

MOMENTUM

Country and Global Leadership



AFTER-ACTION REVIEW TOOL

Template for conducting after-action reviews



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MOMENTUM works alongside governments, local and international private and civil society organizations, and other stakeholders to accelerate improvements in maternal, newborn, and child health services. Building on existing evidence and experience implementing global health programs and interventions, we help foster new ideas, partnerships, and approaches and strengthen the resiliency of health systems.

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Suggested Citation

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MOMENTUM Country and Global Leadership adapted this tool with Youth for Sustainable Development (YSD) and Youth Advocacy on Rights and Opportunities (YARO) as part of our work on youth-led social accountability in Kenya and Ghana. This version of the tool can be adapted and used by others in their own youth-led social accountability work.

AFTER-ACTION REVIEW TOOL

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS AND REPORT FORM

BACKGROUND

An after-action review (AAR) is a simple tool to help facilitate reflection and learning immediately after the close of an important activity or event, which may include a critical task, such as development of a work plan; an event, such as a conference or stakeholder meeting; or a discrete program activity, such as a training of trainers or initial mentoring activities. AARs are meant to yield information on managerial and organizational processes specific to that event or activity. AARs should be conducted immediately after the activity while the experience is still fresh in participants' minds. It usually lasts 45–60 minutes. Active and constructive participation by all participants is key to a successful AAR. It is important for AARs to be facilitated in a safe and trusting environment where successes and challenges can be jointly discussed, and no individual should feel that they are being specifically criticized.

METHODOLOGY

WHERE TO INTEGRATE. During the planning phases of an event, schedule an AAR to take advantage of days and/or times when people are already gathering together. It is important to complete the AAR immediately after the event or activity so participants can better recall the details of what happened. [Note: this can take place on site or virtually, depending on your context]

PARTICIPANTS. An AAR should be completed in a participatory way with a representative group of involved stakeholders. It should be led by a facilitator as soon after completion of the event as is feasible, and it should be conducted in an open and honest way. An AAR should take 45–60 minutes.

Optional: Facilitators may consider sending a brief pre-AAR survey to collect initial, anonymous feedback in advance of the AAR using the same questions as the ones that will be asked in the AAR. A question to recognize staff who did an excellent job can be included to start the AAR and establish a positive and constructive tenor for the AAR. The survey does not replace the AAR session.

GUIDING QUESTIONS. AARs help to structure reflection on the experience of individuals involved in a specific activity. AARs are also useful for establishing a shared narrative about the activity and developing recommendations for how the activity could be improved in the future. While questions may be adapted or additional questions included, there are four basic questions that an AAR addresses (and in this order):

1. What did we want to happen?
2. What actually happened?
3. What worked well (and why)?
4. What could be improved (and how)?

DOCUMENTATION. The AAR questions should inform how notes are taken during the AAR, how the AAR is organized, and how the results are shared with participants to review immediately after the AAR session before the AAR report is finalized.

DATA USE AND REPORTING

A brief report should be completed, which should include reflections, learning, and recommendations from the AAR session. The AAR report should be shared with participants of the AAR and other stakeholders for feedback.

ADAPTED AFTER-ACTION REVIEW TOOL FOR YOUTH SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY ACTIVITY

Team/Project Name:

Project Reviewed:

Date of After-Action Review:

Participant(s):

Facilitator:

Was verbal assent and/or consent obtained from all individuals participating?

Yes No

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **What is your experience in youth social accountability mechanisms?**
 - What role do you play? How do you contribute to and/or coordinate with youth-led social accountability mechanisms?
 - How has your role changed over the past year, if at all?

- **What was expected to happen in the youth social accountability project?**
 - What was the purpose and objectives?
 - Who was the audience?
 - What was the initial timeline?
 - Who was involved (Were youth involved? Different age groups of youth? Different genders of youth? Were youth with disabilities involved? Were youth diverse sexual orientations involved?)
 - What outcomes and outputs were intended?
 - What products were to be produced?
 - What facilitators and barriers were expected?

- **What actually happened during the youth-led social accountability project?**
- **What went well and why?**
 - What were the successful steps taken toward increasing involvement of youth in social accountability mechanisms? What went well in the project?

- **What can be improved and how?**
 - What could have been done better? What can we do differently in similar situations in the future to ensure success? What would be your advice to future implementation teams?

NOTETAKING TEMPLATE

What is your experience in youth social accountability mechanisms?	What was expected to happen in the youth social accountability project?
What actually happened during the youth-led social accountability project?	What went well and why?
What can be improved and how?	

REFERENCES

1. Ortiz Echevarria L, Somji A, Ricca J. (2021). *Basic Toolkit: Adaptive Learning in Projects and Programs*. U.S. Agency for International Development, MOMENTUM Country and Global Leadership.
<https://usaidmomentum.org/resource/adaptive-learning-toolkit/>



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