



SUSTAINABILITY OF OVC PROGRAMMING CASE STUDY

As a principal recipient for the Global Fund, NACOSA was a direct grant manager to 26 CBOs as part of the Global Fund OVC Programme and channelled small grant funding to sub-recipient (SR) organisations. Sustainability of SRs and the services that were provided as part of the grant post-March 2016 was a key concern of NACOSA. This case study explores the contextual, grant- or programme-related and organisational factors related to the sustainability of this intervention.

This case study explores the OVC programme’s exit and the sustainability strategies implemented by NACOSA and their sub-recipients (SRs). First, it defines the concept of sustainability and describes the sustainability efforts by NACOSA as principal recipient. It then takes a best practice versus challenges approach, exploring the challenges and successes faced by organisations and how they have dealt with the issue of sustainability.

“Sustainable services focus on getting a child on their feet rather than creating long term dependence.” – NACOSA Deputy Programme Director

NACOSAS APPROACH TO SUSTAINABILITY

To assist SRs with exit from the grant, NACOSA reported that the following key activities took place:

- Shift to NACOSA’s USAID and PEPFAR-funded OVC Community Systems Strengthening (CSS) programme.
- Programmatic shift from material support to a focus on strengthening community systems.
- Capacity building of SRs
- Advocacy

WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY?

- **Sustain:** Keep something going over time or continuously.
- **Ability:** The power or capacity to do something
- **Sustainability:** The power or capacity to keep something going over time or continuously.

(Oxford paperback dictionary & Thesaurus, 3rd Ed)

Shift to OVC CSS Programme

NACOSA has successfully assisted eight of their SRs (located in the Eastern Cape, Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal) to be contracted for USAID funding from 1 October 2015. These SR were located in the specific geographic areas with a high HIV prevalence that were being targeted through USAID's funding strategy. Through discussions with the SRs and USAID, NACOSA has helped to ensure these organisations will be able to continue providing services to OVC up until potentially September 2017. The USAID and PEPFAR-funded programme has a similar package of services to that of the Global Fund OVC Programme, besides material and nutritional support. The programme is therefore congruent with the shift away from substantial feeding and material support implemented by NACOSA in the Global Fund Phase II Grant. In addition, it is equipping SRs to implement two additional programmes focusing on (a) young women and girls and (b) adolescents and their parents. This will contribute towards capacitating these organisations with experience in implementing programmes compatible with the broader shift in funding priorities from OVC to programmes targeting adolescents and young women and girls.

Programmatic shift

NACOSA defines sustainability at two levels – programmatic and organisational. There were a number of elements of the Global Fund Phase II Programme compared to Phase I that were aimed towards creating sustainability at both of these levels. Phase I provided significantly more material and nutritional support to beneficiaries – nutritional support used to be provided to everyday, for example. However, NACOSA identified that this model would prove challenging when it came to close out at the end of the grant term by contributing towards programme beneficiaries becoming dependent on handouts from SRs.

At close-out this would risk families that had become dependent of the provision of material and nutritional support going without. Therefore, Phase II only provided emergency nutrition in the form of food parcels to children diagnosed as

malnourished for a defined period of time and attempted to tap into existing nutrition programmes. Similarly, material support was limited to the provision of school uniforms to a smaller number of children. This meant that SRs had to consider why and to whom they were providing food, whether it was needed by the child or family.

“When beneficiaries receive sustained support without thought for an exit strategy, services are saturated very quickly often without much thought for the critical needs of the child. This also shuts organisations off from more short term interventions... This type of empowerment approach is difficult for organisations to think about. A level of co-dependence is created – there is no graduation from the programme.” – NACOSA Deputy Programme Director

Capacity Building

The non-financial benefits of the grant, in terms of capacity building, formed part of the sustainability efforts by NACOSA and the Grant more broadly. Capacity building through training and mentoring were two of the key ways NACOSA supported SRs on a number of different levels.

Circles of Support and Child Care Forums: NACOSA trained SRs to implement two low-cost interventions that, once integrated into the organisation's services, were likely to be able to continue beyond the end of the grant terms. The Circles of Support programme for caregivers of OVC and Child Care Forums for community stakeholders helped to bring child rights issues to the forefront of communities and to strengthen community structures to care for and support OVC.

HIV Testing Services: SRs were trained to offer high quality HTS services to children. NACOSA hoped that due to receiving this training and being linked to free test kits sources from clinic, SRs would be able to extend these services to the broader community or charge a fee for HCT. This would help to cover the small cost associated with the service and contribute to its sustainability. In addition, the focus on HCT would strengthen links with local clinics and other role players in health service delivery.

WHAT IS A SUSTAINABLE ORGANISATION?

A sustainable organisation is an organisation that has the ability to continue to survive and render a service over time in a way that is both responsive and speaks to their vision and mission. However, a sustainable organisation also has a sufficient level of flexibility to deal with times of good and not so good funding. When money comes in they might upscale but in lean times [when funding might dwindle] they are not forced to close their doors.

This definition of sustainability speaks to organisational development and the ability of the leadership of an organisation to plan and put systems and programmes in place that are not financially intensive. “This will allow organisations to be ‘lean and mean’ when they need to be and responsive when funding comes in” says NACOSA Deputy Programme Director Caroline Wills, “This may require that boards have a broader perspective or outlook.”

Through their CSS approach, NACOSA has worked to build the capacity of organisations to think about the services they are providing and what the needs of the community are. “They need to be responding at a community and an individual level” said Caroline. A sustainable organisation needs to identify the problems facing a community instead of keeping services going for the sake of keeping them going. Through engaging with the community and key stakeholders in the community and identifying the systemic problems, sustainable organisations are able to be responsive to these challenges and not just address ‘the tip of the iceberg’. Working *with* the community is key in order to provide a sustained response. “Organisations need to engage and work together, rather than compete”, said Caroline.

As funding may fluctuate, planning needs to consider the financial demands of the programme. Addressing a systemic challenge does not necessarily need to be financially intensive or all encompassing.

ART Adherence: 13 NACOSA SRs were trained to offer adherence support and clubs. The aim of this dual funding was to further strengthen links with the community and health services and to allow children and adolescents who test HIV positive to be absorbed into this service.

Organisational Development: NACOSA has attempted to strengthen SRs organisational, financial, management and reporting systems through providing training and mentoring on a number of different topics. These trainings aimed

to strengthen SRs potential for further funding from other international funders and DSD by being able to showcase strong internal systems and processes:

- **Fraud and financial management:** Training on compliance provided by NACOSA was aimed at improving their compliance in terms of financial management.
- **Risk management:** Risk management training focused on getting SR managers and Board members to think about the issue of sustainability in relation to their own organisations and to think strategically around managing the risks associated with transition.
- **Recording/reporting procedures:** NACOSA provided training on the Community Based Information Management System (CBIMS) and provided resources (laptops and modems) to actively use this system. This was aimed at helping SRs to become familiar with the new online reporting system utilised by DSD as a means of demonstrating their services and impact.

Child and Youth Care Worker training: The upskilling of care workers to become qualified Child and Youth Care Workers (CYCW) is in line with DSD’s Isibindi model and the 5-year strategic plan of the Department. At the very least these care workers and organisations for which they work have DSD-recognised qualifications that strengthen the possibility that respective provincial DSDs will be able to absorb the funding of these care workers and/or they will be able to find paid employment.

Mentoring support: Although not direct training as such, NACOSA staff also mentored SRs on- and off-site on finance, M&E and project management which aimed to strengthen their internal systems.

“They are qualified and the thinking was that DSD would be able to take them on as another cadre of staff. They will subsidise the staff, which is really the biggest cost driver.” – NACOSA Deputy Programme Director

Early Notification and Advocacy

The Phase II grant was always intended as a two and a half year grant term and NACOSA

communicated this withdrawal of funding to SRs nine months before the end of the grant term to allow for sufficient time to plan for close out. They have engaged with and encouraged SRs to take steps to plan for the end of the grant.

NACOSA also advocated to a number of provincial and national structures. Advocacy efforts on behalf of civil society organisations in the children's sector have been made to the National Action Committee on Children Affected by HIV/AIDS (NACCA) through the Yezingane Network, as well as the Department of Social Development (DSD).

THE FUNDING LANDSCAPE IN SOUTH AFRICA

The efforts of NACOSA towards sustainability are constrained by the tough current funding climate in South Africa for civil society organisations in the Children's Sector. The end of the Global Fund OVC Grant term accompanies a shift in funding priorities by a number of international donors.

Mapping up to the ward level has meant that donors have been able to identify communities most affected by HIV (particularly in KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga). This 'hot spot mapping' means that resources can go towards providing a package of services targeted towards those hot spots. However, NPOs falling outside the identified districts (for example those in the Northern Cape) may struggle to obtain donor funding no matter how effective their programme.

The premise behind this is that while funders put donor money into certain districts, government will support those districts that fall outside these key districts. However, it is not clear to what extent government has taken on board the case for children. Although NACOSA has advocated to DSD to take over care worker stipends and there is political commitment to funding these posts, DSD is faced with its own funding constraints and grant management challenges. This has delayed the funding of posts.

“There has been a big move internationally away from OVC towards women and girls. There has been a double whammy because it has been accompanied by a shift to a district based approach.”

“An organisation that does OVC work could adapt to a Young Women and Girls' Programme but because government and the international donor community is interested in a saturation approach and going into certain districts or sub districts, some organisations may be 'out of the count'.” – Deputy Programme Director, NACOSA

The Northern Cape has borne the brunt of this shift in funding priorities. Due to low population density and low provincial HIV prevalence, the province has seen the withdrawal of major funders. Such factors detract from 'value for money' services where a large number of a target population can be easily reached. The province is therefore particularly vulnerable with regards to sustainability. Provinces and districts with a high HIV burden and high population density, such as KwaZulu-Natal, on the other hand will see more opportunities for funding in the priority areas of donors. This is especially true for those NPOs falling into 'hot spot' districts that have been identified by donors as sites for intervention.

PROVINCIAL GRANT DISBURSAL

During the period of the Phase II Grant, NACOSA dispersed the grant to implementing partners in four provinces in South Africa: 3 SRs in the Northern Cape, 11 in KwaZulu-Natal, 8 in the Eastern Cape and 4 in the Western Cape who directly implemented the OVC Programme and delivered services to OVC.

NACOSA SUB-RECIPIENTS

NACOSA provided funding to sub-recipient organisations in the four coastal provinces in South Africa (Northern Cape, Western Cape, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal (KZN)). Two provinces are the focus of this case study – the Northern Cape and KZN. These provinces were selected to be the focus of this case study due to the differing way in which these provinces have been affected by the change in the funding landscape in South Africa. Despite the efforts of NACOSA to build organisational capacity and strengthen, it is also the responsibility of organisation and their Boards to sustain their services. This section explores these strategies in more depth.

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES OF SRS IN THE NORTHERN CAPE

Organisations in the Northern Cape were experiencing the loss of large donors and lack of interest amongst national and local corporate social investors to fund services for children in their areas. However, they were taking a number of steps to attempt to ensure the continuation of services and of the organisations¹.



Houses near Prieska, Northern Cape

Exploring local funding opportunities

Despite the challenge for NPOs in the Northern Cape to obtain funding from a major donor, two of the three SRs in the province had approached the local mines for funding. This was identified as a successful strategy that had a history of success. The director from the Noord Kaap Vigs Forum was confident that exploring local funding opportunities, such as from local mines, would be fruitful.

“What we will do and what we have done in the past is to fundraise. In 2014 and 2015 we have been fundraising and that has worked very well so we think that is one thing that works well for us. We fundraise from the local mines here in the Northern Cape...there are a lot of mines in the area...we ask for funding from businesses here in the Northern Cape. We think if we can have at least R20 000 a month we would be able to keep the programme running.” – Noord Kaap Vigs Forum

While the marketing of organisations to local mines and businesses had seen success, for Hospice Moeder Theresa located in Prieska the increasing competition for local funding support was a concern. The programme manager noted that the town was small and there were a number of local NPOs who relied on local business for funding. Whilst they had approached local funders, the feedback was that they cannot give to everyone.

Strong Financial and Management Systems

At Kgatelopele Social Development Forum (Kgatelopele), the recording and reporting systems implemented by NACOSA had helped to strengthen the organisations funding applications.

“It makes you feels so comfortable when you do a presentation for other departments. It has helped us a lot and built us. Your recording is very important. If someone comes to do an audit and you know your stuff and do you recording keeping well, then you will not have a problem. The funders do not like it if your things are not up to standard...Instead of making excuses...just do your work.”
– Kgatelopele



The Kgatelopele team, Northern Cape

Supportive Board Members

The Director from Kgatelopele that a supportive Board was something that worked well for the organisation in terms of sustainability.

¹ Note that this was true for period up until grant close out on 31 March 2016, organisations may since have updated sustainability plans or strategies.

“Most of them are mine representatives and see that if I have secured a stipend, they will try to contribute to that and give some additional funding.” – Kgatelopele

Department of Social Development

The programme manager from Hospice Moeder Theresa felt that DSD was reluctant to provide more funding, as they were already funding their HCT services and family services. However, the organisation was negotiating with local government to take on the care workers, as posts were available with DSD as well as with the Department of Health. The absorption of the OVC care workers by the Department would be a good model for sustainability for the organisation.

Volunteerism, motivation and dedication

Despite the lack of big donors, organisations were somewhat optimistic that the motivation and dedication of staff would help to sustain the organisation and services through this period

“...we might get other funding somewhere and I don’t want to tell those funders that people have just stopped because the funding stopped. That’s why we call ourselves volunteers up until we secure more funding. At least NACOSA is not just leaving us... we have got skill, we have got a certificate. We will go slowly but surely until we get to greener pastures. We are close, we are like family, and that is what is carrying us.” – Kgatelopele

The manager at KSDF has signed the care workers up for the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) in the municipality. The manager was worried that the care workers would not be earning the same that they did before but rather significantly less. Although the organisation acknowledged some care workers may leave for ‘greener pastures’, they were confident that the little they would be getting would help sustain the programme services, staff and organisation in the interim.

“I have made my colleagues ready and given the list of their names to the community works programme...they won’t earn much, it’s about

R600 and something a month. The carers that are working within this community are the ones that have passion for their work. Up until we get funding, they are ready to work for that stipend. They are used to R1600 they won’t be getting but at least they will be getting that R600 and something.” – Kgatelopele

ORGANISATION	KEY STRATEGY
Hospice Moeder Theresa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No new major donor but exploring opportunities for care workers to be absorbed by DSD or DoH Applied to local businesses and other funders for the OVC programme
Kgatelopele Social Development Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No new major donor but applied to local mines and business for financial and in-kind support to keep the OVC programme running Signed care workers up to the EPWP programme to receive a small stipend but will also rely on volunteerism The organisation is also currently funded by DSD and DoH
Noord Kaap Vigs Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No new major donor but applied to local mines and business for financial and in-kind support to keep the OVC programme running

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES OF NORTHERN CAPE SRS

Still a big loss

Despite the steps taken above, all SRs in the Northern Cape were concerned about the future of the care workers and the potential loss of services to OVC households in their respective communities.

“I think after March 27 staff members will be without a job and those 27 people are mostly breadwinners in their homes so it is going to be very bad for a lot of people...Children will not get their services on a regular basis...It will really be a huge blow to our OVCs after end of March.” – Noord Kaap Vigs Forum

For the children that are part of the programme, the organisations reported that they will try to shift them over the DSD OVC programme or make provisions in their existing programmes. In order to make services sustainable, they will look at how services costs can be cut.

“We’re going to carry on as usual and do the best that we can.” – Kgatelopele

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES OF SRS IN KWAZULU-NATAL

Overall, few SRs in KZN expected to be significantly impacted by the end of the grant. Most reported having a number of other additional funders that would help to buffer the effects of the end of the grant term².

New Major Donors

Whereas none of the three SRs in the Northern Cape had received funding from a major donor, five of the eleven SRs in KZN had secured such funding. This included four which had been switched over to USAID through NACOSA. As one director noted:

“From the 1st of October (2015) we have transitioned to get funding again through NACOSA...from USAID for our children’s programme, so the project received a big cash injection and a big expansion from the 1st of October. The programme has expanded rather than closed or shrunk.” – Hillcrest



Rural KwaZulu-Natal

Strong Fundraising Capacity

Both Umvoti and Hillcrest identified the benefit of a strong fundraiser or fundraising capacity within an organisation. Not only was this important in terms of developing effective income generating projects in order to decrease reliance on donors, but also to have success in applications to donors:

“The key is that you have to have a really good fundraising manager ...they know the funders, they know how to pitch proposals, they know how to work reports, they know the lingo around grant application. The technical skills to write grant applications.” – Hillcrest

“Funders like the fact that we have income generation projects. They like that we are not just relying on donors.” – Hillcrest



Hillcrest staff selling beadwork at the International AIDS Conference 2016, Durban

Volunteerism, motivation and dedication

As with care workers in the Northern Cape, SRs in KZN identified the passion and dedication amongst their care workers as a key factor facilitating the continuation of programme services post close out. This was the case for organisations that had not secured additional major donors due to not being located in a priority district.

“I know I’ve tried to be very transparent about where we are with funding. One of the things that’s really a strength is that (although time will only tell how much of a strength it is) is the fact that all of us were doing this voluntarily at the very beginning. And so I think because it’s something we really feel called to do and want to be involved in, I think we will continue to be involved in it. We might kind of revert somehow back to how we were doing it before.” – Thembaletu Care

² Note that this was true for period up until grant close out on 31 March 2016, organisations may since have updated sustainability plans or strategies.

Change in Programme Focus

An organisation's ability to adapt to the broader policy environment is critical to their survival – if they are able to adapt and change their programme focus to align with district or national policy they have more chance of getting resources. This is evident in the sustainability strategy implemented by Umvoti AIDS Centre.

Towards the end of the OVC grant, Umvoti AIDS Centre was approached by NACOSA to apply for a grant to work with HIV positive adolescents and provide a programme of HIV education and adherence (i.e. adherence support clubs). What initially started off as a R375 000 grant to run a classroom based curriculum with HIV positive adolescents and camps has grown into a large multi-donor, long-term intervention. The money from NACOSA was used to build a curriculum that was then bought by the AIDS Foundation of South Africa who are paying to Umvoti to roll out the intervention with 20 other NPOs in KZN. It is also being rolled out in the district with 400 peer educators.

“That particular interveniton has been particularly successful for us...we’ve turned this into something that is sustainable and from R375 000 has earned us R1.7 million. Because the province or district has this focus too, the stakeholder involvement has been very positive. We involve them. Our business plan is to work within government rather than separate.” – Umvoti

Umvoti operates in an NHI pilot district and have a strong district Department of Health. Adherence support is a government objective and part of the national HIV guidelines. Anticipating that the province would expect district to provide adherence support, Umvoti hopes to use the adolescent adherence programme to assist the district or do it quicker. The Director explained that the organisation tries to see and adapt to district and provincial needs before they emerge so the organisations services are in demand by government and other stakeholders.

“We are trying to build a programme, anticipating where the government is going, based on the fact that we know, nationally that our district (umzinyathi) is seen as the leader in rolling out community-based interventions around TB.” – Umvoti

They managed to sell this idea to others and have generated income and interest:

“We are hopefully going to use it and combine it with what we have in terms of adherence support and take the burden off the clinics.” – Umvoti

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES OF KWAZULU-NATAL SRS

ORGANISATION	KEY STRATEGY
Hillcrest Aids Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Been switched over to USAID • Also applied to donor in Switzerland and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation • OVC programme <10% of the organisations funding • Significant proportion of the organisation's income is self-generated • Large number of other donors
Masilenze Izwi Lenkosi Upliftment Initiative (MILUVE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Been switched over to USAID
Ethembeni HIV/AIDS Ministry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Been switched over to USAID
Masibumbane HIV/Aids Mission of The Hilton Methodist Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Been switched over to USAID
Youth for Christ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No major donor secured
Mpilonhle Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No major donor but applications to a number of smaller donors submitted
Thembaletu Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential FHI360 grant recipient and strong links with US faith based organisations • Applications to individual donors in US
Sinomhawu Aids Project - Malenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No major donor but organisation receives funding from DSD and has submitted a number of applications to smaller donors
Khayelisha Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No major donor but strong volunteer capacity and care worker commitment to continuation of services
Umvoti Aids Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applied to and secured funding for other programmes (shift away from psychosocial support for OVC) • AIDS Foundation of South Africa • The organisation is also an Isibindi site and has a number of other donors
Philanjalo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No major donor, OVC programme will be closing and the organisation is focusing on research

LESSONS LEARNED

Despite the efforts by NACOSA to build sustainability in the SRs that were part of the Grant, there are **contextual factors** that affect the sustainability of organisations, including the broader funding landscape. This means that the sustainability challenges facing some SRs are far greater than others.

Despite a **tough funding climate** in the Northern Cape, SRs have taken steps towards securing the future of their organisation and services to vulnerable communities, including securing other funding and committed fundraising efforts.

Organisations in KZN generally seem to have a **more diverse funding stream** whereas organisations in the Northern Cape are relying particularly on fundraising through local businesses and mines in order to ensure organisational and service sustainability. They have drawn on the training and capacity building provided during the grant, to strengthen these activities.

Despite the close out of the grant, **training and assistance with exit and sustainability strategies** to SRs was important. SRs used this training to implement strategies to sustain their organisations. For example, approaching local funders and donors for support; and strengthening organisational structures, administration and management.

Care workers are motivated and have a strong spirit of volunteerism. It is heartening to note that the care workers at both SRs were determined to continue their work with the children and families in their respective communities.

This case study was compiled by Creative Consulting and Development Works (developmentworks.co.za) for NACOSA and NRASD, monitored by the Department for Social Development.



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