

Development Project Management Plus Deliverable

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DPMI Module: One, Managing Development Projects

[This report contextualizes the attached logical framework. First, the report presents background information on the organization with which I created the logical framework, Nayuchi AIDS Network Services. Second, the report places the framework within the scope of the border project that necessitated its creation. Last, the report evaluates the attached logical framework and generates lessons learned in creating and implementing the logical framework to development project management concepts.]

Organizational Background

Nayuchi AIDS Network Services (NANES) is an indigenous Malawian non-governmental organization (NGO) working in Machinga District. In April of 2003, NANES began as a network of seven community based organizations operating in eastern Machinga District. In December 2008, NANES registered as an NGO with the Government of Malawi under the Trustees Incorporation Act. NANES's mission is to use advocacy and capacity building to ensure that Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC), People Living with HIV (PLHIV), and young people have productive lives. NANES strives to develop communities wherein all targeted vulnerable persons live in an environment that supports health and productive lives by promoting equal access to HIV prevention, care, and support services.

Nayuchi AIDS Network Services' core competency, then, is HIV impact mitigation. NANES has the following programmatic areas: (1) HIV care and support, (2) Gender and Human Rights and (3) Youth and Reproductive Health. Each of these areas has achieved meaningful accomplishments. NANES's HIV care and support activities, in particular, have had outstanding successes. For example, NANES established *Chigonjesto* PLHIV support group at Ntaja Health Center. This support group was the catalyst for introducing an Anti-Retroviral Drug Clinic at Ntaja Health Center. NANES also established the forty member strong *Chisomo* PLHIV support group at *Makwemba* Group Village. NANES's other notable HIV care and support achievements include the following: fostering a cordial relationship with the District Hospital Office; training three OVC Support Groups in income generating activities; and cultivating enough maize to supply ten Community Based Care Centers.

Logical Framework Rational: Proposal Writing

In early 2009, Southern Africa AIDS Trust–Malawi (SAT) noticed NANES's successes, and, on behalf German's bilateral international aid agency (GIZ), collaborated with NANES and three other indigenous Malawian NGOs to pilot transformative gender, HIV projects. These projects

enable SAT to test innovative transformative gender, HIV interventions at the community level and to strengthen the gender mainstreaming skills of social welfare organizations in Malawi. NANES's project helps SAT apply transformative gender issues to HIV impact mitigation by promoting meaningful male involvement in Home Based Care (HBC) and PLHIV Support Groups. NANES's two year project tested new ways of tackling slow community development by decreasing women's vulnerability to HIV, which results from low levels of male involvement in Home Based Care and Support Groups for PLHIV. The project targeted thirty-four percent of the population of Senior Group Village Headman *Makwemba*. Direct project beneficiaries included men living with HIV, male youth, women living with HIV and female youth. This translated to 4,800 people out the over 14 thousand residents living in the 29 village area.

Before project implementation could begin April 2010, NANES had to develop a detailed proposal for SAT. I advised NANES's Executive Director, Chifuniro Miro, and Program Manager, James Tsegula, on writing this proposal. The attached logical framework was an integral proposal component. NANES's preliminary research, which analyzed secondary data, verified that women far out numbered men in HIV care and support activities. Four out of 18 HBC volunteers were men; while nine out of 43 HIV support group members were men, and 12 out of 36 OVC volunteers were men. After conducting participatory research with key stakeholders, NANES discovered that several factors contributed to the area's low level of male involvement in HIV care and support activities. Economic disincentives were one driver. Men received no direct financial benefits from participating in care and support activities. Additionally, men were too busy looking for money through productive tasks, and, therefore did not have time to participate in care and support activities.

Cultural and religious traditions further compounded the problem. Matrilineal land ownership, for instance, decreased men's incentives to take part in community development activities, including HIV care and support activities. Islamic tradition also limited men and women from freely associating in groups. Men holding authoritative positions, furthermore, felt demeaned when they joined care and support groups, which held low status. Polygamist arrangements, likewise, decreased the amount of time men had to attend support group meetings or be involved in HIV care activities. Gender stereotypes also contributed to low male involvement: Malawian men are socialized to view care giving as women's work. Men also feared that once they disclosed their status, they would fail to access as many female partners. Unfortunately, the attached logical framework could not explicitly state all the assumed drivers of low levels of male participation in HIV care and support activities.

Logical Framework Review

This logical framework (logframe), however, did have six major strengths. First, the logframe created an accurate schedule of activities. The logframe forced NANES staff to decide the activities that complemented and coincided with others that would achieve the same output. Second, the logframe served as a clear project summary. Partnering organizations like Machinga District's Health Office read NANES's logframe and easily comprehend the projects overall goals, purpose outputs, and activities. This enabled the district to buy-into the project quickly. The logframe therefore supports DPMI Module Two's point that clear communication strengthens partnerships.

Third, the logframe helped NANES staff members compare planned outputs and activities with actual results. For example, NANES used the logframe's indicators to create an indicator monitoring matrix. Fourth, although the logframe that NANES submitted to SAT had some logical flaws, the logframe in the appendix uses a clear "if-then" logic. Fifth, the logframe uses both qualitative and quantitative indicators. Qualitative indicators helped the project track how it achieved certain results and will thereby help NANES produce lessons learned during the project's documentation and presentation stages. Finally, the logframe's indicators adhere to DPMI Module One's quality, quantity, time, and place maxim for indicator construction.

Making and using this logframe, however, posed challenges. First, the project design team went against DPMI Module One's advice of using the logframe as a basis for project design. NANES, instead, developed its logframe after choosing activities the organization wanted to implement. The following factors stunted the logframe's development process: (1) SAT required a logframe only after seeing NANES's preliminary proposal thereby reinforcing the idea that the tool was a bureaucratic requirement; (2) NANES staff members were new to the logframe process and did not understand its significance in project design; (3) NANES did not involve key stakeholders and primary beneficiaries in the logframe creation process, so the logframe design team did not have the necessary clout to change previous decisions that were derived in a participatory environment, which aligned with DPMI Module Three's recommendations.

Second, NANES did not agree with DPMI Module One's perspective that a logframe is a living document. After submitting the logframe and the overall proposal to SAT, NANES's senior management viewed the tool, and the project it summarized, as a static, legal document. SAT's approval and funding were contingent on NANES's implementing the proposed activities. My advice to revise the logframe fell on deaf ears. The project was locked in place.

Third, due to funding constraints, some logframe's activities were insufficient to achieve its outputs. Fourth, some outputs and activities have too few indicators; while other higher level changes rely on proxy indicators. Use of proxy indicators dragoon the question of validity: Does the indicator measure what it claims to measure? The use of proxy indicators, however, allowed the project to interpret and use available data more easily. This practical advantaged outweighed the latter technical concerns.

My creating and using this framework in Malawi has taught me a valuable lesson: A participatory logframe creation process must be used during project design. Management should not squeeze logframes into proposals to fulfill external requirements. Last minute perfunctory attempts at strategic thinking do not make up for poor strategic thinking at the outset.