in Sri Lanka

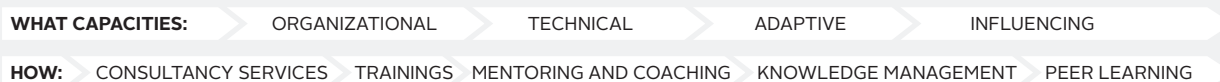
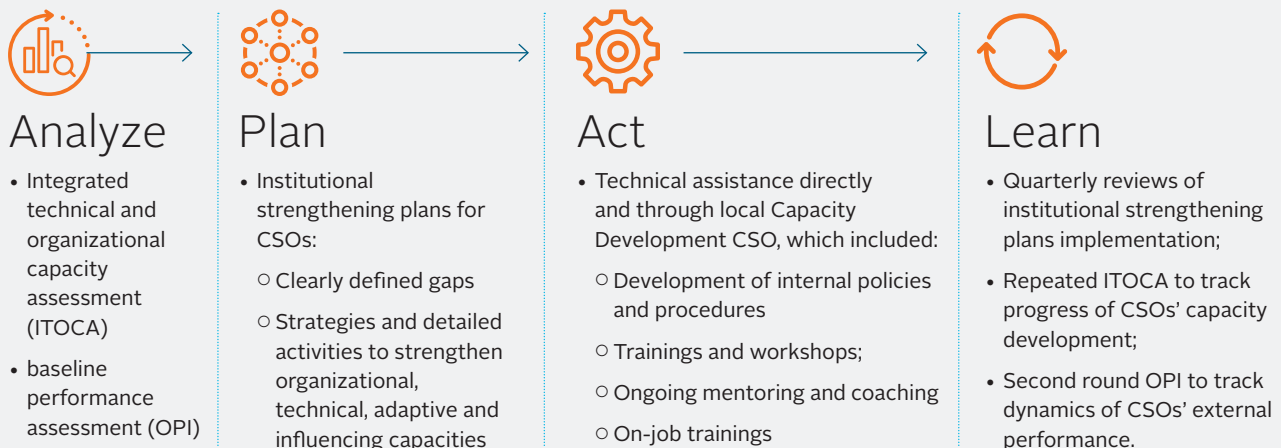
## BACKGROUND

Under the USAID-funded LINKAGES Project in Sri Lanka, Pact in partnership with FHI360, developed and implemented a capacity strengthening strategy focused on improving delivery of interventions across the continuum of HIV care by developing the capacity of local KP-led community-based organizations (CSOs) for improved financial systems, leadership, engagement and participation (advocacy) of the groups in the HIV response. Service trends from previous years showed that despite availability of services, there have been continued gaps in HIV service delivery and access to services for and by Key Populations (KPs), caused by the gaps in organizational systems of local HIV-service CSOs.

## APPROACH

Pact engaged and strengthened the capacity of Sri Lanka Center for Development Facilitation (SLCDF), a national capacity development organization, to work with local implementing partners Alcohol Drug and Information Center (ADIC); Community Strength Development Foundation (CSDF); and Saviya Development Foundation (SDF), to strengthen them as learning sites for key population programming. Pact applied its holistic approach to capacity development based on a strategic combination of methodologies and contextualization of tools that support four core phases of a capacity development intervention of Analyze, Plan, Act and Learn (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1: PACT'S APPROACH TO ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF SRI LANKA LOCAL CSOs



In December 2017, through an intensive participatory process using Integrated Technical and Organizational Capacity Assessment (ITOCA) tool and Organizational Performance Index (OPI); AIDIC, SDF and CSDF were supported to undertake a prioritization exercise of their organizational development needs which resulted in order of priority as follows: Human Resource Management system, followed by Financial management, Community Empowerment, Stigma and Discrimination

activities, Social Behavioral Change Communication, both internal control and compliance, and monitoring evaluation and learning were tied as the least.



Using the findings from the assessment, Pact worked with partners to co-create institutional strengthening plans (ISP)/Change Action Plan (CAP) in line with their prioritized needs. These plans contained targeted capacity development activities with actions to address them and continuous monitoring for changes in organizational systems and performance trends.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND RESULTS

### Internal systems

Human resource management, internal control and compliance, financial management, monitoring and evaluation system were identified as key gaps in organizational systems. Through the project lifetime SLCDF provided partners with TA to develop required manuals, policies and procedures. Partners also received hands-on trainings and ongoing mentoring support to ensure that organizational documents are institutionalized and operationalized. As a result, all three partners recorded improvements in their internal systems, which led to increase in CSOs' level of accountability and transparency (based on the results of interviews with partners). Partners also ensured compliance of financial systems with national and international donor requirements, such as procurement policies, cash flow management.

### Resource mobilization

To improve the sustainability of partners' service provision, Pact in partnership with SLCDF provided technical assistance on resource mobilization, including proposal writing. Two workshops for the initial 3 partners (AIDIC, SDF and CSDF), as well as the additional 6 FY'19 partners (ECDIC in Ratnapura, OECRP in Ratnapura, Rajarata Gemi Pahana (RGP) in Anuradhapura, HNRDF in Galle, Mithuru Mithuro Movement in Colombo, Asia Lanka Social Development Cooperation in Kalutara), were facilitated by Pact and equipped partners with knowledge and skills on approaches for diversification of funding base. Ongoing mentoring support was provided by SLCDF who had been trained to oversee progress on practices newly introduced and to provide further guidance and assistance during implementation. To ensure sustainability, SLCDF continues to provide capacity development support to the partners on EU sponsored 'Let Women decide their own' project, and a USAID grant funded project. Additionally, 2 of 3 partners (CSDF and SDF) demonstrated the skills gained in submitting new proposals that received positive outcomes, while all 3 partners introduced new livelihoods program for their target populations.

### Addressing Stigma and Discrimination (S&D).

To address the issue of low awareness about stigma & discrimination and approaches for its elimination, Pact strengthened the capacity of partners (ADIC, CSDF and SDF program managers and coordinators) through a training that engaged communities (champions) and health workers (National

**“The trend mapping and stakeholders mapping tools were very helpful to prioritize areas and stakeholders whom my organization can work with.”**

**WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT**

“We were able to get more knowledge about community mobilization; thus, we are going to plan and implement in a formal manner”

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT

STD/AIDS Control Program [NSACP clinicians]). As a result, implementing partners developed S&D policies and updated organizational manuals to integrate them, leading to increase in awareness contributing to improvement of service delivery including referral systems among CSOs and medical facilities, better reach of target communities.

### Community engagement and advocacy.

To improve the engagement of target populations in service delivery and programs planning, Pact facilitated two workshops for partner organizations on principles of community mobilization, using theory and practical examples from the HIV sector. As a result, each organization drafted a community mobilization plan and with mentorship support has finalized and are currently implementing. Knowledge gained on advocacy based on Pact’s politically SMART advocacy guide has led to improvements of overall service delivery and reach of organizational targets. Additionally, Partners have improved access to hard to reach communities and are forging new partnerships with activities aimed to support the rights of communities they serve. As an example, CSDF introduced work on social protection.

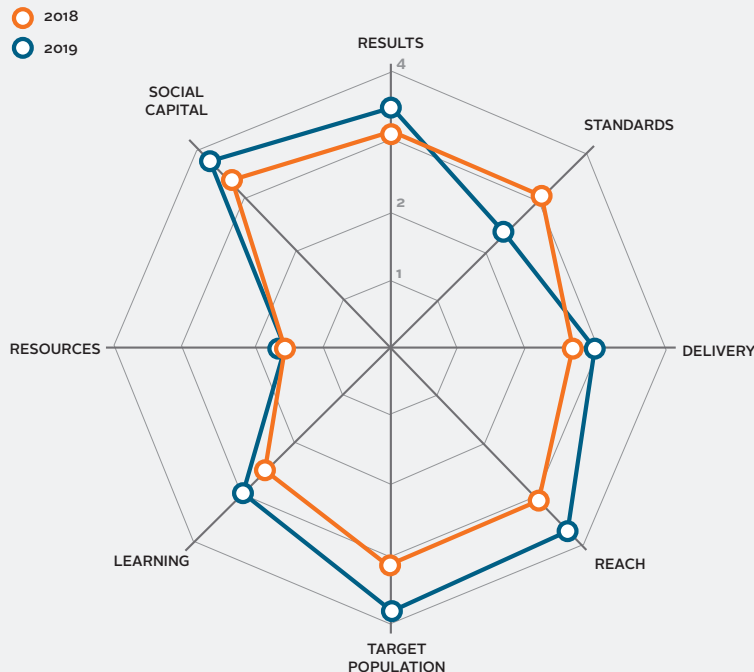
## SUSTAINABILITY OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS FOR SRI LANKA CSOS WORKING WITH KEY POPULATION

Pact’s strategy for sustainability centered around strengthening of the capacity of SLCDF to serve as the local Trainer of Trainers and mentor ensuring that the gains after the project ends are sustained. Working closely on site and virtually with SLCDF, Pact provided them with in-depth targeted capacity strengthening that did not only address their gaps, but also equipped them with knowledge and skills to ensure that they could serve as mentors to the rest of the partners. This support included training, mentoring and coaching from Pact’s Global Capacity Development team over the life of the project

related to various tools, approaches and methodologies for organizational and technical capacity strengthening. SLCDF along with other local professionals enhanced their skills in facilitation of ITOCA and OPI processes and received support for the adaptation and translation of ITOCA facilitation guides and manuals into Sinhala and Tamil languages. In addition, SLCDF was engaged in all capacity development activities and received corresponding manuals and materials, for future use as they continue providing support to local partners.

Baseline (January 2018) and endline (March – April 2019) OPI assessments for the 3 local partners (ADIC, CSDF and SDF) conducted in March-April 2019, shows positive dynamics as demonstrated in Figure 2. On average, improved capacity of up to (1) unit was observed across most domains as a result of the direct capacity development received between 2018 and 2019.

FIGURE 2: BASELINE AND ENDLINE OPI ASSESSMENT

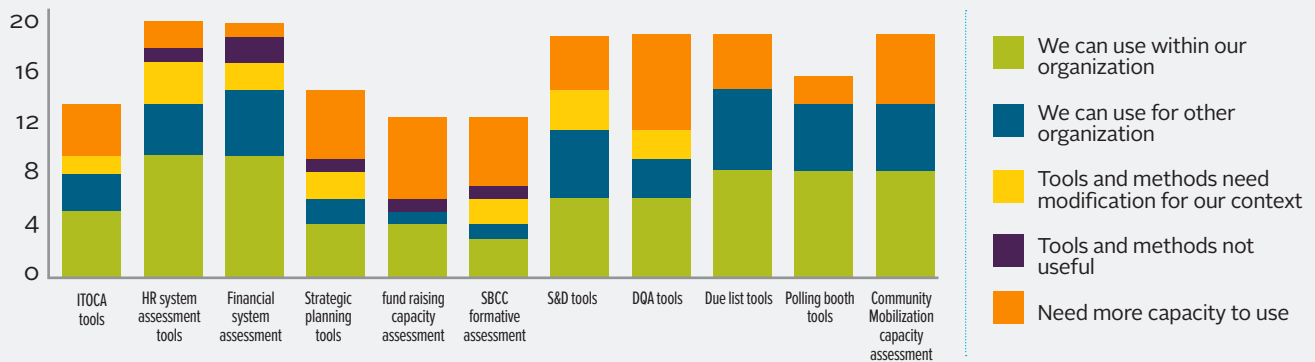


## LESSONS

Based on the results of capacity development activities, survey and interviews with local partners, the following conclusions can be made as lessons learnt, that:

- **Pact's holistic approach and methodologies proved to be effective for CSOs' performance improvement in the delivery of HIV services.** A December 2018 survey to collect feedback from the three learning site partner staff and senior management indicated (Figure 3) that partners found most tools and technical inputs useful for internal adoption and felt confident using them to capacitate other organizations.
- **Principles of participation, inclusion and empowerment engendered CSOs' ownership** of capacity development.
- **Learning activities improved networking** and established efficient peer learning system
- **One year of technical assistance is insufficient** for big changes in organizational performance.
- **Long term sustainability and local expertise in capacity development requires additional support** for local CSOs & local capacity development service providers and other key stakeholders.

FIGURE 3: RATING OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT BY LEARNING SITE PARTNERS



## WAY FORWARD / RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Continued support for partner convening**, as a means of strengthening their systems and further sustainability
- Continued support for local partners with **a focus on transition to direct funding from USAID and other donors**
- Support to partner organizations' on **further linking their community mobilization and advocacy strategies** to their strategic plans and national HIV/AIDS prevention goals.
- **Continue to engage key actors** in addressing KP access to HIV/AIDS service provision, inclusive of de-stigmatization.