



■ Learning Report

STRENGTHENING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Lessons Learned from MOMENTUM

The [MOMENTUM suite](#) of projects aims to holistically improve maternal, newborn, and child health and nutrition, voluntary family planning, and reproductive health (MNCHN/FP/RH) in selected USAID partner countries around the world. While MOMENTUM projects implement activities across a diverse range of country contexts, they share a common [learning agenda](#) with topical areas contributing to iterative learning to ensure MOMENTUM's programs achieve optimal results. Learning from the six MOMENTUM awards generates new evidence for MOMENTUM, USAID, and country and global stakeholders that addresses critical knowledge gaps in the effective implementation of health programs. The learning agenda also contributes to

understanding how to accelerate progress in sustainable development and localization.* Learning topics seek to explore *if and how* MOMENTUM partners and projects achieved success, capturing information on the approaches and adaptations that shape MOMENTUM’s activities.

Achieving locally-led, sustainable development requires resources and efforts to support local actors—who are most familiar with their communities—in assessing their organizational knowledge, skills, and practices and developing implementation strategies to reach their goals effectively. USAID’s localization policies promote collaboration with partner country governments, private sector partners, commercial organizations, and non-profit partners to improve the resilience and capacity of health systems to accelerate reductions in maternal, newborn, and child mortality and morbidity.¹ Health policy makers and program implementers require information and evidence to understand how best to allocate resources and implement strategies that can strengthen capacity and optimize efforts to improve health outcomes for their constituents.

Box 1. Learning Topic and Sub-Question

What capacity-strengthening strategies (whose and what dimensions of capacity [including digital health]) are effective in increasing capacity at the individual, organization, community, and system levels?

What contextual factors influence strategy selection and success (including sustainable development)?

One of the four prioritized learning areas in the MOMENTUM learning agenda seeks to explore MOMENTUM’s contributions to supporting countries toward sustainable development. Under this learning area, the MOMENTUM suite is exploring the question, “What capacity-strengthening strategies are effective in increasing capacity at the individual, organization, community, and system levels?” (See Box 1). Learning generated from MOMENTUM’s capacity-strengthening efforts with its partners can help the suite, and other global health practitioners, adopt evidence-based practices and maximize results. This brief summarizes findings from a learning exploration of MOMENTUM’s organizational capacity (OC)-strengthening work.

APPROACH TO THE LEARNING EXPLORATION

MOMENTUM catalyzes locally-led change and focuses on strengthening the performance of local actors and systems to achieve and sustain results. This is a shift from the traditional definition of capacity as an organization’s ability to manage and receive direct funds from a U.S. government agency. Organizational capacity is best understood as the attributes, skills, and behaviors that enable an organization to perform and add value to the communities it serves. A high-capacity organization uses iterative approaches, feedback, and evidence-based decision-making to adapt and improve its fit within its local system and context. Strengthening organizational capacity leads to improved organizational performance, which MOMENTUM defines as “the joint effectiveness of processes, functions, and activities that create the conditions necessary to achieve development results.”² This includes both operational management and technical functions and activities. The suite’s OC-strengthening activities support a diverse set of local organizations[†] in different countries to improve their performance, resilience, and health outcomes. These activities operate in complex

* Defined as strategic investments in the process of partnering with and strengthening capacity of local actors to jointly improve the performance of a local system and to produce locally valued and sustainable development outcomes.¹

† Defined as individual institutions carrying out activities that affect health outcomes.

environments. Understanding how to address and measure organizational capacity within complex systems is needed to ensure that efforts in building local partnerships also contribute to improved performance and sustained change.

*The Enhanced Organizational Capacity Framework*³ proposes key capacity areas, or domains, that reflect MOMENTUM’s programmatic interests as well as key organizational behaviors that contribute to performance (See Box 2 for more information). While the framework includes different capacity domains, the domains are closely linked as one domain may support behaviors in others. These domains include a focus on an organization’s ability to:

- **Foster Self Determination** – to promote ownership, commitment, confidence, motivation, leadership, and self-direction that catalyze other capacities.
- **Produce Sustainable Results** – to add value for stakeholders and develop systems that aim to sustain that value over time.
- **Align Systems for Agility** – to balance flexibility and control to achieve its purpose and cope with cycles of stability, growth, and change.
- **Learn and Adapt** – to innovate and modify activities and proactively anticipate change using monitoring data.
- **Attract and Sustain Support** – to establish and manage connections, alliances, or partnerships to enhance reach, impact, and stakeholder legitimacy.

Box 2. The Enhanced Framework for Organizational Capacity Development³

MOMENTUM developed an [enhanced framework](#) that considers organizational capacity within a wider health system, taking into account the relationships and contextual influences that affect an organization’s performance. The framework aligns capacity development efforts to the principles of localization and sustainable development, emphasizing the specific behaviors that demonstrate an organization’s knowledge, skills, and culture, which impact its performance and resilience.



The enhanced framework was applied to the MOMENTUM learning exploration on OC-strengthening to understand which organizational capacities MOMENTUM awards are addressing, the strategies they are employing, and which ones have been successful to date. Information and secondary data about each MOMENTUM project’s OC-strengthening activities were collated by reviewing program reports and documents and holding consultations with project staff. The information was then analyzed and mapped to enhanced framework domains to identify the common organizational behaviors being prioritized and the strategies employed with partners to strengthen them.

FINDINGS FROM THE LEARNING EXPLORATION

TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERS AND CAPACITY STRENGTHENING TOOLS

The learning exploration revealed that the MOMENTUM projects are working with more than 100 local partners and implementing many strategies to help strengthen these partners' performance. The MOMENTUM projects operate in a diverse range of countries and contexts; their partners are equally diverse, with varying areas of expertise and focus. Partner organizations or institutions who receive capacity-strengthening support from MOMENTUM include:

- Non-governmental and not-for profit organizations
- Civil society health organizations
- Faith-based organizations
- Community-based/grassroots health organizations
- Youth-led health organizations
- Professional associations (health and non-health)
- Educational and research institutions
- Governmental agencies (national and sub-national level offices)
- Private sector firms and cooperatives
- Private and public health facilities

Local partners engage with MOMENTUM projects to discuss their organizational goals and assess the organizational behaviors or areas that they want to strengthen to improve their performance. These assessments of capacity gaps or needs are often conducted by using tools such as USAID's [Organizational Capacity Assessment](#) (OCA), Pact's [Organizational Performance Index](#) (OPI), Organizational Network Analysis, and the [Integrated Technical Organizational Capacity Assessment](#) (ITOCA). Some of these tools measure capacity directly, while others measure performance, which helps users identify the capacity areas in need of strengthening. The tools are sometimes implemented by MOMENTUM project staff with the organization or are self-administered by the partner organization after receiving training on the tools. The MOMENTUM project staff and their partner counterparts then discuss the results from these tools, prioritize behaviors or skills that the organization wants to strengthen, and then co-develop change action plans that address identified capacity gaps. The organizations often plan to conduct a follow-up assessment later during the implementation period, using the same tool, to assess any changes in capacity or performance after they implement their change action plans.

The organizational behaviors addressed by MOMENTUM activities fit under specific capacity domains from the *Enhanced Framework for Organizational Capacity Development* and are strengthened through different strategies or approaches that may include trainings, mentorship, coaching[‡], providing technical assistance (continuous technical guidance or support to solve specific challenges, such as developing tools/policies or recommending implementation adaptations), or peer learning. Some of the common strategies the MOMENTUM projects use to address each capacity domain and examples of some lessons learned from those activities to date are highlighted below.

[‡] "Coaching" includes structured, performance driven support focused on specific skills led by a coach for their coachee. This is distinct from mentorship, as coaching is usually short-term and involves an evaluation or measurement component to assess performance. "Mentorship" refers to activities where an individual receives informal, longer-term support from a more experienced mentor and does not include formal evaluation or regular scheduled activities.

STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES TO ADDRESS CAPACITY DOMAINS

DOMAIN: FOSTER SELF-DETERMINATION

Organizations that develop and sustain internal commitment to their work demonstrate ownership, agency, and autonomy over their mission. Leadership and internal culture play an important role in cultivating initiative and commitment among staff.

Among the five domains in the framework, this domain is addressed the least by MOMENTUM's projects and partners, though it is a critical element of sustainable development. An example of how MOMENTUM is strengthening partners' ownership and autonomy is the work carried out by MOMENTUM Country and Global Leadership. The project facilitated use of the ITOCA and OPI with the Caribbean Regional Midwives Association (CRMA) to co-create a change action plan (CAP). Their CAP outlined priorities to address gaps in key operational management and technical areas, including governance, program sustainability, strategic communications, program planning and management, and strategic information management and use. MOMENTUM then provided technical assistance to CRMA to develop its first organizational strategic plan to guide CRMA's efforts over a five-year period, in which CRMA articulated its vision to be the premier support mechanism for midwifery associations in the Caribbean. MOMENTUM Country and Global Leadership is continuing to support CRMA in leading regional policy dialogue aimed to further discussions about nursing and midwifery regulation and other identified priorities in the region, a step in actualizing its vision. These actions reflect CRMA efforts to own and carry out its strategic plan.

Box 3. MOMENTUM Strategies Used to Foster Self-Determination

- Provide technical assistance
- Facilitate strategic direction setting
- Train leaders and staff
- Improve & facilitate routine program monitoring and learning

DOMAIN: PRODUCE SUSTAINABLE RESULTS

Effective and successful organizations demonstrate their ability to produce intended results and sustain the quality of their work. In line with MOMENTUM's goal to scale-up and sustain equitable use of quality services, most of its partnerships and OC-strengthening activities focus on organizational capacities that contribute to producing sustainable results. Specific organizational behaviors addressed include project management, project planning and evidence-based design, using monitoring and evaluation data, and delivering health and community services of high technical quality. An organization's technical activities and processes fall under this domain.

Several different strategies are effective in strengthening organizational behaviors to produce sustainable results. Those most commonly used by the MOMENTUM projects include providing technical assistance, coaching and mentoring leaders and staff, and facilitating program monitoring and learning. Many of these strategies are implemented together in an integrated manner. For example, MOMENTUM Routine Immunization

Box 4. MOMENTUM Strategies Used to Produce Sustainable Results

- Provide technical assistance
- Train leaders and staff
- Coach and mentor leaders, staff, or volunteers
- Improve and facilitate routine program monitoring and learning
- Facilitate strategic direction setting
- Provide material resources (e.g., tools, job aids, equipment)

Transformation and Equity co-created an action plan with the National Vaccines and Immunizations Program (NVIP) in Kenya to review county-level immunization performance and to develop strategies to address identified gaps. The project now provides technical assistance, training, and mentoring to the members and leaders of NVIP, including support to improve the quality and use of data for routine immunization services. Specifically, the project provides technical assistance to NVIP leadership to collect and review immunization supply chain data together to support microplanning efforts for immunization services. The activity is ongoing but the goal is that, with this support, members of the NVIP will be able to use service data more regularly to better manage and plan their work to ensure optimal and sustained results.

DOMAIN: ALIGN SYSTEMS FOR AGILITY

This domain is concerned with the managerial, logistical, and programmatic systems that organizations put in place to deliver sustainable programs. Organizations should have systems in place to manage how resources flow into and through the organization so that they are agile and can quickly adapt to shocks or stressors. This requires that organizations practice efficient and clear internal communication to enable informed decision making across different operational teams, moving beyond just financial management ability. This domain is closely linked to the domain to produce sustainable results. Specific capacities that MOMENTUM addresses to improve the agility of systems include functional financial and human resource (HR) management systems, sustainable fundraising processes, and processes to optimize organizational systems.

One example of how MOMENTUM helps organizations optimize their HR systems is the work of MOMENTUM Private Healthcare Delivery project with the Uganda Private Midwives Association (UPMA), a network of private midwives and facilities. One of the capacity gaps prioritized by UPMA and MOMENTUM was UPMA's HR policies and systems. UPMA had an outdated HR manual that lacked standard policies for staff pay, leave, and other labor requirements. MOMENTUM provided coaching to help UPMA update its HR policies, manual, and job descriptions, which UPMA used to fill staffing gaps (See Case Study 1 for more details). MOMENTUM also coached UPMA to hold routine cross-departmental review meetings so that their HR, financial, and operational teams shared information, coordinated plans, and ensured external activities were adequately aligned and supported by internal systems.

LEARN & ADAPT DOMAIN

Organizations and their stakeholders are always evolving. Being able to adapt is critical to being sustainable, which requires continuous learning and adapting to ensure an organization's work is always responsive to the needs of its communities and employees. Organizations that learn and adapt have established feedback mechanisms to improve the quality of their work and guide their performance improvement initiatives. This requires regular data collection and use by all areas of an

Box 5. MOMENTUM Strategies Used to Align Systems for Agility

- Coach and mentor leaders, staff, or volunteers
- Address HR policies and needs
- Provide financial resources
- Facilitate strategic direction setting

Box 6. MOMENTUM Strategies Used to Learn and Adapt

- Train and mentor staff in adaptive management and learning
- Provide technical assistance
- Improve and facilitate routine program monitoring and learning

organization, which is a primary focus of many of MOMENTUM’s OC-strengthening activities. This domain is closely linked to the capacity domain to produce sustainable results, thus many strategies to address capacities that support this domain can also support an organization’s ability to achieve sustained impact. For example, MOMENTUM Country and Global Leadership works with many of its local partners to develop capacity development plans specifically to improve their monitoring and evaluation capacity. The project provides training and mentorship to the staff of partner organizations to improve data management systems and use of data, so that partners can better monitor and adapt program activities to meet their goals. Similarly, the MOMENTUM suite also provides training and mentoring to health workers and staff at public and private health facilities in more than 30 partner countries to improve routine data collection and use and adapt facility-level processes or systems to improve service delivery. The capacities addressed by these facility-focused activities primarily contribute to strengthening quality improvement (QI) initiatives led by dedicated facility staff. Facility-based QI teams receive in-person or virtual mentoring from dedicated quality-of-care mentors, who support the teams to lead QI processes in their facilities. These QI processes entail addressing gaps in data collection, reviewing facility-level data, making improvement plans to address any gaps in data quality and service delivery, and adapting facility-level services or processes to improve service delivery.

DOMAIN: ATTRACT & SUSTAIN SUPPORT

An effective organization needs the financial, social, and political support of its stakeholder network to facilitate its work. Stakeholders can include the community the organization serves, peer organizations, governments, and donors. Cultivating relationships with stakeholders helps to earn their trust and commitment, which contributes to organizational resilience and sustainability. This capacity domain is centered around the ability of an organization to fundraise with diverse donors, cultivate relationships, and regularly communicate with its stakeholders. Among the framework’s domains, this is the second most common capacity domain that MOMENTUM activities seek to strengthen.

MOMENTUM helps its partners to develop and manage partnerships and to build social capital in their communities. This helps to strengthen the partners’ ability to attract and retain support. For example, MOMENTUM Country and Global Leadership paired adult mentors with leaders of youth-led organizations of the International Youth Alliance for Family Planning (IYAFP) to coach them on fundraising, financial planning, and managing FP/RH programs. The mentors help the youth leaders to improve their communication strategies to expand the reach and service networks of their organizations, developing new partnerships with community stakeholders. IYAFP is continuing its mentorship activities with youth leaders currently, supporting them to cultivate their new partnerships and fundraise with donors.

Box 7. MOMENTUM Strategies Used to Attract and Sustain Support

- Coach and mentor staff
- Facilitate strategic direction setting
- Facilitate connections and collaborations
- Provide financial resources
- Address HR policies and needs

CASE STUDIES

The following case studies are three examples of how MOMENTUM is supporting partner organizations in several countries to strengthen their capacity. While to date MOMENTUM awards have not used the new *Enhanced Framework for Organizational Capacity Development* to guide their capacity strengthening efforts, the capacity areas highlighted in the case studies align to domains of the *Enhanced Framework for Organizational Capacity Development*. The case studies underscore the diversity of strategies used by partner organizations and MOMENTUM awards and, where available, share outcomes and lessons learned to date.

CASE STUDY 1 - MENTORING AND BUILDING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY WITH THE UGANDAN PRIVATE MIDWIVES ASSOCIATION TO STRENGTHEN QUALITY FP/RH SERVICES FOR URBAN COMMUNITIES

Capacity-strengthening Approach and Priorities

MOMENTUM Private Healthcare Delivery partners with the Uganda Private Midwives Association (UPMA), a network of 40 private health facilities and providers, to expand access to high-quality postpartum family planning services for urban slum communities in the greater Kampala metropolitan area. The MOMENTUM project provides training and ongoing mentorship to UPMA and its providers to promote adherence to standards of care and strengthen the organization's capacity to improve and sustain the quality of care delivered to clients. In addition to improving service quality across its network, UPMA is working to strengthen its human resources (HR) and financial management systems, as well as its capacity to better support and sustain its work.

MOMENTUM Private Healthcare Delivery's capacity-strengthening approach began at the onset of project activities in Uganda. To identify capacity areas that needed to be strengthened, the project guided UPMA in the use of an organizational assessment tool commonly used by implementing partners, the Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA). MOMENTUM partnered with UPMA to understand why and how to use the tool and adapted it so UPMA could co-lead the assessment. UPMA used the adapted tool to conduct a series of self-assessments of its organizational strengths and weaknesses and joint discussions with MOMENTUM. The assessments and discussions revealed gaps in areas including strategic planning and HR management. These gaps contributed to an internal culture that lacked a unifying mission and appropriate support for staff, as well as hindered the organization's performance. Through discussions with the MOMENTUM project, UPMA's leaders decided to address identified gaps in strategic direction, HR management, and resource mobilization, prioritizing the development of strategic plans and HR policies first, followed by improving organizational finance systems. In addition to operational management capacities, UPMA and MOMENTUM Private Healthcare Delivery are working to improve UPMA's technical capacity as well, specifically the quality of care delivered by UPMA providers.

As a long-established organization, UPMA was used to maintaining the *status quo* in its way of working but had new leadership with limited institutional memory of the organization's founding values. This change in leadership offered an opportunity to address HR and finance-related gaps, refresh strategic priorities and operational policies, and ultimately improve performance. Together, UPMA and MOMENTUM Private Healthcare Delivery developed a plan to strengthen UPMA's organizational capacity and identified performance metrics and benchmarks to measure growth.

Results

UPMA's leadership and staff has been working closely with the MOMENTUM Private Healthcare Delivery project since 2021 to achieve the objectives in its capacity-strengthening plan. Results of these efforts align to domains within the *Enhanced Framework* such as **align systems for agility, learn and adapt, and produce sustainable results**. To date, the project has:

- Convened, mentored, and coached an interdisciplinary team comprised of UPMA staff to jointly identify and implement solutions to address their HR, finance, staffing, and governance challenges.
 - To address the magnitude of the HR management gaps, UPMA hired temporary staff with MOMENTUM support to adapt templates and update their HR manual with policies on staff pay, leave policies, and standardized job descriptions.
 - To improve institutional knowledge and foster an internal culture of adaptive learning and management, UPMA management and staff worked closely with MOMENTUM to prepare quarterly reports from its monitoring data and to conduct regular after-action reviews (AARs) based on findings from the quarterly reports. Now, UPMA jointly leads monthly reflection meetings with MOMENTUM staff to address ongoing challenges as a team.
- To support ongoing reflection and tracking of objectives, UPMA and MOMENTUM conducted a second OCA 11 months after the initial assessment. Improved overall scores were seen across all themes, reflecting increasing capacities.
 - The assessment highlights achievement in several milestones, including operationalization of the strategic and quality assurance plans. Communications have also been improved with the successful reactivation of UPMA's online presence (web and social media)[§] and a fully functional and inducted advisory board to support sustained governance. UPMA's management team received mentorship to develop organizational policies and processes to enforce those policies. MOMENTUM also supported UPMA to establish a board of directors that participated in meetings to set the organization's strategic direction.

Key Lessons

- When initiating a change process that requires shifts in organizational culture, organizations need to utilize participatory approaches to build buy-in and ownership of the change itself. This may take more time, but it is worth the investment. MOMENTUM Private Healthcare Delivery worked closely with UPMA to receive input from all staff on their action plans, strategic direction priorities, and new HR policies. The participatory processes helped to distribute power within UPMA so that a small group of "elites" in the organization was not making all the decisions.
- Every meeting should be coordinated with members of the partner organization's leadership and led jointly by the organization receiving capacity-building and the supporting organization so staff observe their leaders taking ownership of the change. For example, UPMA's leaders, (i.e., the organization's president and program coordinator) were heavily involved in meetings with MOMENTUM Private Healthcare Delivery. Leaders eager for learning and continuous improvement are more likely to help integrate those principles into their organization's culture and values.
- Organizational change requires confidence in the leaders so that staff members trust the process. MOMENTUM Private Healthcare Delivery took time to build relationships with staff after conducting

[§] Website: www.upmauganda.org; Social Media (Twitter): @UPMAofficial

an in-depth assessment of the organization as an entry point. These initial discussions helped build trust between the project and UPMA's staff, facilitating their mentorship relationship.

- Organizations that want to change must invest in developing and supporting their staff first. Organizations willing to invest time and resources to grow their internal HR processes and provide capacity-building and growth opportunities for staff will improve their performance and deliver higher-quality results.
- Developing new organizational policies or processes requires a strong interdisciplinary team of finance, HR, management, and technical staff to focus on the "bigger picture" and ensure all parts of the organization evolve together. To ensure the strategic plans were comprehensive and inclusive, UPMA formed a board of directors comprised of individuals with expertise in different organizational management areas.

CASE STUDY 2 - A SYSTEMIC APPROACH TO STRENGTHENING THE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY OF YOUTH PARTNERS

Capacity-strengthening Approach and Priorities

Sustainable development is embedded in [MOMENTUM's Theory of Change](#) as well as MOMENTUM Country and Global Leadership's project-specific Theory of Change. MOMENTUM Country and Global Leadership emphasizes strengthening partnerships and governance, co-creation and co-investment in system-oriented plans, and individual and organizational capacity development. It takes a systematic approach to providing capacity development support to local partner organizations, consisting of 1) an intake diagnostic using ITOCA, OPI, or other assessment or performance index; 2) co-creating change action plans with partners on specific capacity support areas; and 3) delivering capacity-strengthening through technical assistance, coaching, workshops, or modules.

In addition to faith-based and other community-based partners, the project works with youth-focused and youth-led organizations to increase their organizational capacity and advance positive youth development and youth leadership. MOMENTUM Country and Global Leadership tailored the ITOCA tool to include standards for youth-focused programming in both operational management and technical domains. These youth-focused and youth-led partners work across different geographies and contexts to increase youth participation and youth-led social accountability, improve access to quality health services, and create adolescent-responsive systems, often focused on youth sexual and reproductive health and family planning.

Results

From using ITOCA and OPIs, MOMENTUM and its youth partners have identified opportunities to strengthen several domains of the *Enhanced Framework for Organizational Capacity Development*. These include **producing sustainable results, learning and adapting/aligning systems for agility, and attracting and sustaining support**. Specific capacity areas identified for strengthening include program planning, project management, monitoring and evaluation, learning and adapting, stakeholder engagement, and resource mobilization. The resulting action plans and associated activities have helped to address each youth partner's prioritized improvement areas to advance their goals.

Youth for Sustainable Development (YSD) in Kenya takes a learning-focused approach, continuously monitoring and improving its activities and adding to the evidence surrounding youth-led social accountability mechanisms. In partnership with MOMENTUM, the team meets monthly to discuss activities and reflect on what went well and how to course correct for the future. Meeting participants speak candidly so that timely decisions can improve programming in real-time. As one example of learning in action, team

members shared that during awareness activities and community score card assessments, young people repeatedly mentioned that religious and traditional leaders were creating barriers to accessing sexual and reproductive health information and services. As a result, YSD adjusted their Facebook session and large interface meeting agendas to include religious/traditional leader panelists. They successfully recruited champions for YSD's work for these activities from the religious/traditional community who could speak about the benefits of YSD's work.

MOMENTUM Country and Global Leadership has made organizational development an integral component of its partnerships with YSD and the Ghana-based Youth Advocacy on Rights and Opportunities (YARO). With MOMENTUM facilitation, both organizations undertook a process of self-reflection and self-assessment using the ITOCA tool, followed by the development of a clear change action plan to address identified challenges. In its plan, YARO's self-identified priorities in key areas of organizational management and sustainability. YARO has since developed its first strategic plan and resource mobilization strategy, and team members have received training on USAID financial management requirements and on monitoring and evaluation. YSD put together its first board of directors and developed a board charter to guide them. They also articulated their intention to remain youth-led; to that effect, YSD is developing a succession plan for staff once they are close to aging out of the organization. Other YSD priorities include developing a strategic plan, monitoring and evaluation strategy, and training in financial management and project management.

Key Lessons

- Financial investment in organizational development *from the start* of a project is critical. For example, MOMENTUM Country and Global Leadership seeks to budget at least 20 percent of each partners' funding for institutional capacity towards priorities identified by partners. These capacity-strengthening activities complement and accelerate the partners' abilities to achieve results beyond the project lifecycle.
- Conducting an intake diagnostic (e.g., ITOCA) can be both an assessment and a learning opportunity for the organization that facilitates collective reflection and planning toward self-identified priorities.
- When providing tailored mentorship and technical assistance to youth-led organizations, it is important to:
 - Offer continuous communication and support;
 - Listen and respond to the needs of the youth partner; and
 - Organize monthly learning calls or use other approaches to create a learning journey.
- Youth-led organizations have unique capacity development needs and require tailored approaches to support their management systems and processes. For example, youth-led organizations grapple with whether their boards should comprise some youth or all youth and should develop plans to transition their leadership once they are no longer considered youth.
- Many youth-led and youth-focused partners identified the need to formalize and codify informal processes by updating, developing, and disseminating key policies, strategies, and plans such as strategic plans, annual work plans, M&E, communications, HR, and procurement policies.

CASE STUDY 3 - STRENGTHENING NATIONAL AND SUB-NATIONAL HEALTH SYSTEMS TO IMPROVE COVID-19 AND ROUTINE IMMUNIZATION DELIVERY IN MOZAMBIQUE AND KENYA

MOMENTUM Routine Immunization Transformation and Equity works with public health facilities, local and national governments, and community-based organizations to strengthen their capacity to deliver routine and COVID-19 immunization in countries like Mozambique and Kenya. These efforts help to create systems

where healthcare workers can perform their jobs effectively, make strategic linkages between partners (both traditional and non-traditional), and build trust in vaccine delivery and the health system among communities. The *Enhanced Framework* was designed to fit the non-governmental organization model. Adaptations to the framework’s domains are needed to better match the differences in purpose, incentives, and accountability of other organization types, such as government institutions and community-based organizations. Nonetheless, MOMENTUM Routine Immunization Transformation and Equity’s capacity-strengthening strategies address both governmental and non-governmental partners’ capacities across several domains, such as **producing sustainable results** and **learning and adapting**. Specific capacity areas include project management, stakeholder engagement, data use and adaptive learning, and stakeholder engagement. The following table outlines some of the ways in which MOMENTUM supports OC-strengthening for the national and local governments in Kenya and facilities and community organizations in Mozambique. It also shares outcomes and emerging lessons associated with these efforts.

Capacity-Strengthening Approach and Priorities	Results	Early Lessons Learned
Kenya		
<p>Strengthening the collection, transmission, and dissemination of COVID-19 vaccination data through support to regular data review meetings in Nairobi, Trans Nzoia, and Kakamega county government offices. This strategy was prioritized to improve the accuracy of county-level data reported to the national level and better guide county-level decision-making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced the data backlog and improved coverage--particularly in Kakamega county. • Enabled continuous feedback on performance. • Increased leadership of country-level staff and managers to make data-driven decisions at the county-level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use performance reviews to identify knowledge gaps. • Look beyond what is reported to identify <i>hidden</i> gaps. • Consider data skills and internet capacity in addition to hardware when introducing new technology. • Include capacity-building on adoption of new technology in addition to capacity-building on technical skills and knowledge about vaccines.
<p>Expanding strategic partnerships between immunization actors and other health and non-health stakeholders that can be leveraged further to improve routine immunization access, quality, and utilization. Since many of these partners worked in fields other than immunization, MRITE also provided technical assistance on immunization to these partners. This strategy sought to leverage the strengths of non-traditional partners to advance immunization in Kenya by linking them to the Ministry of Health. Specifically, MRITE provided COVID-19 and routine immunization technical support to both the USAID Kenya Health Partnership for Quality Services partners as well as other non-health, non-immunization partners such as HelpAge.</p>	<p>Integrated COVID-19 or routine immunization into their day-to-day programs and activities with the aim of increasing coverage and access and reducing inequities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantial time is required to identify challenges and create solutions for these types of partnerships. • New partners may require technical assistance to strengthen the continually-evolving skills needed to advance immunization efforts. • Opportunities exist to integrate immunization into other health and non-health programs. These can be facilitated by sensitizing partners on where and how immunization fits into their programs and activities.

Capacity-Strengthening Approach and Priorities	Results	Early Lessons Learned
<p>Supporting the functioning and coordination of the county and sub-county COVID-19 technical and thematic working groups in Nairobi, Trans Nzoia, and Kakamega Counties. Comprised of governmental, non-governmental, and community-based organizations, critical decisions on all facets of vaccine delivery are made in these technical and thematic working groups.</p>	<p>Better planning and coordination of vaccination activities, particularly related to community engagement outreach and identifying challenges and their solutions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination and linkages between community engagement and service delivery remain weak despite their critical importance for vaccine uptake. • Managers often require support in developing skills related to partner coordination and management. • Co-creation with county governments and communities enables partners to prioritize and address their needs. It also creates a sense of mutual ownership among all stakeholders and creates an opportunity for all to understand what is working and where there is need for change.
Mozambique		
<p>Developing a facility-level capacity building system that is competency-based and involves traditional training, on-the-job training, peer learning, and remote support via social networks to reinforce knowledge. This focus sought to create trainings that go beyond traditional, classroom-style approaches to incorporate ongoing reinforcement of knowledge and include peer learning and mentorship.</p>	<p>Strengthened capacity of facility managers to conduct on-the-job training to new and existing staff on a continuous basis. Successful elements included the peer learning and support aspects, mentorship provided by the facility manager, and the use of adaptive learning among facilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy can lead to better engagement of health workers during the learning process, as well as increased awareness and ownership by health workers of their role in driving change. • Building the technical capacity of health workers can improve the design of strategies for identifying and reaching zero-dose or under-immunized children.
<p>Engaging community organizations and leaders in the intervention provinces that can complement facility-level immunization service delivery. Local, social, and behavior change organizations were selected for their community engagement and mobilization experience, ability to collaborate with health system actors, and ability to work in local languages. MOMENTUM partnered with them to conduct organizational capacity assessments and co-create tailored capacity-building action plans focused on</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created a strong social network of community-based partners who understand the importance of vaccinating all children and can help implementation efforts towards achieving this goal. • Planning and mobilizing with community and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select social and behavior change (or other community) partners based on community engagement and mobilization experience, their ability to collaborate with health system actors, and ability to work in local languages. • Working with community-based organizations and leaders helps build the community trust needed to improve vaccine coverage and create a supportive ecosystem that extends beyond facilities.

Capacity-Strengthening Approach and Priorities	Results	Early Lessons Learned
<p>optimizing organizational systems. The project also re-designed its approach to community engagement with influential community and religious leaders in targeted districts to sensitize them to the importance of vaccines and gender barriers to immunization faced by women and girls.</p>	<p>religious leaders helped create strong, trusting relationships with these focal points who are instrumental in facilitating implementation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community political leaders should be engaged and mobilized in planning and implementing project activities since they can provide a trusted link to the health system.

LESSONS LEARNED & KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

At its core, OC-strengthening relies on efforts to cultivate a culture of problem-solving and adaptive learning within an organization to improve and sustain performance. MOMENTUM’s OC-strengthening activities help organizations to identify the internal processes that need to be strengthened, enabling organizations to adapt and deliver improved programming to their external stakeholders. While MOMENTUM is still implementing many of its OC-strengthening activities, the learning exploration generated some early lessons learned and recommendations about their implementation:

- Building and cultivating partnerships to strengthen capacity requires time, clear communication, and inclusive decision-making with various parts of an organization, not just its leadership.
- High staff turnover is one of the most common problems reported by MOMENTUM’s partners. Organizations that are successful in improving performance invest in developing their staff, first and foremost, to foster a culture of growth within the organization and maintain institutional knowledge and capacity. This requires efforts to develop and implement supportive and adaptive HR and financial policies that prioritize staff development and external growth.
- Capacity-strengthening efforts should start with open, honest, and inclusive assessments of performance and needs. Tools such as ITOCA and OPI help organizations assess and explore areas of performance that they do not usually address and can guide discussions to help organizations reflect on and prioritize areas in need of strengthening. This also builds ownership of any solutions developed and ensures that OC-strengthening strategies are responsive to the organization’s needs.
- Efforts to build social capital and accountability of partners are a worthwhile investment, as organizations can create feedback mechanisms to hear directly from their stakeholders about how their activities are received. Providing coaching to organizations to work with community leaders, champions,

Box 8. For More on Adaptive Learning

Adaptive learning is an important capacity for organizations seeking to improve and sustain performance and impact. The [MOMENTUM Adaptive Learning Guide](#) provides information and resources to integrate adaptive learning into the design, implementation, and improvements for MNCH/FP/RH programs.

partners, and donors through participatory approaches builds stakeholder buy-in for their work, which helps to mobilize and sustain stakeholder support.

- The strategies most often being used by MOMENTUM’s projects to strengthen various organizational capacity domains and behaviors are coaching and peer mentoring. Virtual tools, such as WhatsApp and Zoom, are effective platforms to provide one-on-one tailored support when in-person interactions are not feasible.

OC-strengthening strategies can be bolstered by using evidence and data. Strategies should incorporate efforts to strengthen data reporting, collection, and review so that organizations are able to make evidence-based decisions about their activities. This ensures that organizations can adapt and better respond to emerging needs.

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