

# Capable Partners Program

CAP Support to the Development Grants  
Program (DGP)

Final Report

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS


AOR	Agreement Officer's Representative
CA	Cooperative Agreement
CAP	Capable Partners Program
CBSP	Capacity Building Service Provider
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DGP	Development Grants Program
DIMP	Detailed Implementation and Management Planning
E&E	Europe and Eurasia
FBO	Faith-based Organization
IDF	Institutional Development Framework
IIP	Institutional Improvement Plan
IPR2	Implementation and Procurement Reform Objective 2
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OD	Organizational Development
PVO	Private Voluntary Organization
RTA	Regional Technical Advisor
TA	Technical Assistance
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government








## CAP-SUPPORTED DGP AWARDEES BY COUNTRY AND SECTOR (CON'T)











\*Grantee works in more than one country





<b>Angola</b>		
<i>Rnd.</i>	<i>Grantee Name</i>	<i>Sector</i>
	Acção Humana	Micro-Enterprise
	Ajuda de Desenvolvimento de Povo para Povo Angola (ADPP)	Women's Empowerment
	Alfalit	Women's Empowerment
	Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD)	Water
	Kixi Credito	Micro-Enterprise
	Twayovoka para o Desenvolvimento	Micro-Enterprise








<b>Azerbaijan</b>		
<i>Rnd.</i>	<i>Grantee Name</i>	<i>Sector</i>
	UMID-98 Humanitarian and Social Support Center	Dairy



<b>Dominican Republic</b>		
<i>Rnd.</i>	<i>Grantee Name</i>	<i>Sector</i>
	Batey Relief Alliance, Inc. (BRA)*	Women's Empowerment
	Floresta *	Women's Empowerment

<b>Ecuador</b>		
<i>Rnd.</i>	<i>Grantee Name</i>	<i>Sector</i>
	Fundación Kimirina	Women's Empowerment
	Fundacion Nuestros Jouenes	Women's Empowerment
	Fundación Waaponi	Women's Empowerment


<b>Ethiopia</b>		
<i>Rnd.</i>	<i>Grantee Name</i>	<i>Sector</i>
	African AIDS Initiative International	Women's Empowerment
	Brighter Image for Generation Association (BIGA)	Democracy & Governance/ Women's Empowerment
	Convoy of Hope, Inc.	Women's Empowerment
	Ethiopian Assemblies of God Church (EAGC)	Women's Empowerment
	The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus- Development and Social Services Commission (DASSC)	Water & Sanitation
	A Glimmer of Hope	Water & Sanitation
	Global Team for Local Initiatives	Water & Sanitation
	Heartland Alliance for Human Rights and Human Needs	Women's Empowerment
	Life in Abundance	Water & Sanitation
	Lifewater International	Water & Sanitation

<b>Georgia</b>		
<i>Rnd.</i>	<i>Grantee Name</i>	<i>Sector</i>
	Association of Persons with Disability in Tsalenjikha	Women's Empowerment
	Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CENN)	Environment
	Center for Training and Consultancy	Micro-Enterprise
	Georgian Centre for the Conservation of Wildlife	Environment
	Women's Fund in Georgia	Women's Empowerment


<b>Haiti</b>		
<i>Rnd.</i>	<i>Grantee Name</i>	<i>Sector</i>
	Batey Relief Alliance, Inc. (BRA)*	Women's Empowerment
	Floresta *	Women's Empowerment
	JURIMEDIA	Democracy & Governance
<b>India</b>		
<i>Rnd.</i>	<i>Grantee Name</i>	<i>Sector</i>
	Humana People to People - India	Environment
<b>Macedonia</b>		
<i>Rnd.</i>	<i>Grantee Name</i>	<i>Sector</i>
	NGO-Info Center	Democracy & Governance
<b>Mali</b>		
<i>Rnd.</i>	<i>Grantee Name</i>	<i>Sector</i>
	Near East Foundation	Environment
<b>Malawi</b>		
<i>Rnd.</i>	<i>Grantee Name</i>	<i>Sector</i>
	CUMO Microfinance Ltd.	Micro-Enterprise/ Women's Empowerment
	Friends of AIDS Support Trust (FAST)	Women's Empowerment
	Heifer International	Dairy
	Total Land Care	Micro-Enterprise
	CCAP Nkhoma Synod Relief and Development	Water, Sanitation & Hygiene
<b>Moldova</b>		
<i>Rnd.</i>	<i>Grantee Name</i>	<i>Sector</i>
	Pro Business Nord (PBN)	Women's Empowerment
<b>Nigeria</b>		
<i>Rnd.</i>	<i>Grantee Name</i>	<i>Sector</i>
	Partners for Development (PFD)	Micro-Enterprise
<b>Peru</b>		
<i>Rnd.</i>	<i>Grantee Name</i>	<i>Sector</i>
	The Mountain Institute	Environment
<b>Russia</b>		
<i>Rnd.</i>	<i>Grantee Name</i>	<i>Sector</i>
	Institute for Comparative Labor Relations Studies (ISITO)	Micro-Enterprise/ Women's Empowerment
<b>Senegal</b>		
<i>Rnd.</i>	<i>Grantee Name</i>	<i>Sector</i>
	Association des Femmes de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (AFAO)	Women's Empowerment
	CARITAS Senegal	Water & Sanitation
	Centre Régional pour l'Eau Potable et l'Assainissement (CREPA)	Water & Sanitation
	Groupe d'Action pour le Développement Communautaire (GADEC)	Water & Sanitation
	Groupe d'Etudes et de Recherches Genre et Sociétés (GESTES)	Women's Empowerment
	Réseau Africain pour le Développement Intégré (RADI)	Water & Sanitation/ Democracy & Governance

	Synergie d'Action pour la Formation et le Développement (SYAFD)	Democracy & Governance
	West African Association for Marine Environment (WAAME)	Water & Sanitation



#### **Seychelles**

<i>Rnd.</i>	<i>Grantee Name</i>	<i>Sector</i>
	Nature Seychelles	Climate Change



#### **Sierra Leone**

<i>Rnd.</i>	<i>Grantee Name</i>	<i>Sector</i>
	Baptist Convention of Sierra Leone	Micro-Enterprise


#### **South Africa**

<i>Rnd.</i>	<i>Grantee Name</i>	<i>Sector</i>
	Institute of Natural Resources (INR)	Water, Sanitation & Hygiene
	Wildlife and Environmental Society of South Africa (WESSA)	Climate Change



#### **Swaziland**

<i>Rnd.</i>	<i>Grantee Name</i>	<i>Sector</i>
	Action for Africa (A4A)	Water, Sanitation & Hygiene
	Palms for Life	Water, Sanitation & Hygiene



#### **Tanzania**

<i>Rnd.</i>	<i>Grantee Name</i>	<i>Sector</i>
	Floresta *	Women's Empowerment



#### **Timor Leste**

<i>Rnd.</i>	<i>Grantee Name</i>	<i>Sector</i>
	Church World Service (CWS) Timor-Leste	Micro-Enterprise
	Xanana Vocational Education Trust	Dairy



#### **Uganda**

<i>Rnd.</i>	<i>Grantee Name</i>	<i>Sector</i>
	Alliance for Youth Achievement (AYA)	Water & Sanitation
	Kigezi Diocese – Kabale	Water & Sanitation

#### **Zambia**

<i>Rnd.</i>	<i>Grantee Name</i>	<i>Sector</i>
	Development Aid from People to People (DAPP Zambia)	Water & Sanitation
	Nascent Solutions Inc.	Women's Empowerment

#### **Zimbabwe**

<i>Rnd.</i>	<i>Grantee Name</i>	<i>Sector</i>
	Institute for a Democratic Alternative in Zimbabwe	Democracy & Governance
	Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights	Democracy & Governance

## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Administrator’s vision for the Agency—“Delivering Assistance Differently,”—presented in June 2010, emphasized building local capacity and ownership as a means to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of USAID’s program implementation. This report provides an overview of how the Capable Partners Program (CAP), the preferred technical assistance (TA) provider for the first two rounds of the Development Grants Program (DGP), worked to make this a reality.

From April 2010 to July 2012, CAP provided TA to 63 grantees in 27 countries working in eight sectors—climate change adaptation; environment; dairy; microenterprise; women's empowerment; water; sanitation and hygiene; and democracy and governance. CAP’s emphasis on building effective organizations, in addition to strong technical programs, was a defining aspect of our work on behalf of the DGP. Highlights included:

- Implementing a hub-and-spoke system to deliver capacity-development TA to grantees. By design, CAP established regional hubs located in four regions—Africa, Asia, Europe and Eurasia and Latin America and the Caribbean—to serve the majority of DGP grantees. Each hub was headed by a Regional Technical Advisor (RTA) who is an expert in one or more of the core organizational domains essential to strengthening grantee institutions and improving their capacity to deliver quality interventions in their respective sectors.
- Identifying, engaging and training local capacity building service providers (CBSPs) in DGP countries. This report briefly describes efforts in Georgia, Senegal, Malawi, Ecuador, and Ethiopia.
- Developing the content for and facilitating nine Detailed Implementation and Management Planning (DIMP) workshops for DGP grantees. The four-and-a-half-day “boot camps” focused on developing grantees’ skills to run effective and compliant programs.
- Conducting participatory organizational capacity assessments using the Institutional Development Framework (IDF) with 55 grantees and using the resulting data to craft Institutional Improvement Plans (IIPs) customized to each grantee’s circumstances.
- Delivering 230 skill-building workshops, training events, and customized technical assistance engagements.
- More than two-thirds of the organizations demonstrating increased organizational health following capacity-development interventions.
- Fielding a Grantee Impact and Satisfaction survey of grantees that found:
  - 100% agreed that the IDF process and tools helped staff and stakeholders focus on and prioritize capacity needs.
  - 94% agreed or strongly agreed that CAP’s services addressed priority organizational capacity needs.
  - 79% agreed that their “organization is a stronger, more sustainable organization because of CAP support.”



What follows describes how CAP, working across sectors, helped the DGP recipients boost their accountability, performance and impact.

## II. INTRODUCTION AND DGP OBJECTIVES

From April 2010 through July 2012, the Capable Partners Program (CAP) served as the go-to technical assistance (TA) provider for 63 grantees funded in the first two rounds of the Development Grants Program (DGP). The initiative, authorized by the U.S. Congress in 2008 and managed by USAID's Office of Innovation & Development Alliances (IDEA), sought to foster direct partnerships between USAID Missions and grassroots non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and U.S. private voluntary organizations (PVOs) working in the developing world. A competitive grants program designed to support NGOs who had little or no prior experience working with the U.S. Government, the DGP aimed to enhance partners' technical and organizational capacities to solve their own problems, better fulfill their missions, and support quality and sustainability.

### USAID Development Grants Program (DGP) Objectives:

1. To broaden participation in USAID programs of local NGOs and U.S. PVOs with the necessary organizational and technical capacity, experience and expertise relevant to priority USAID and partner country development objectives;
2. To expand numbers of local NGOs and U.S. PVOs with planning, management and service delivery operations and systems adequate to implement USAID-funded activities; and
3. To facilitate measurable local NGO/U.S. PVO contributions to the achievement of the USAID Mission development objectives with emphasis given to those that address Agency priority strategies.

In 2010, when USAID embarked on its ambitious reform effort, *USAID Forward*, CAP—with its track record strengthening local NGOs' systems and performance and portfolio of DGP recipients—was uniquely positioned to support the Agency's new priorities and reform efforts. For example, CAP accelerated efforts to identify and work with local CBSPs who are local entities that either have experience in the field of OD or the potential for developing OD expertise. Whether nonprofit or for-profit, CAP engaged in identifying, training and promoting local CBSPs as a means to achieve what USAID Administrator Dr. Rajiv Shah described as the “long-term sustainability of country-owned models of inclusive growth and development success.”

USAID missions directly funded the grantees and encouraged grantees to use CAP as the preferred TA and training provider. This “parallel” approach to capacity building—where USAID simultaneously issues direct awards to local organizations and funds another entity to support their work and help them grow and develop—is a model of best practice put forward by USAID under Implementation and Procurement Reform Objective 2 (IPR2). Consequently, CAP supported 63 organizations in 27 countries working in eight sectors—climate change adaptation; environment; dairy; microenterprise; women's empowerment; water; sanitation and hygiene; and democracy and governance. (*See* map at the beginning of this report showing CAP's support for DGP awardees by country and sector.)

This report provides an overview of CAP's work with the DGP awardees—from fostering their capacity to assess organizational performance and manage USAID funds to mentoring them as they took ownership of and planned for their futures. It then considers what worked, what didn't and how satisfied grantees were with CAP's services. It concludes with lessons learned and recommendations.

### **III. CAPABLE PARTNERS PROGRAM (CAP) SUPPORT FOR THE DGP**

USAID designated CAP as the preferred TA provider for DGP grantees. From April 2010 to July 2012, CAP assisted grantees by providing an array of skill-building services via customized technical assistance, broad-based trainings and a dynamic website, which are described in detail in the sections below.

In June of 2011, to further advance the imperatives of *USAID Forward*, CAP's program description was modified, re-orienting our responsibilities with regard to the DGP. As a result, CAP concluded providing direct capacity building services to Round 1 and 2 DGP grantees and embarked on a Learning Agenda in support of *USAID Forward* and IPR2. Through July 2012, CAP fulfilled training and TA commitments to grantees and worked with them to enhance their institutional health and ensure they met the obligations of their Cooperative Agreements.

### **IV. THE CAP APPROACH TO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT**

#### **A. Implementing a Hub-and-Spoke System**

CAP implemented a hub-and-spoke system to deliver capacity-development TA to grantees. By design, CAP established regional hubs located in four regions—Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Eurasia, Latin America and the Caribbean—to serve the majority of DGP grantees, and where available, engaged CBSPs working with grantees. Each hub was headed by an RTA who is an expert in one or more of the core organizational domains essential to strengthening grantee institutions and improving their capacity to deliver quality interventions in their respective sectors. Though RTAs were based in specific regions to facilitate strong, ongoing relationships with grantees, they were deployed elsewhere when appropriate.

RTAs provided technical assistance and training support in key organizational development domains including, governance; human resource management; monitoring and evaluation; financial management; program management, and compliance with USAID rules and regulations. To strengthen its community of practice, CAP began conducting regular monthly thematic web-enabled calls with RTAs and CBSPs as appropriate to share knowledge, explore emerging issues and discuss the technical aspects of their work, troubleshoot challenges and plan for upcoming events. From July 2011-May 2012, each call was hosted by an RTA who organized a presentation and discussion around a central theme related to an aspect of organizational development, TA provision and IPR objective 2.

From the start, employing RTAs who were readily available to their (grantee) clients allowed CAP to establish strong, trusting relationships with the grantees. As shown below such relationships, built on mutual respect and trust, helped open doors to doing the hard work of strengthening and transforming organizations.

## B. Engaging Local Capacity Building Service Providers

To best align with IPR2 and *USAID Forward*, CAP identified and engaged local CBSPs in DGP countries. Not surprisingly, we found each country context different. In some areas, there are local consultants, firms and organizations that can meet some grantee needs. In other areas, there is an absence of high-quality CBSPs. Most local CBSPs needed training and oversight of their work in order to meet CAP's expectations for quality of services. Snapshots of our experience with local CBSPs follow.

- In **Georgia**, through our RTA's efforts, grantees networked to maximize training opportunities and a new local CBSP partnership was born. When three of the country's four DGP recipients identified marketing and communications/public relations as critical needs, our RTA sought and engaged two highly qualified local marketing and communications/public relations consultants. Then, our RTA, the grantees and consultants collaborated on a single workshop covering both topics, which was followed by individualized TA. Although the two consultants had not worked together before, as a result of their successful collaboration for CAP, they formed a CBSP partnership.

Finding qualified local CBSPs for newer OD areas, such Knowledge Management (KM), can present particular challenges, even in a country as sophisticated as Georgia. Despite searching using traditional and the most highly-rated employment website in Georgia, our RTA found that none of the nineteen individuals who applied had concrete experience in the KM field, nor were most even familiar with KM. Thus, CAP identified and contracted with a KM expert in the U.S. to provide these services.

- The search for qualified locally-based experts with relevant USG experience often takes time to bear fruit. And, once hired, consultants still may require substantial oversight to ensure that priorities, goals and deadlines are met. In **Senegal**, after months of intense recruitment, our RTA was able to hire four local consultants with sufficient expertise in monitoring and evaluation (M&E); financial management; program management; resource mobilization and OD to meet the grantees' significant needs and the Mission's expectations.
- In **Malawi**, our RTA conducted a market study of local CBSPs based on nearly 30 key informant interviews held with individual consultants, representatives of local and international NGOs and private consulting firms that specialize in organizational development, and frequent users of technical assistance such as leaders from bilateral donors and development agencies. The report confirmed that most local CBSPs in Malawi would need CAP training and oversight to ensure quality.

### *Training local CBSPs*

- In **Ethiopia**, we found that although local CBSPs existed, none were able to provide off-the-shelf services to DGP grantees without additional training and significant oversight. The three top organizations of the many interviewed—Ethiopia Interfaith Forum for Development Dialogue and Action (EIFFDDA), Fayaa Integrated Development Association (FIDO) and IMPACT-Ethiopia—were invited to participate in the Ethiopia DIMP workshop to facilitate exercises with the grantees. Our objective was twofold: 1) to orient them to CAP and DGP and 2) assess their expertise and interactions with the grantees as a basis for future

collaboration. Prior to the workshop, CAP conducted a day-long training with the CBSPs to familiarize them with CAP, DGP and the upcoming workshop content and exercises. Despite this orientation, the three CBSPs did not prove adept enough at performing their limited roles in the workshop to warrant hiring them for more demanding work with the grantees.

### ***Becoming a local CBSP via training-of-trainers workshops***

- Training up NGOs that display sound management and a good measure of sustainability to serve as local CBSPs proved to be a workable strategy in **Ecuador**. There, grantee Red Financiera Rural (RFR), a network of micro-finance organizations, not only used the IDF process but learned from our RTA during a training-of-trainers (TOT) how to apply the process to its members. In addition, RFR planned to facilitate the IDF for paying clients, thus becoming a CBSP and earning income.
- In **Angola**, grantee Development Workshop (DW) also took on a CBSP role as a result of its introduction to the IDF. Following its own assessment, our RTA provided TOT so that in turn DW could prepare its own facilitators to work with its 50 affiliated community-based organizations.

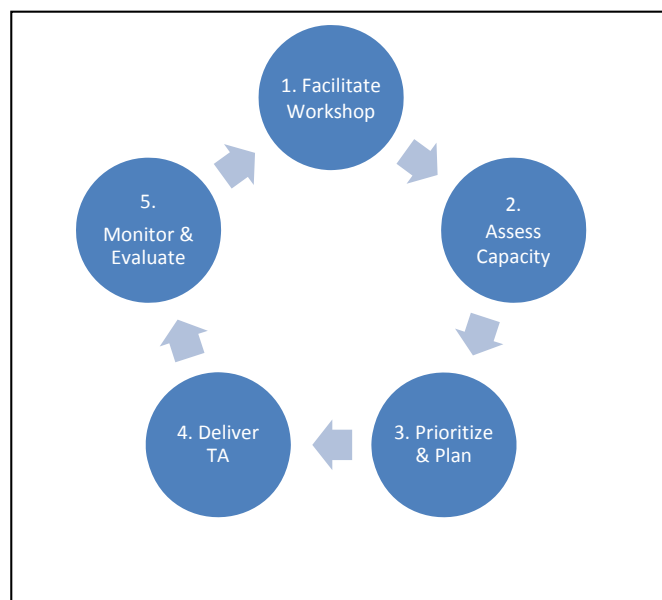
### ***Leveraging Pro Bono Services***

- In **Ecuador**, our RTA engaged the pro bono services of a senior member of a local consulting firm that provides OD services to various businesses and other entities. As a result, the firm helped design and facilitate a strategic-planning workshop for a DGP grantee in that country.

Local CBSPs can add energy and expertise or they can become a drain and a distraction. As CAP learned, the key is hiring good ones and then, investing time in managing their work.

## **C. CAP's Capacity Development Process**

CAP carried out a five-step capacity development process with each DGP grantee: 1) facilitate an introductory workshop, 2) assess internal capacities and prioritize needs, 3) develop a capacity strengthening plan, 4) implement the plan in concert with organizational priorities, then 5) monitor and evaluate the results.



CAP's 5-Step Capacity Development Process

## Step 1: Facilitate Detailed Implementation and Management Planning (DIMP) Workshops

At USAID’s request, CAP developed and facilitated a series of DIMP workshops for DGP grantees. Conducted as close to signing their Cooperative Agreements (CA) as possible, the four-and-a-half-day workshops were designed to develop the skills and capacity needed to execute

Figure 1: Detailed Implementation and Planning (DIMP) Workshop Schedule

Place	Country	Dates	Rd1	Rd 2
Howick	South Africa	July 18-22, 2011		x
Lilongwe	Malawi	May 23-27, 2011	x	x
Rabat	Morocco	May 25-27, 2011		x
Hawassa	Ethiopia	Mar. 7-10, 2011	x	
Dakar	Senegal	Jan. 11-15, 2010	x	
Kampala	Uganda	Dec. 8-11, 2009	x	
Pretoria	South Africa	Nov. 30-Dec, 3, 2009	x	
Kiev	Ukraine	Oct. 26-29, 2009	x	
Quito	Ecuador	Oct. 13-16, 2009	x	

and manage a USAID award. AORs were invited to participate in these financial management and monitoring and evaluation “boot camps,” thus providing an opportunity to introduce grantees to and clarify the roles and responsibilities of their AOR and TA provider.

As a result of the workshops, grantees refined their respective work and performance management plans; improved their knowledge and

understanding of how to fulfill USAID financial management requirements, and practiced skills for ensuring compliance with their ward documents, and fostered relationships their AORs and the TA provider. Figures 1 and 2 indicate the location, dates, Rounds of DPG grantees and participation at the DIMP workshops.

Figure 2: Participation in DIMP Workshops

	Quito	Kiev	Pretoria	Kampala	Dakar	Hawassa	Rabat	Lilongwe	Howick	Total
# of NGO Participants	15	16	29	20	38	24	21	19	19	201
# of USAID Mission Staff	3	6	5	2	11	7	6	12	10	62
# NGOs	6	8	14	10	13	13	6	5	7	82
# Countries	3	4	5	6	6	1	1	1	4	31

## Step 2: Assess Institutional Capacity

In each case, the RTA began by helping the organization’s leadership orchestrate a participatory capacity assessment using the Institutional Development Framework (IDF). The IDF compresses multiple steps—data collection, analysis and decision-making—into one activity.

The IDF provides tools (see box) to facilitate a self-assessment of an organization’s systems, assets and activities. During the assessment, the participants assign numerical ratings (1-4) to the organization’s current status or performance in key organizational development (OD) domains examined using the IDF matrix. The IDF yields both an organizational profile and a calculation

sheet that presents a baseline from which to track the future evolution of the organization along a development continuum.

### Step 3: Prioritize and Plan

Following the initial IDF assessment, CAP worked with each organization’s leadership to prioritize areas of need and formulate an Institutional Improvement Plan (IIP). With limited time and resources for capacity development, setting priorities can be difficult, as individual staff have their own priorities that must be balanced against organizational, beneficiary and donor priorities. This internal negotiation over organizational priorities fosters ownership of the change process.

Based on the identified needs and priorities, each grantee worked with CAP to craft a plan that articulated its objectives for change, activities in pursuit of that change, any required resources, and persons responsible for each activity. This capacity-strengthening action plan was flexible enough to serve both the short- and long-term goals of the organization and the needs of organizations operating in complex environments. The IIP identified specific areas of need to be addressed by CAP.

The RTAs observed that for many grantees, the guided capacity-assessment process and subsequent planning sparked reflection and constructive discussion about long-term development goals and organizational sustainability for the first time.

**What is the IDF?**

The Institutional Development Framework (IDF) is both

- A *tool* to help an organization understand its strengths and weaknesses.
- A *process* that provides an organization a way to:
  - Identify organizational development needs and priorities
  - Map a prioritized plan for improvement
  - Measure progress

**The IDF Tool Kit includes:**

- *Framework* – A matrix that defines organizational development & success by key managerial attributes
- *Profile Sheet* – Rates organizational strengths and weaknesses according to a framework
- *Calculation Sheet* – Documents organizational capability and identifies priority areas for improvement
- *Improvement Plan* – Lays out steps to take to start addressing priority areas for improvement

### Step 4: Deliver Technical Assistance

Based on the grantee’s OD priorities, CAP together with each client determined how best to meet the TA needs laid out in its capacity-strengthening plan. The grantee was not just a recipient of support; it was required to assume responsibilities and carry out actions laid out in the plan. Direct TA was provided either by a CAP staff member or by a local capacity building service provider (CBSP) with proven expertise in the required OD domain. Many of the DGP grantees, for example, requested support in strategic planning, human resources development and

monitoring and evaluation systems and tools. CAP drew from a variety of approaches, including one-on-one technical assistance, peer-to-peer consultation, trainings, and materials exchange, to deliver the requested TA.

In addition to the formal TA requests made through the IDF and

Figure 3: Summary of CAP’s TA Support to DGP Grantees 2010-2012

<i>Period</i>	<i>IDFs, Workshops, Trainings or TA Visits</i>
April 1, 2010–September 30, 2010	37
October 1, 2010–March 31, 2011	25
April 1, 2011–September 30, 2011	35
October 1, 2011–March 31, 2012	35
April 1–September 30, 2012	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>163</b>



IIP process, many grantees also requested additional support from CAP. For tracking purposes, these ad hoc requests were classified as distinct Non-IDF Technical Assistance Requests. DGP grantees made 67 of these requests. 100% of them were fulfilled.

Figure 3 shows the total number of IDF capacity assessments, workshops, trainings or TA visits that CAP provided to grantees during each reporting period but not total support activities for the period April 1, 2010 – September 30, 2012.

### Step 5: Monitor and Evaluate

CAP's monitoring and evaluation of its work with DGP recipients included:

- gathering quarterly outputs related to trainings and TA,
- tracking organizational change by analyzing changes in IDF scores,
- collecting direct feedback from grantees through periodic surveys, and
- supporting external evaluations that assessed change at the grantee level and across program beneficiaries.

Simultaneously, we trained, mentored and supported DGP grantees to monitor and evaluate change in their own capacities, in service delivery, and impact on their beneficiaries/community. We invested time and resources in strengthening the capacity of partners to track their own organizational growth to encourage ownership of the change process.

## V. KNOWLEDGE GENERATION AND INFORMATION SHARING

CAP launched an information-rich destination for DGP recipients—www.DGConnect.Net website—that featured all DIMP workshop materials, IDF tools, resources, innovations, and lessons learned developed by, for and with grantees.

Although DGP awardees worked in as many as eight different sectors, the IDF assessment process demonstrated that many of their needs were similar when it came to institutional strengthening. Commonality of needs provided increasing opportunities for leveraging USAID's investment by expanding the reach of existing tools and resources and developing new ones to disseminate via traditional and new media channels.

To support the capacity development of DGP recipients, CAP developed, disseminated and posted online a number of user-friendly tools and resources to support new partners and USAID's procurement reform initiative. The most critical materials aimed at helping new USAID partners address daily challenges were translated into the principal languages used by DGP grantees. Translations helped bridge gaps in understanding, especially related to jargon—for example, "pipelines" and "burn rates," common parlance for USAID—that were often confusing to non-native-English speakers.



Key products, reviewed by USAID staff, that will continue to be useful to new USAID partners long after DGP, include:

- ***NGOConnect eNews***, a series of 50 electronic newsletters issued monthly to DGP grantees via e-mail listserv. Each issue focused on a single topic in one of the key OD domains. Whether providing step-by-step instructions on how to complete U.S. Government forms or explaining how to develop a human resources handbook, the eNewsletters addressed basic questions from the field. Translated into French, Portuguese, Spanish, Russian and Arabic.
- ***The Essential NGO Guide to Managing Your USAID Award*** is a plain English reference for DGP grantees and other NGOs, regardless of sector, to help them meet USAID requirements and establish the good practices needed to implement effective programs, from pre-award through start-up, implementation and close-out. Translated into French, Portuguese, Spanish, Russian and Arabic.
- ***Implementation Tips for USAID Partners*** presents—in an easy-to-read, Q&A format a response to a specific, frequently asked question about how to navigate USAID rules and regulations. Arranged according to organizational development domains—governance, financial management, human resources, program management, external relations, compliance, and monitoring and evaluation—*Implementation Tips* also offers strategies to help strengthen an organization’s systems and processes.



## VI. DATA SOURCES AND CONSTRAINTS

To evaluate the impact of CAP’s work on grantees’ technical and organizational capacities and to explore the effectiveness of our capacity-development process, we conducted a thorough review of data collected throughout our relationship with the grantees—from April 1, 2010 through September 30, 2012. We looked at a number of different variables from the data sources that are described below and highlight a number of constraints of the data.

### A. Sources of Data

1. **Tracking grantee performance data.** On a quarterly basis, using a robust Web-based Customer Relationship Management tool, we captured essential information about DGP awards, grantees and their TA. Dubbed the Grantee Accountability Tracking Tool (GATT), it became the repository of all DGP performance data including, 1) basic information about the grantee—name, location, size of grant, pre-award survey results; 2) results of the IDF organizational capacity assessment; 3) capacity building objectives and status tracking, and 4) capacity building activities and status.



2. **Conducting constituent surveys.** At USAID’s request, a *DGP Grantee and Constituent Perspectives Evaluation* was conducted in 2011. The evaluation, developed and implemented by South Africa-based Keystone Accountability, sought the perspectives of two key stakeholder groups—grantees and their constituents. Designed as a mid-term, real-time, learning-oriented evaluation, its purpose was to generate and analyze independent, quantifiable and comparative feedback from grantees and their constituents regarding the DGP, the grantee-USAID relationship, and CAP. The main focus was the DGP grantee-USAID relationship. Survey results related to CAP’s work with the DGP grantees were re-analyzed for this report.
3. **Fielding a Grantee Impact and Satisfaction survey.** Toward the end of CAP’s support to the DGP grantees, we undertook a survey of DGP grantees to solicit feedback about their experiences working with us. In particular, we were interested in learning more about how our work with grantees improved their organizational and technical performance. The survey was not designed to capture general information about the DGP program or about the USAID-grantee relationship. Basic findings from the report were included in CAP Semi-Annual Report #17 (October 1, 2011 – March 31, 2012), and the data were analyzed in greater depth for this report.
4. **Conducting DIMP workshop pre- and post-tests and evaluations.** At the start and conclusion of each workshop, participants were asked to complete a two-part test that allowed us to gauge changes in their levels of knowledge and ability to apply the content presented. In addition, participants were asked to evaluate the usefulness and clarity of the workshop sessions. A comprehensive DIMP workshop report was submitted to USAID in April 2010. However, we revisited the pre- and post-tests and evaluations for additional information for this report.
5. **Reviewing RTA inputs in the GATT and quarterly reports.** Data were gathered from the GATT, monthly RTA conference calls and written quarterly reports. For this report, notes and reports were reviewed and mined for the purposes of capturing learning.

## **B. Constraints**

1. CAP was able to conduct only a limited number of IDF follow-up organizational capacity assessments. A baseline IDF assessment was conducted with 55 Round 1 and 2 DGP grantees. Although we intended to conduct follow-up assessments with all grantees, only 16 second applications were facilitated, limiting the size of the pool for comparison. In some cases, because CAP’s support to the grantees was curtailed by USAID in 2012, there was insufficient time for a subsequent application. In others, the grantees had not fulfilled (or were not able to fulfill) their initial IIPs; thus, they were not ready for a second application. On average, grantees undertook capacity development activities over 15 months between assessments.
2. The IDF itself, as a facilitated self-assessment, has a degree of inherent subjectivity. CAP found that some organizations’ scores decreased in some key organizational development areas across applications. We assume that this is due to inflated scores during the first application of the IDF as anecdotal evidence shows that significant progress in those areas

was made by the organization. We found that over time organizations have a better sense of where they ‘sit’ on the organizational development continuum after being exposed to standards in organizational capacity.

3. *The Grantee and Constituent Perspectives Evaluation* conducted by Keystone Accountability had a number of constraints, including the scale used in the survey. The survey results had extremely high ratings across the board and those ratings are atypical for Keystone’s other grantee surveys. This could be due, as Keystone explained, to the fact that with the “rating scale from -5 to +5, most respondents tend to see 0 as a negative instead of neutral score. The participants at three of the four reflective workshops confirmed that they felt 0 was negative rating and that an ordinary 1-10 scale would be more accurate—but not by much.”
4. Our Grantee Impact and Satisfaction survey was limited to grantees that received CAP services, not all of the DGP grantees from Rounds 1 and 2. In March 2012, the survey was sent to DGP grantees that had received training and TA support from CAP to solicit feedback about their experiences working with CAP. 33 of the 63 grantees with which CAP worked responded.

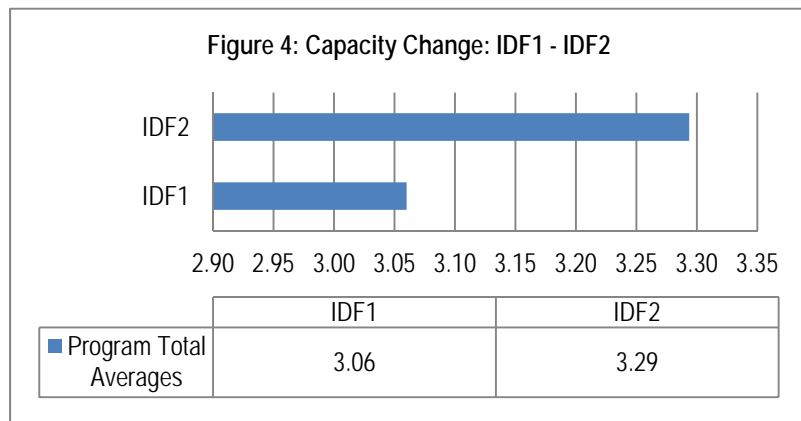
## VII. IMPACT: CHANGES IN ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

This section proposes some answers to the question: *What was the impact of CAP’s work on grantees’ organizational capacity?* Answers are based on data from: GATT, IDF Calculation Sheets, IIP activities started and completed, non-IDF Technical Assistance Requests, and the Grantee Impact and Satisfaction Survey. The constraints of the data highlighted above should be kept in mind when reviewing the findings.

### *Overall, did the organizational capacity of DGP grantee improve?*

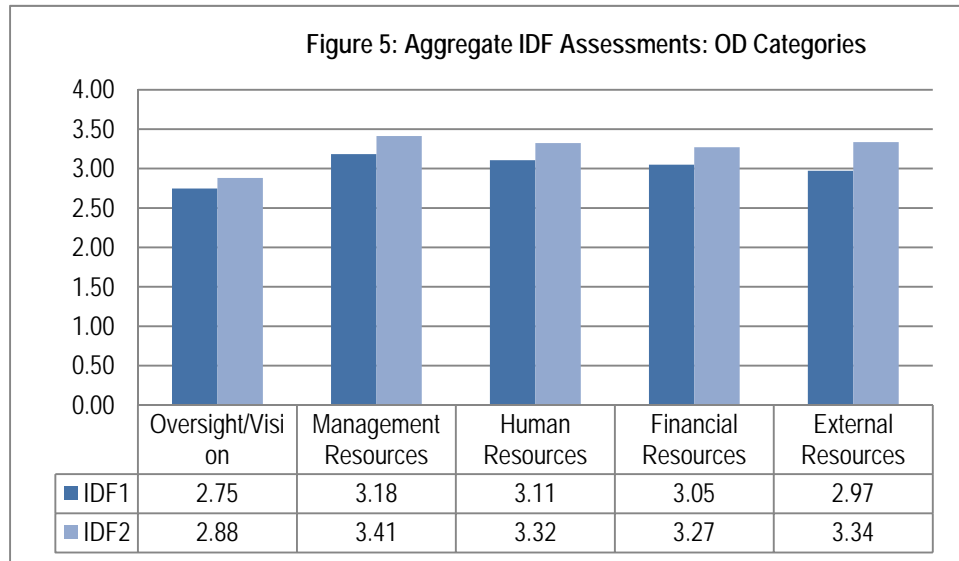
In the DGP feedback report, 79% of respondents agreed that their “organization is a stronger, more sustainable organization because of CAP support.” In the Keystone report, when asked about the support they received from CAP, respondents rated the usefulness of CAP support at greater than 90% in measuring success, M&E, financial systems, and HR systems.

Of the 16 organizations that conducted two IDFs, the average score from the first assessment was 3.04 and 3.29 from the second assessment. See Figure 4. This marks an 8% improvement of their self-assessed capacity from the first application to the second. On average organizations took about 15 months to carry out their capacity-development activities, usually focusing on three or four improvement areas, before doing a second assessment. The 8% improvement represents an improvement from an organization that is focused on consolidating its systems and expanding operations to one that is approaching more



long-term, sustaining practices and systems. Further, RTAs noted that because scores are self-assessed, second applications are typically more realistic in comparison to the first. Therefore, higher levels of improvements may be muted or not fully captured by the measurement instrument.

It is also interesting to note that the average IDF assessment score among the 55 initial applications of the IDF was 2.44 points. For the 16 organizations that conducted two IDFs, the average initial score was 3.04. This reading is substantially higher than the organizations that conducted only one IDF who had an initial score of 2.23. This could suggest that organizations that score higher on an initial IDF are more likely as a group to continue with a capacity development program.



***What specific improvements were made in different domains of organizational capacity?***

The 16 grantees who conducted two IDFs experienced their greatest gains in External Resources (ER) at 12%. They made modest gains of approximately 7% in Human Resources, Management Resources and Financial Resources categories. They made the least changes in Oversight and Vision at 5%. See Figure 5.

That grantees made most gains in External Resources is particularly intriguing since grantees chose to focus least on External Resources when selecting organizational development objectives. (See Figure 12 on page 17.) Instead, many decided to focus the majority of their

**Figure 6: Grantee Selection of IIP Activities by Domain**

<i>OD Category</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>% of Total</i>
Oversight/Vision	142	24%
Management Resources	164	28%
Human Resources	115	20%
Financial Resources	103	17%
External Resources	65	11%

capacity development efforts on Management Resources. Figure 6 shows the percentage of IIP activities selected by grantees in the different organizational domains.

While further investigation is required to understand this more fully, one theory supported by the qualitative evidence, is that an external facilitator who leads a process of examining the nature of relationships through the

IDF process introduces new ideas and fresh perspectives to an organization. Simply by examining the role of external relationships organizations are encouraged to make modifications in the way they think and deal with other civil society organizations, ethnic communities, governments and/or the media.

***What effect did DIMP workshop participation have on an organization’s propensity to make capacity gains?***

Organizations that attended DIMPs had a higher original self-assessed organizational development score (2.45 points) in comparison with those that completed IDFs but did not attend DIMPs (2.32). While we can’t be certain about the causality, we can say that organizations that attended DIMP workshops registered higher self-assessed scores than those that did not attend DIMPs.

Unfortunately, for comparison purposes, all organizations that conducted two IDFs also attended DIMP workshops, so we cannot say that participation in a DIMP workshop led to higher performance in capacity gains. However, we note that among this group, four organizations attended in-country DIMP workshops and twelve organizations attended regional DIMP workshops. Interestingly, the organizations that participated in regional DIMP workshops tended to make greater gains (0.28 points) in self-assessed capacity development versus those who participated in in-country DIMP workshops (no change). See Figure 7. Additionally, grantees who attended regional DIMPs performed comparatively better in every single organizational development category.

Figure 7: Self-Assessed Capacity Change Between IDF Applications

	Grantee Count	IDF1 Score	IDF2 Score	Change IDF2 – IDF1
In-Country	4	2.93	2.93	0
Regional	12	3.07	3.35	0.28

This trend, greater gains for grantees who attend regional DIMPs could be explained by two possible interpretations. First, in comparison with in-country DIMPs grantees that attend regional DIMPs interact with unfamiliar organizations and people leading to higher exposure to new ideas, organizations, practices and ways of

doing things. This exposure could lead to better capacity development outcomes. Second, people that attend regional workshops generally travel further distance, make more preparations to attend and put more effort into the goals of the conference. More focused attention on the DIMP workshop topics could yield higher performing outcomes in capacity development.

***What effect did the IDF have on capacity gains?***

In the DGP survey, 26 out of 27 grantees responded “yes” when asked the question “*If your organization participated in an Institutional Development Framework (IDF) capacity assessment process, did the process contribute to your organization’s technical and/or organizational development? Why or why not?*” The grantees that said “yes” provided overwhelmingly positive responses to how the IDF helped the organization. These included:

- identifying and prioritizing needs of the organization;
- gaining a better understanding of the organizational priorities;
- providing a framework to self-evaluate the organization;
- developing an improvement plan, and
- working on issues with or without the support of CAP

Of the 16 grantees that completed two IDFs, 14 responded to the Grantee Impact and Satisfaction survey. In response to the question: “If your organization participated in a second application of the IDF process, what did you learn during the second application?” we received the following common responses:

- grantees were more skilled at going through the IDF process and identifying needs and recognizing priorities;
- grantees had brought forward new areas of capacity building needs during the second application;
- grantees were able to compare their measurements from the first round to the second;
- grantees were able to see improvement in different areas, such as internal policies, staff skills, reporting, etc., and
- grantees were able to see links between different aspects of organizational development that they had not seen in the first round.

***What effect did completing IIP activities have on capacity gains?***

Higher IIP completion rates appear to be correlated with greater gains in organizational development capacity. Figure 8 is sorted by IIP completion rates. The highest rates are listed at the top and lower rates at the bottom. The column on the far right is the gross change in IDF scores from the first application of the IDF to the second application. The blue coloration indicates those grantees with positive change with darker blue signifying more change and the grey indicates lower capacity changes with deeper color signifying more negative change.

Figure 8: IIP Completion Rates and Assessed Capacity Changes

GranteeName	IIPCmpltRt	GrossChangeIDF
Kixi Credito	100%	0.46
Accao Humana	89%	0.22
Alfaliit	75%	0.80
PBN	74%	0.53
GADEC	73%	0.17
Twayovoka	72%	0.52
UMID	60%	0.32
Waaponi	57%	-0.32
APDT	57%	-0.10
ADPP	55%	0.16
DAPP	51%	0.29
CREPA	47%	0.40
CENN	45%	-0.24
WFG	43%	-0.02
Nascent Solutions	23%	0.38
WAAME	21%	-0.25

There is a clear correlation between the completion rate of IIP Activities and a gross change in self-assessed capacity among DGP organizations. Those organizations that failed to complete less than 60% of their IIP activities tended to make modest gains or lose ground in their organizational development capacities.

***Did the proximity of a RTA have an effect on capacity gains?***

Organizations who worked with an RTA based in a neighboring country or region had higher rates of IIP activity completion and gave themselves higher self-assessed scores in organizational capacity areas than those with an RTA in-country. These findings suggest that grantees make the greatest gains when RTAs are not present in a particular country, but rather are regionally-based (see Figure 9). On the contrary, as you will find in the section below, organizations were more satisfied with CAP services when the RTA was in-country.

Figure 9: Capacity Changes with an RTA Based In country Versus Based Regionally

	Record Count	IIP Completion Rate	IDF1 – IDF2 Change	Management Resources (MR) Completion Rate	MR IDF1 – IDF2 Change	Financial Resources (FR) IIP Completion Rate	FR IDF1 – IDF2 Change
RTA In-Country	9	46%	0.04	49%	0.03	46%	0.21
RTA Regionally-based	7	75%	0.43	66%	0.43	88%	0.36

Similar to the effect on DIMP workshops, this could be explained by several hypotheses. First, visits and support from external technical advisors are taken more seriously in comparison with in country technical advisors. Organizations are more likely to make preparations that include meeting activity deliverables and checkboxes when an advisor is visiting from abroad versus from across town.

Second, external technical advisors have more ready access to international best practices and techniques. By the nature of greater exposure to the broader marketplace of ideas, practices and techniques, external advisors bring a wider variety of knowledge than local counterparts.

Third, externally-based advising takes place over a longer term in comparison with in-country advising. Capacity development for organizations is a long-term process with organizations experiencing growth spurts and lulls. By its nature, external advising is less intensive and results oriented in comparison with local advising when meetings are simpler to conduct with fewer obstacles in the way of making progress.

## VIII. SATISFACTION: GRANTEE FEEDBACK ON CAP SERVICES

Seeking feedback from a project’s intended beneficiaries is a guiding principle of participatory monitoring and evaluation. Project participants should have the opportunity to express openly whether or not their needs and expectations were met, whether the process itself has been appropriate or rewarding and to provide input and direction for future efforts. Client satisfaction has been a key metric guiding CAP’s internal performance monitoring throughout its support to DGP grantees at multiple levels and at points in time.

At the activity- and output-levels CAP used client satisfaction to evaluate its delivery of services for discreet events such as DIMP Workshops and IDF Assessments. Using simple surveys participants were asked to rate the utility and clarity of the content presented as well as the apparent preparedness, subject matter knowledge, and quality of the facilitator among others. This feedback helped shape the planning and design of successive events.

At the outcome-level CAP carried out two program-level client satisfaction surveys. The first, conducted in early 2011, was developed, administered and analyzed by an outside firm, Keystone Accountability, as part of a larger mid-term evaluation. The second effort was CAP-lead and took place in 2012 closer to the conclusion of support to DGP grantees. Both surveys



focused on organization-level client satisfaction with specific CAP services over time as well as satisfaction with CAP itself. This final report contains findings from these outcome-level client satisfaction surveys.

**Overall, what was the level of satisfaction with CAP services?**

In the Keystone survey, when asked about CAP services versus other provider’s capacity building services, 89% of respondents felt that CAP was *better than* other providers at adding value to their work overall. Interestingly, the more experienced grantees, those with more than 2 years of USAID experience, felt that CAP was better overall than other providers, more so than the respondents with less than 2 years USAID experience.

**Usefulness and Relevance of CAP services**

90% of non-US PVOs rated CAP’s services as useful and 62% as extremely useful in the Keystone survey. Again, more experienced organizations felt that CAP services were useful with 92% of organizations with greater than 2 years of experience with USAID reporting so.

In the DGP customer satisfaction survey, grantees also found CAP services to be highly relevant to their most pressing needs and flexible to changing conditions as evidence by the following responses to survey:

- *CAP supported your organization to address its real priority needs:* 94% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed
- *CAP delivered tangible and sustainable benefits to your organization within the given time:* 79% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed
- *CAP support was flexible enough to respond to changes in your organization’s environment:* 94% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed

Figures 10 and 11 highlight additional findings from the Keystone survey and the DGP customer satisfaction survey.

Figure 10: Grantee Overall Satisfaction with CAP Services

<i>On a scale of 1-5, please rate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements.</i>	Overall relevance & quality of CAP support			Overall potential sustainability	
	CAP supported your organization to address its real priority needs.	CAP delivered tangible and sustainable benefits to your organization	CAP was flexible enough to respond to changes in your organization’s environment	Your organization will continue to make use of relevant CAP tools and resources after CAP support has ended	Your organization is a stronger, more sustainable organization because of CAP support
Average Score	4.48	4.12	4.21	4.60	4.00
% Agree <sup>1</sup>	94%	79%	94%	100%	81%
% Strongly Agree <sup>2</sup>	55%	39%	27%	57%	15%

Source: Customer Satisfaction Survey

<sup>1</sup> For this study, CAP defines “agreement” with the statement as a rating of 4 or 5.

<sup>2</sup> For this study, CAP defines “strong agreement” with the statement as a rating of 5 only.

Figure 11: Grantee Experiences with CAP Compared with Other Capacity Building and Grantee Support Agencies

	Support for all round organization strengthening	One on one mentoring and coaching	Training workshops	Printed support materials	Online support materials	Staff are accessible and available	Respectfulness	Knowledge of the challenges NGOs face	Overall value added to your work
Average Score	1.63	2.36	3.17	2	2.73	2.71	3	2.39	2.79
% Better	63%	71%	89%	67%	67%	82%	82%	72%	89%
% Much Better	31%	50%	50%	22%	53%	41%	35%	33%	47%

Source: Keystone Accountability Mid-term Evaluation Survey

### *What was the level of demand for CAP services?*

Grantees requested CAP support at high rates across the entire program. CAP supported 95% of IIP objectives.<sup>3</sup> Oversight & Vision and Management Resources were the areas where grantees requested the most assistance and External Resources was the area where grantees requested the least support. Figure 12 provides an overview of the number and percentage of CAP supported objectives.

Figure 12: CAP Support for Institutional Improvement Plan (IIP) Objectives

OD Category	Total Objectives	CAP Supported Objectives	Unsupported Objectives	% Supported
Oversight/Vision	34	34	0	100%
Management Resources	78	77	1	99%
Human Resources	47	44	3	94%
Financial Resources	48	43	5	90%
External Resources	24	21	3	88%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>95%</b>

In addition to the high percentage of demand through the IDF and IIP processes, CAP also supported 67 ad hoc, non-IDF-related TA requests. CAP RTAs and consultants fulfilled all of these requests.

The overwhelmingly positive responses to the first and third questions—that CAP supported the DGP grantees’ real priority needs and that it was flexible enough to respond to changes in the organization’s environment—suggests that CAP’s approach to providing TA was successful.

<sup>3</sup> Capacity development objectives comprised a range of three to fifteen supporting activities. A “CAP supported objective” is any objective that included an activity where the CAP RTA was either the responsible party for the activity or cited as a resource required for completion.



### ***What was the level of satisfaction with DIMP workshops?***

In the Keystone survey, 88% of respondents agreed that the DIMP workshops helped them comply with USAID funding requirements. In the DGP feedback survey, Organizations that attended regional DIMPs agreed more strongly that CAP support helped them form new relationships with donors and institutions (3.77 vs. 3.50)

For the *Round 1* grantees, five regional workshops were held: Quito, Equator; Kiev, Ukraine; Pretoria, South Africa; Kampala, Uganda; and Dakar, Senegal. Fifty-one of the 59 Round 1 Grantees participated in the workshops. A total of 118 individuals from these NGOs participated along with 27 USAID Mission AORs and staff, for a total of 145 participants. On average, participants found the workshops to be both useful and clear, ranking usefulness at 4.56 on a 5-point scale or 91% if expressed as a percentage and clarity at 4.31 on a 5-point scale or 86% if expressed as a percentage.

For the *Round 2* grantees, four single country DIMP workshops were held: Hawassa, Ethiopia; Rabat, Morocco; Lilongwe, Malawi; and Howick, South Africa (for the Southern Africa region). On average, participants found the workshops to be both useful and clear. As the workshops were not standard across the countries, the average scores cannot be combined. Figure 13 provides an overview of average usefulness and clarity scores from each of the Round 2 country-based DIMP workshops.

Figure 13: Composite scores from Round 2 DIMP Workshops

	Hawassa, Ethiopia	Rabat, Morocco	Lilongwe, Malawi	Howick, South Africa
Useful	4.63 (93%)	4.65 (93%)	4.75 (95%)	4.57 (91.4%)
Clear	4.22 (84%)	4.38 (88%)	4.44 (89%)	4.54 (90.8%)

When comparing the Round 1 and Round 2 DIMP workshops, the Keystone survey found that organizations who attended country DIMPs agreed more strongly that their expectations about CAP services had been met (average scores 4.5 vs. 4.26). That said, in other questions, the difference in ratings between those who attended country vs. regional DIMPs were not consistent across other survey categories.

### ***What was the level of satisfaction with the IDF assessment process?***

The IDF process was critically important to many of the organizations that received support from CAP. In the Keystone survey, there is near universal agreement across variables about the value of the IDF tool, the only such instance of agreement in the entire survey. Specifically, respondents agreed that the capacity assessment using the IDF tool helped staff and stakeholders reflect together and agree on capacity needs (100% agree), the IDF ratings are an accurate and holistic reflection of our capabilities (100% agree) and the IDF tool covers all the organization capacities that we feel are important (100%).

We received the same overwhelming positivity in the findings related to the IDF from the DGP survey. Of the grantees that responded to this section, 100% of respondents *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that the IDF tool was appropriate for their organization’s level of experience.

The grantees also were satisfied with the facilitation of the IDF assessment process. For the most part, the IDF was facilitated by an RTA. Of the grantees that responded, 96% of respondents *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that the facilitator had the right skills to facilitate the IDF assessment process and 97% of respondents *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that the facilitator had the right attitude to facilitate the IDF assessment the process.

A vast majority of the grantees indicated a willingness to use the IDF in the future when responding to the DGP feedback survey. In terms of sustainability of the IDF, we asked grantees: “*Will your organization use the IDF methodology in the future? Why or why not?*” Of the respondents, 27 grantees said “yes,” they will use the IDF again. They said the tool was clear and easy-to-use. Others liked the sense of ownership and sense of responsibility that it engendered. Some grantees mentioned that the process was highly inclusive. Several remarked at how the end result—measurable objectives and benchmarks—accommodates tracking the process in a real and tangible way.

The following are some grantee verbatim responses when they said “yes, we will continue to use the IDF.” Because...

*It creates a sense of co-responsibility for our institution on the part of the whole team.*

*It permits prioritization.*

*It uses indicators constructed in a participatory manner and that are comprehensible to everyone since they were written as a team.*

*We will use the tool for our organization’s future development as it is participatory, problem solving and user friendly.*

*Yes, because we believe it is the best option to allow transparency and participation of staff, good governance and good management*

In addition, four organizations said they would use the tool with their partners and sub-grantees.

### ***Did the proximity of an RTA have an effect on level of satisfaction?***

We found that, in general, grantees with an RTA in-country were *more satisfied* with all aspects of CAP support than those who did not have an RTA in the country by an average of .13 points.

Those grantees with an RTA in-country were:

- more likely to agree or strongly agree that CAP *delivered sustainable and tangible benefits* (89% vs. 67%).
- more likely to agree or strongly agree that CAP support *helped them implement their DGP project* (88% vs. 71%).
- more likely to agree or strongly agree that CAP *fulfilled its support commitments* (88% vs. 71%).
- more likely to agree or strongly agree that CAP *helped establish a stronger relationship with USAID* (88% vs. 67%).

- more likely to agree or strongly agree that CAP *helped establish new relationships with donors* (80% vs. 50%).
- more likely to agree or strongly agree that the organization is *more sustainable because of CAP support* (88% vs. 73%).

Interestingly, though, those grantees with an RTA in-country were no more or less likely to agree or strongly agree that CAP-supported changes would continue beyond the project, but were significantly more likely to say that CAP had helped them form new relationships. On the contrary, as shown above, RTA presence in country did not directly result in stronger gains in capacity for the organization.

### ***What was the level of satisfaction with CAP resources?***

Grantees had access to a wide array of written tools and resources such as the DIMP workshop binder materials, the *Essential NGO Guide to Managing Your USAID Award*, *NGO Connect e-newsletters*, and the library of resources on [www.DGPconnect.net](http://www.DGPconnect.net). In the DGP feedback survey, when asked will “*Will your organization continue to make use of relevant CAP tools and resources after CAP support has ended*”? 100% of respondents said “yes.”

Similarly, in the Keystone survey, 85% of those surveyed found CAP support materials (guides, workshop materials, samples, examples) useful. 86% of those surveyed found DGP Connect e-newsletters useful and 86% found the DGP Connect.net website (which includes resources) useful.

In comparison to other service providers, 67% respondents to the Keystone survey found CAP's printed materials and online materials *better* than other providers' resources.

## **IX. CONCLUSIONS**

This section highlights lessons that we have learned through throughout the implementation of the DGP activities as well as recommendations for future capacity building projects, particularly those that are run through a ‘parallel’ model where USAID provides direct grants and an outside service provider is brought in to support the grantees’ organizational development.

### **A. Lessons Learned**

#### ***1. DIMP workshops provided an essential introduction to working with USAID and making cross-sectoral and country connections***

For many of the grantees, the DIMP workshops provided the first opportunity to learn about and gain specific, practical skills to manage their USAID awards. The workshops were most successful when:

- a. The event took place soon after the grantee received its award. In general, grantees want and need training as early as possible in the project cycle; three to six months was suggested as ideal.
- b. Those individuals responsible for managing key parts of their award—program management, M&E, and finance—attended. Strengthening these three pillars is

- critical to the success of projects and essential to bolstering compliance and accountability.
- c. Local USAID staff played an active role in the proceedings. Some of the best learning happened when USAID staff interacted individually with the grantees in breakout sessions and during practical exercises. This provided a non-threatening, open forum for grantees and their AORs to communicate directly about expectations and shared goals and to build strong relationships. Grantees especially benefited when USAID staff co-presented with CAP staff and/or were available to answer key questions, clarify issues and provide local Mission insights. When USAID staff did not attend, or did not participate actively, it was a missed opportunity and participants did not gain as much from the workshop.
  - d. The content was tailored to the specific needs of the grantees. Formal or informal pre-workshop surveys with grantees and USAID facilitated tailoring the content to best meet the needs of grantees.
  - e. The content was tailored to the stage at which grantees were in their projects' life cycle. For example, asking grantees midway in their projects to bring an outline of a future project proposal rather than their original, one-year-old proposals to the Malawi workshop made sessions and interactive exercises especially meaningful according to participants' feedback.
  - f. The agenda allowed time for grantees to present their work to peers. This fostered cross-organizational learning and facilitated networking among grantees. In the DIMP workshop evaluations, participants said there was unexpected learning via these interactions. Both AORs and grantees highly valued the opportunity to build and strengthen relationships based on a shared body of knowledge and a common understanding of how to move forward to maximize the possibilities provided by the DGP.
  - g. The DIMP workshop was followed by ongoing, tailored training and TA. Although the workshop served as an excellent launching pad for fostering more capable USAID partners ongoing coaching, training and TA were essential to reinforcing learning and establishing new skills, systems, procedures and behaviors.

***2. The IDF capacity assessment process was a first for most grantees and a real eye-opener.***

DGP grantees expressed overwhelmingly positive responses to CAP-facilitated IDF capacity assessments. For many, the IDF was the first time that staff took a critical look at the systems, assets and activities of the organization. Many appreciated how the assessment shined a light on strengths as well as weaknesses, and allowed them to view their NGO in multiple dimensions. A number of grantees also acknowledged that the process itself serves as a model of participatory management as the assessment lead to prioritization of needs and the development of an improvement plan. Frequently, the grantees asked for a longer period of time to conduct the assessment so they could probe more deeply.

### **3. Grantees' capacity goals shifted over time.**

For those grantees that completed two IDF processes, we found that their goals shifted from solving immediate problems and filling immediate needs—such as creating manuals and establishing systems and processes—to longer-term goals such as staff development and strategic planning. Many realized that they needed strong and dedicated professional staff to carry out their work.

### **4. IDF scores don't tell the whole story.**

For those grantees that completed two IDF processes, we found that some of their IDF scores decreased in certain areas, although anecdotally, we know that their capacity actually improved. After being exposed to the 'standards' of organizational capacity and the experience and sophistication of other organizations, we find that organizations have a better sense of where they 'sit' on the organizational development continuum. Therefore, we need to be careful about tying our measures of success directly to quantitative scores from assessments. They often do not tell the whole story.

### **5. The IDF capacity assessment is a sustainable and replicable process.**

The IDF is a process and a tool that grantees will use in the future. Many expressed their desire and commitment to facilitate the IDF with their own organizations as well as subgrantees. In fact, at the request of several grantees, CAP conducted TOTs to enable them to use the tool and facilitate the process with their partners and subs.

### **6. Building relationships with grantees fostered success.**

Although many grantees had worked on projects with a capacity-building component in the past, it appears from the IDF assessments that the impact was limited. From years of experience working in different cultures, CAP is convinced that successful trial and adoption of new skills and behaviors is contingent, in part, on the relationship developed between the grantee and the TA provider. For many DGP recipients, the CAP RTAs became become trusted, authoritative and reliable sources of information and guidance. We heard from grantees and AORs alike that consistent, hands-on TA and training provided by the RTAs has triggered improvements in performance, implementation and reporting.

### **7. Virtual TA was cheaper but challenging.**

Providing virtual TA—online and/or via telephone—was challenging in many of the DGP countries, particularly in the absence of a regionally-based technical advisor. Where internet and telephone access was inconsistent, slow or limited, CAP found that face-to-face TA was most effective. On the other hand, in places where connectivity was reliable, virtual support was effective, especially building on relationships that were established initially in person. Overall, effectiveness seems to be enhanced when the relationship is initially built face-to-face.

### **8. Many grantees needed external encouragement to make progress on their capacity goals.**

Grantees often needed frequent encouragement via emails, calls and visits from RTAs and CBSPs to ensure they were completing their agreed-upon IIP activities. Grantees typically struggled with competing priorities—grant implementation vs. capacity building

activities—often putting capacity building on the back burner. Although understandable and despite CAP’s encouraging grantees to do both in parallel, it was a serious challenge for many grantees.

**9. *Celebrating capacity gains was a motivator for continued progress.***

Recognizing milestones of accomplishment served as indispensable markers for the grantees. Celebrating significant results in organizational change motivated grantees to continue pursuing organizational development objectives.

**10. *Subcontracting capacity building support had mixed results.***

CAP, asked by USAID to align with procurement reform and *USAID Forward*, responded by seeking out and engaging as much as possible with local CBSPs in DGP countries. CAP found that each country context was different. In some areas, there were local consultants, firms and organizations that could meet some of grantee’s needs. In other areas, there was an absence of high-quality CBSPs. When local consultants, firms and NGOs were subcontracted to provide support, CAP found that they needed training, mentoring and consistent oversight of their work in order to meet expectations for quality and timeliness of services.

**11. *There are often other, more intangible factors that impact the likelihood of success.***

Capacity-building is inherently about organizational change, and not all organizations are ready, equipped or even interested in pursuing a change agenda. The ability to pursue change in a focused manner is itself a capacity, and for some grantees this was a gap. Other factors such as values, individual personalities, and compatibility between an RTA and a given grantee almost certainly affected the degree of success realized by CAP TA.

**12. *Decoupling TA provision and grants management offers certain advantages.***

A key lesson from CAP’s support to the DGP is how central strong relationships are to successful capacity building. When the participating organization is legally and financially accountable to the TA provider, it can be challenging to foster a relationship that has trust, transparency, and accountability for the quality of TA being provided. When USAID staff become involved in TA provision, they often report the same experience. Working alongside USAID and its direct grantees has given CAP the opportunity to enhance the functioning of the USAID-grantee relationship, helping both sides work more efficiently and effectively in partnership.

## **B. Recommendations**

Based on the findings and lessons learned from the DGP activities, CAP recommends the following:

**1. *Hold workshops to teach new grantees how to meet USAID requirements and expectations.***

DIMP workshops are not the panacea for grantees’ capacity needs, but they do a) provide a *base of knowledge and skills* for new grantees to get started with their awards, b) establish the foundations of a *strong relationship* between the grantee, USAID and a capacity building support provider, c) offer *go-to materials and resources* that grantees can use as job aids when difficult questions arise after they leave the workshop and



d) create a community or support *network* of grantees that are faced with similar challenges. Smaller, more intimate single-country and/or single-language workshops are cheaper for the USAID and the grantees. We found that those grantees who did not participate in such workshops, were behind the curve in meeting reporting requirements and other aspects of managing their award.

**2. *Facilitate an organizational capacity self-assessment with new grantees.***

Although CAP found success with the IDF, it is not necessary to use that specific tool, but a self-assessment process is strongly recommended. The key elements to consider are a) the process is a *self*-assessment, allowing the organization to reflect on and own the process, b) the assessment is *facilitated* by an external, neutral person with specific facilitate skills to support the organization to dig deep into the roots of their capacity needs and issues, and c) the assessment provides a *baseline* from which the organization can measure its progress along the development continuum.

**3. *Establish a robust monitoring and evaluation plan related to capacity development.***

It is crucial to establish a clear monitoring and evaluation plan and specific responsibilities from the beginning of the program. The plan should track both the service provider's performance and the grantees' performance in project implementation and organizational development. CAP's ability to show results was hampered, in part, by a) PMP responsibility in the hands of USAID and b) lack of time to conduct follow up IDF assessments with the grantees. Clarity and responsibility about the performance measures, tracking of indicators and evaluation should be negotiated from the beginning of the activity.

**4. *Ensure the quality of the capacity development support provided.***

Whether or not the training and capacity development TA is provided by CAP, a local CBSP or USAID itself, the quality of the support provided is critical. In addition, the provider must appreciate the organization's assets, talent and experience to build the trust, credibility and ownership necessary to foster learning and change. The support provided to address grantees' critical needs should be of such high quality that it increases demand for the services offered.