Chapter IV
MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS

What is a management information system?

MIS is a dynamic, integrated, and cyclical approach to program management.

A Management Information System[1] (MIS) is the system or process that generates information utilizing the data necessary to manage an organization[2] or project effectively. (See definitions of "information" and "data" in text box.) It is a dynamic, integrated, and cyclical program management approach that improves decision-making, facilitates change, and enhances the demonstration of results and impact. It unifies the language collaborators use with each-other, reinforces understanding, and magnifies the value of their work.

With the expertise of the EnCompass team, the CAAHT staff and stakeholders developed an innovative MIS approach specifically for anti-trafficking work, grounded in Appreciative Inquiry (AI) methodology. Appreciative Inquiry techniques enable practitioners to focus on identifying "what works" rather than the more familiar problem-oriented approach to management (i.e., "what is not working"). It also emphasizes the power of questions. This is exceptionally helpful in a field where practitioners must often confront on a daily basis the elusive and distressing realities of trafficking of children and women.

INFORMATION is knowledge gained through study, communication and research.

It makes meaning of DATA, i.e. numerical / statistical input as well as qualitative facts, research, and observations.

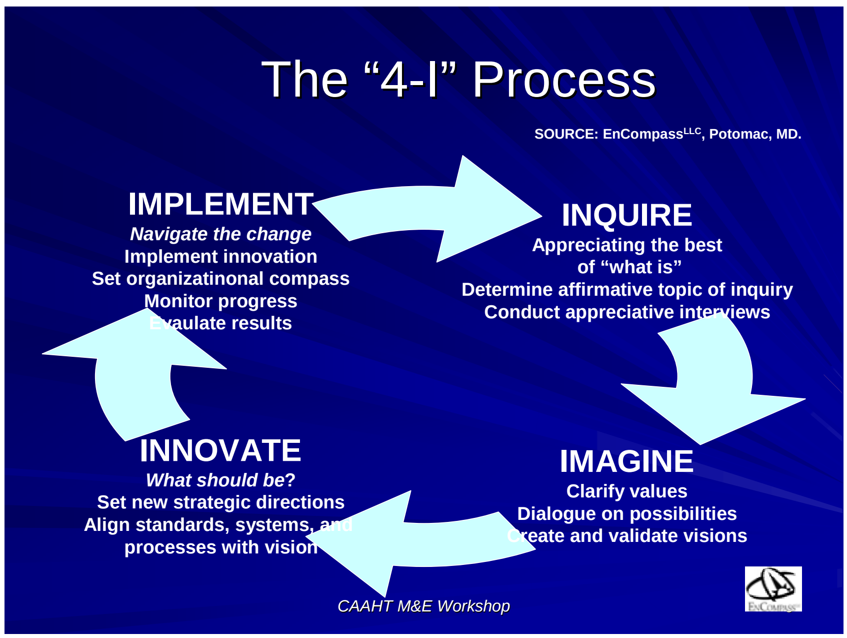


Chart 1: The "4-I" Process

---

[1] The phrase Management Information System is found more commonly in business and computer management theory. Many of the principles in those disciplines are reflected in this description. However, it should be recognized that the MIS approach described in this chapter is for the purpose of management of anti-trafficking systems focused on assistance to vulnerable populations.

[2] Throughout this chapter, the term "organization" is used to designate both government entities and civil society organizations.

> *Appreciative Inquiry techniques focus on identifying "what works" rather than the more familiar problem approach to management.*

The MIS approach introduced by the CAAHT program uses the "4-I" appreciate management cycle shown in the diagram in chart 1. (It is described in more detail in section I of this chapter "Appreciative Inquiry".) This dynamic cycle incorporates the monitoring and evaluation system of the organization by providing a framework for continuous use of the information gathered. It also encourages regular reflection on the targets, outputs and outcomes of the monitoring system to ensure that they sufficiently capture the value of the programming underway.

MIS enables the management, staff and stakeholders of the program or organization to answer questions such as:

- Where are we?
- What do we want to achieve?
- How will we achieve it?
- What do we need to know?
- Who should do the monitoring?
- For whom?

Management information system implementation and tools

> *A Management Information System incorporates all of the activities, instruments and procedures necessary to follow the "road map" of a comprehensive project management plan.*

A Management Information System incorporates all of the activities, instruments and procedures necessary to follow the "road map" of a comprehensive project management plan in chart 2.

Chart 2: The Management Information System Road Map.

To begin the project and MIS design, the "4-Is" process – Inquire, Imagine, Innovate and Implement – can be used in order to:

- develop a program logic model
- clarify the program's purpose
- identify the program's stakeholders
- develop the program's measures/indicators
- develop a monitoring and evaluation plan for the program

Well-constructed data gathering instruments are key to success, they enable data to be consolidated and compared among implementers and over the life of the project.

Initial data gathering is an essential first step. Information needs to be acquired to determine the "why, where, what, and how" of the initial program design. This information gathering process can be a fairly simple process of desktop research and interviewing knowledgeable community members. However, for programs that intend to create significant change in the community, a more complex process of researching and establishing a baseline of information may be necessary. Either way, it is important to identify:

- What data do we already have?
- What data do we need?
- How will we acquire that information?
- How will we record and retain the data for later use?

Appreciative Inquiry techniques focuses program managers and stakeholders on emphasizing "what works", energizing people to build on successes and resolve obstacles to successful program results. This methodology is described in more detail in section I of this chapter.

Well-constructed data gathering instruments are also key to success. Use of common instruments between different program areas and by multiple project partners enables the information to be consolidated and compared across project implementers and over the life of the project. Instruments can vary from the simple participant registration sheet to many-columned Excel spreadsheets with quantitative and qualitative data. Several instruments designed and used by the CAAHT program are presented in section 2 of this chapter.

The CAAHT program and several of its implementing NPO partners found that good information management requires a skilled employee who carries primary responsibility for designing data gathering tools, training staff and partners in data collection, consolidating quarterly and annual data, and supporting the project management to use the information for reporting and other project management activities. Discussion of the role and responsibilities of a monitoring and evaluation staff member is presented in section 3 of this chapter.

What key factors contribute to successful creation of an MIS system?

- Curiosity; an interest in discovering new information and angles that help inform the project
- A collaborative program team (staff or volunteer) whose members are willing to share their knowledge with each other.
- Sufficient planning and initial research time at the beginning of the program to acquire baseline information and apply it to designing the project work and monitoring plans.
- A team commitment and schedule to systematically update and review MIS data and information throughout the life of the program.
- Flexibility from the program team and stakeholders to enable adjustments in the project in response to information learned during implementation.
- At least one computer for data storage and processing.
- An internet connection to increase access to information within the country and from around the world; staff or volunteers with internet research skills.

Defining success and measuring impact

Organisations can judge how successful the implementation of an MIS system has been by considering the following criteria:

- Level of use – how actively is it used (frequency and types of inquiries)?
- Level of user satisfaction - Do users find the system useful?
- Impact of the MIS - How well have the objectives originally adopted in the MIS plan been achieved?
- Institutionalization of the MIS system - has it become part of the regular management practice of the office or organization?

Curiosity and an interest in discovering new things is key to a successful MIS.

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS TOOLS

1. Appreciative Inquiry[3]

Description

The CAAHT program introduced Appreciative Inquiry methodology as a new organizational development approach for its own program management as well as to build the capacity of government and civil society anti-trafficking actors in Albania.

Appreciative Inquiry is a group process that inquires into, identifies, and further develops the best of "what is" in organizations in order to create a better future.

What is Appreciative Inquiry?

Appreciative Inquiry is a capacity-building process that:

- values the organization/community and its culture;
- honors the past and provides continuity during transition;
- identifies and builds on assets and strengths versus focusing on problems and deficiencies;
- builds collaborative competence through dialogue;
- discovers common ground and shared vision; and
- creates commitment to action.

Theoretical Framework of the Appreciative Approach

The "*appreciative approach*" used in the CAAHT program is based on *Appreciative Inquiry* (AI), a philosophy and approach to change and transformation in organizations and communities. *Appreciative Inquiry* was developed in the mid-1980s by David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva at the Weatherhead School of Management at Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland. This approach has been used successfully in business, government, manufacturing, health systems, the nonprofit sector, schools, and churches in the U.S. and Europe, and in developing countries. (http://ai.cwru.edu)

Its basic concepts are:

- Image and action are linked. Research from the fields of medicine (Placebo effect), education (Pygmalion dynamic) and human behavior and sports psychology show the power of these concepts. The images that exist within us are a powerful reality. Successful organizations and communities have a positive vision and images that lead to action.

[3] Most of the text in this section is quoted from the book Reframing Evaluation Through Appreciative Inquiry, Hallie Preskill and Tessie Tzavaras Catsambas, Sage Publications: 2006 or handout materials from trainings by EnCompass.

- Organizations move in the direction of the questions they ask. The questions we ask determine what we find. What we find becomes the data from which we construct the future. AI seeks to find and understand successes and innovations to discover the passion, excitement and the deepest values of an organization or community to inspire movement toward its preferred future.
- Valuing the best of the past provides continuity in times of transition and change. When the past is honored, people are enabled to build on past successes to create a better future. We find it easier to let go of what must be left behind, and take forward the best of the past. Resistance toward change is greatly reduced.
- Organizational and community realities are not fixed. Change is constant. Patterns, systems and structures created by people and communities are open to change. Through inquiry and dialogue, we create new images, which lead to new actions, which in turn, create new realities. Organizations can build an affirmative competence when they pay attention to their progress and innovations.
- Building appreciative skills is a key leadership task. Appreciative leaders develop the capacity to see past problems (e.g. what we don't have or can't do) to potentials (what we do have, what we can do) and enables learning through dialogue, imagination, creativity and action.

Appreciative Inquiry is a strategy for intentional change and a process of collaborative inquiry that enhance cultural identity, spirit and vision.

Appreciative Inquiry is:

- A strategy for intentional change that identifies the best of "what is" to pursue dreams and possibilities of "what could be"; a cooperative search for the strengths, passions and life-giving forces that are found within every system and that hold potential for inspired, positive change.
- A process of collaborative inquiry, based on interviews and affirmative questioning, that collects and celebrates "good news stories" of a community; these stories serve to enhance cultural identity, spirit and vision.

Objectives

Using an Appreciative Inquiry approach stimulates creativity, encourages staff and stakeholders to participate, and compounds success.

Outcome or Impact

- Change in basic orientation from problem-focused to possibility-focused.
- Clarified or enhanced sense of identity, shared values & culture.
- Established climate of continual learning & inquiry.
- Renewal of group energy, hope, motivation & commitment.

- Increase in curiosity and wonder.
- Systemic changes in culture & language (e.g. increase in cooperative practices and & decrease in competition; increase in ratio of positive over negative comments; increase in affirmative questions and/or narrative-rich communication).
- Improved working relations and conflict resolution.
- Decrease in hierarchical decision-making; increase in egalitarian practices & self-initiated action.

Implementation

Appreciative Inquiry is a dynamic management approach based on the "4-I" process:

- *Inquire*
- *Imagine*
- *Innovate*
- *Implement*

The 4-I Process

The Appreciative Inquiry process for organizational learning and transformation is based on the "4-I" Model[4] – Inquire, Imagine, Innovate, Implement shown in Chart 1 at the beginning of this chapter. Each of these phases is described briefly below:

Inquire (Discover).

Phase One is for the discovery and appreciation of the best of "what is" by focusing on peak moments of organizational excellence from the organization's history. In this phase, organizations discover the unique factors (e.g., leadership, relationships, culture, structure, rewards, etc.) that made those moments possible. Organizations become capable of innovating to the extent that they can interpret their histories for positive possibilities. This builds the capacity for effective management of organizational continuity during times of change. Members become ready to let go of parts of the past, and become aware of what they want to take into the future.

Imagine (Dream).

In this phase organizations challenge the *status quo* by envisioning more valued and vital futures. Images of the future emerge out of the stories and examples from the best of the past. They are compelling possibilities because they emerged from the extraordinary moments of the organization's history. Organizations have a tendency to move toward the shared, positive images of the future. Together, the organization creates a positive image of its most desired and preferred future. They take the best of "what is" to "what might be" by asking, "What is the world calling our organization to become?" The organization is enabled to go beyond what it thought was possible.

Innovate (Design).

The goal of the innovation phase is to envision how the organization should be designed to fully realize the shared dreams and ideals. Organizational elements, or the "social architecture" (values,

---

[4] This model was developed by EnCompass. It is a variation of the "4-D" process – Discover, Dream, Design and Deliver – created by Cooperrider.

leadership, culture, staff/people, structures, strategy, communications, processes, practices, results, etc.) are first identified. Then the organization creates "provocative propositions," or "possibility statements," about what the organization would look like if it were doing more of its "bests." In this phase the organization begins to set new strategic directions and creates alignment between its visions of the future and its systems and processes.

Implement (Deliver).
The task in this phase is to "set the organizational compass." It is a time of continuous learning, using monitoring and appreciative evaluation tools and processes, and improving or making course corrections in pursuit of the shared vision. The momentum and potential for innovation, creativity, and productivity is very high by this stage of the inquiry. This must be nurtured by leaders with mindful attention to growing an appreciative learning culture and awareness of the adaptive challenges of change.

Appreciative Inquiry is about the search for the best in people, their organizations, and the relevant world around them.

Appreciative Inquiry is about the search for the best in people, their organizations, and the relevant world around them. In its broadest focus, it involves systematic discovery of what gives "life" to a living system when it is most alive, most effective, and most constructively capable. AI involves, in a central way, the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system's capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential. It centrally involves the mobilization of inquiry through the crafting of the "unconditional positive question" often-involving hundreds or sometimes thousands of people.

Appreciative Inquiry principles are adapted and customized to each individual situation; the full AI process typically includes:

1. selecting a focus area or topic(s) of interest;
2. interviews designed to discover strengths, passions, unique attributes;
3. identifying patterns, themes and/or intriguing possibilities;
4. creating bold statements of ideal possibilities ("Provocative Propositions");
5. co-determining "what should be" (consensus re: principles & priorities); and
6. taking/sustaining action.

For more information about Appreciative Inquiry and its many applications, visit the *Appreciative Inquiry Commons* website at http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/.

Cost considerations, timing & complexity

The philosophy and much of the methodology of Appreciative Inquiry can be applied with no additional costs to a program. However, it is a wise investment to hire a trainer/consultant to train and advise the organization, at minimum during the first use of these techniques in the organization. The intensely participatory nature of AI necessitates sufficient investment of time to enable staff and stakeholders to cooperatively gather and analyze data and information. If this entails a large number of people, there may be substantial costs incurred for meetings and surveys.

Complementary activities

Appreciative Inquiry techniques can be applied with all the tools and activities presented in this Toolkit.

Programmatic prerequisites

Organization staff and stakeholders need a clear understanding of the core principles and techniques of Appreciative Inquiry. In other words, they need to clearly understand why they are doing this and how it could be used in different areas of their work.

Other important prerequisites include:

- Curiosity; an interest in discovering new things!
- A collaborative program team (staff or volunteer) whose members are willing to share their knowledge with each other.
- Staff members and stakeholders who are ready to be active agents of AI technology; they are the heart of effective AI.

Questions to ask before beginning this activity

- Are we willing to start following another road and being open to using new approaches in our organization?
- What resources do we need to do so?
- How will we prepare our staff and stakeholders to use Appreciative Inquiry?
- Who will be the leader on this task?
- How are we going to help our staff and stakeholders to change from asking questions focused on “what is going wrong” to “what is our best”?
- How can management staff model these attitudes and behavior?

Lessons learned

- Appreciative Inquiry makes people more motivated because it builds on what they can do best and how to do more of this.
- Using AI methodology attracts greater cooperation from government and civil society actors. They feel valued and involved.
- Appreciative Inquiry “opens the doors” to collecting valuable information.

- It makes people feel comfortable sharing and discussing problems without the fear of being "controlled."
- Appreciative Inquiry can be used in all aspects of the work, e.g. project design, monitoring and evaluation, financial monitoring, staff management, problem solving, conflict resolution, etc.
- Use of Appreciative Inquiry in project management increases the likelihood of achievement and success.

For more information, please contact

Creative Associates International, Inc.: www.caii.com
Sylvia Ellison, Senior Associate: SylviaE@caii.com
Sarah Stephens, CAAHT Chief of Party: SarahS@caii.com
EnCompass: www.encompassworld.com
The Albanian National Training and Technical Assistance Resource Center (ANTTARC): ngoc@abcom.al
CAAHT staff trained in Appreciative Inquiry:
Alketa Gaxha, Grants Manager
Dolor Tozaj, Local Program Coordinator
Elvana Gadeshi, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist
Entela Lezo, Finance Manager
Etion Parruca, Assistant for Administration and Resources
Ines Xhelili, Local Program Coordinator
Shpresa Spahiu, Social Services Specialist

2. Data gathering & processing instruments

Description

Careful collection and retention of data is the underlying platform that enables the creation of meaningful information for program management and evaluation. Data can be collected in a variety of ways that range from simple to complex. The complexity of the instrument or system should be appropriate to both the nature of the work and the skill level of the people who will have to ensure the data input. Types of data needed to manage anti-trafficking programs include stakeholder contact information, attendance records for activities, records of services provided to beneficiaries, etc.

For programming with many elements of activity, a database can be an efficient and useful instrument. A database is a collection of data that is organized so that it can easily be accessed, managed, and updated. Databases are sometimes classified according to their organizational approach. The most prevalent approach is the relational database, a tabular database in which data is defined so that it can be reorganized and accessed in a number of different ways. The CAAHT program designed several such databases using the Excel computer application to gather information about awareness raising activities, prevention services, and services provided to victims of trafficking. These are described in more detail in the implementation section that follows.

Careful collection and retention of data is the underlying platform that enables the creation of meaningful information for program management and evaluation.

The CAAHT program discovered that virtually all its program partners (government and civil society) that have computers[5] use the Microsoft Windows and Office applications. After assessing the computer and human resources of its partners, the CAAHT program decided to develop its databases using Excel, rather than the more sophisticated Access database application in Microsoft Office. Excel has sufficient "power" and is more accessible for a breadth of program partners in the country. In general, the quantity of data being consolidated is manageable in the Excel workbook structure.

The data contained in the CAAHT-designed databases also can be used with more sophisticated data analysis tools. In Albania, academic institutions and research organizations like the Institute for Development Research Alternatives (IDRA) can process this data with SPSS software (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, recently re-branded as PASW

[5] In Albania, virtually all civil society organizations have at least one or two computers. As of August 2009, this was not yet true for government offices. Additionally, in many cases, the computer equipment that does exists in offices of government officials is not readily available for the staff who carry the main responsibilities for data input and analysis. There also is a dearth of access to the internet in Albanian government offices.

– Predictive Analytics Software). This computer application enables calculation of cross tabulation[6] and frequency[7] of different types of data and can generate useful tables, charts and graphs for analytical purposes. Two examples of reports written based on extensive use of SPSS generated material are the CAAHT impact assessment reports on grantee awareness raising activities produced by IDRA, which are included in the Toolkit Resources CD.

The full anti-trafficking picture can only be painted through cooperation and consideration of data from both government and civil society sources, and from the varied sectors of law enforcement, social services, education, health, etc.

Similarly, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software can generate maps of data that is retained with geographic location notation (e.g. *qarqe*, municipality/commune). In 2003, the USAID Albania Mission invested in the software and staff training to establish a GIS unit. That unit has assisted the CAAHT program by creating maps to interpret the geographic impact of the country and to analyze some of the dynamics of human trafficking revealed through data from the cases of victims of trafficking. In the Toolkit Resources CD, see the CAAHT report, *The State of Efforts in Albania to Combat Trafficking in Persons 2007 – 2008*, Chapter 1 for examples of the use of such maps.

The Ministry of the Interior, with the technical support of the US Embassy International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance program (ICITAP) has created The Integrated Information Management System (TIMS) for the Albanian State Police. The TIMS database has distinct compartments, under restricted access, for: (i) Border Control Information System (BCIS); (ii) Standardized Case Reporting Information System (CRIS); (iii) Criminal Investigations Management Information System (CIMIS); and (iv) Criminal Records and Intelligence Information System (CRIIS). It is used by the government as the primary source of data about trafficking in persons in Albania.

The Office of the National Coordinator on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings is responsible for coordinating the data gathered through the ministry focal point officers on the National Anti-trafficking Task Force, the *Regional Committees in the Fight Against Human Trafficking* and civil society. This process is coordinated with the data gathering systems of each of these entities.

Meaningful data about human trafficking is difficult to collect. Since human trafficking is criminal activity, information about it is intentionally obscured by the perpetrators. Much of the data collected about victims of trafficking is consolidated through law enforcement channels as described in the previous paragraph. This tends to focus the data that is needed for purposes of investigation, rather than for the purpose of understanding and assisting the victims of these crimes. Data retention can also be unduly influenced by political or institutional interests.

---

[6] Cross tabulation displays the joint distribution of two or more data variables.

[7] In terms of anti-trafficking programming, frequency would usually mean the number of times a type of event occurred in the program.

The full anti-trafficking picture can only be painted through cooperation and consideration of data from both government and civil society sources, and from the varied sectors of law enforcement, social services, education, health, etc.

Objectives

- To collect comparable data through use of unified instruments for data collection.
- To enable data analyses for the specific areas of the work being conducted.
- To help anti-trafficking offices and organizations in the decision making process.

Outcome or Impact

Availability of accurate, current, and comparable data about anti-trafficking efforts in Albania.

Implementation

Decisions about what data is needed for program management and evaluation need to be made early in the program planning process.

Decisions about what data is needed for program management and evaluation need to be made early in the program planning process. Data gathering does not need to be too complicated. However, careful planning and testing of data gathering instruments as well as training for those who will be responsible for data input will enable a smooth and accurate process of data retention.

Ideally, a baseline of current data before the program activities begin is created against which change will be able to be tracked. For example, if awareness raising is going to be conducted, a baseline survey can be made of the level of awareness and knowledge about human trafficking that the target population has. This information can then be used to determine what further information is needed and how it will be conveyed. At the end of the awareness raising campaign, the same survey instrument should be used again with the same target population to determine what change in their awareness and knowledge has occurred due to the activities in which they participated. Baseline research also is an excellent way to introduce the project to stakeholders and begin identifying target beneficiaries and implementation partners.

CAAHT database instruments

A major contribution of the CAAHT program to anti-trafficking work in Albania is the development of a set of simple, standardized Excel database instruments accepted by many organizations throughout the country for the purposes of recording data about their beneficiaries and activities. Each of these instruments is described briefly below. Each instrument and accompanying guidelines for use are included in the Toolkit Resources CD.

A distinct feature of these instruments is the “drop-down menu” used for most column categories. This makes it simpler to insert data and allows for easy sorting and reviewing of the data. It captures key information by geographic units, which enables detailed analysis of patterns of recruitment, exploitation, and reintegration.

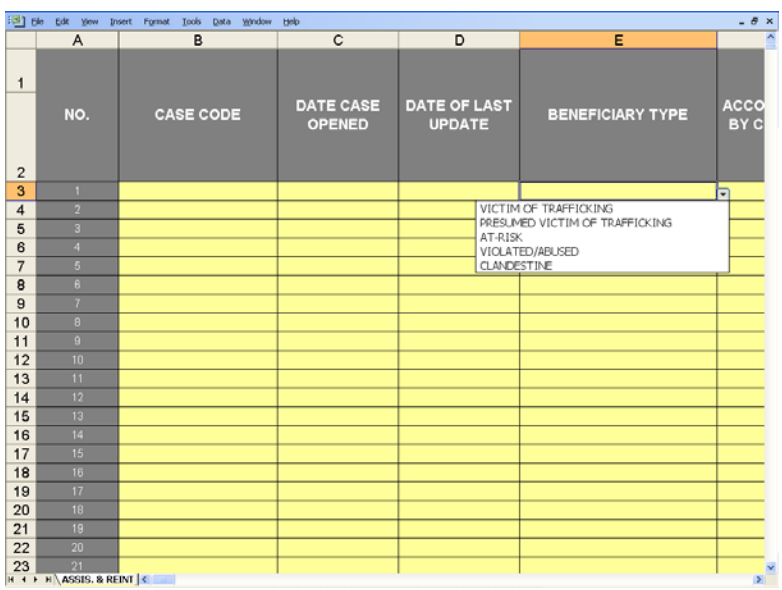
It is possible to link these instruments into a more complex database, using the Access application in Microsoft Office. This requires substantial training as well as design time.

CAAHT stakeholder contact database

This is a comprehensive list of government, civil society and international partners associated with the CAAHT program. It includes names, position titles, institutions, addresses, phone/fax numbers and email addresses for all the stakeholders (remaining in Albania) that cooperated with the CAAHT program, regardless of whether they currently hold the position. The complete database may be found on the Toolkit Resources CD. The data in it was last updated in August 2009.

Shelter beneficiary case database instrument

The CAAHT/National Anti-trafficking Shelter Coalition database on counter-trafficking shelter beneficiaries consolidates information about victims of trafficking and others who receive assistance and reintegration services from shelter providers. The most important element of this database is that it enables all partners to report and compare data about individual beneficiaries without the inclusion of personal identifying information such as name, address, phone number, etc. This meets the highest standards of personal data protection, consistent with European human rights protocols. The instrument, and guidelines for its use, may be found on the Toolkit Resources CD.



The CAAHT program worked closely with the member organizations in the National Anti-trafficking Shelter Coalition to create this common case record database instrument to collect non-personal identified information on their beneficiaries. Expert technical advice was also provided by the staff of the ONAC. Although the case code technique helps protect the privacy of the beneficiary, it is important to note that this database includes CONFIDENTIAL information. Access to the data should be carefully managed by the responsible organizations.

Community services case records database instrument

This workbook contains one worksheet. It is structured similar to the shelter beneficiary database instrument, and is intended to capture information about the constellation of services provided to a particular beneficiary. It assists case management of a prevention plan for either children or adults. It also uses a case code system to protect the privacy of the beneficiary, while tracking information about the variety of assistance this person receives over an extended period of time. The instrument may be found on the Toolkit Resources CD.

Awareness raising activities database instrument

This workbook contains two worksheets. The "Participants" worksheet records the names, addresses and other contact information for all people who attend awareness raising activities. This creates a database of knowledgeable people who may be contacted again to cooperate in other anti-trafficking efforts. The second worksheet titled "Awareness Activities" records event information about awareness raising activities conducted by the organization. The instrument may be found on the Toolkit Resources CD.

Training database instrument

This workbook contains two worksheets. The "Trained People" worksheet records the names, addresses and other contact information for each person who received training from the organization and its partners. This creates a database of knowledgeable people who may be called upon to contribute to anti-trafficking efforts in the future. It can be especially useful for *Regional Committees in the Fight Against Trafficking* because it identifies government and civil society representatives in the local community who can advise and support their efforts. The second worksheet titled "Training Activities" records event information about awareness raising activities conducted by the organization and its partners. The instrument may be found on the Toolkit Resources CD.

Cost considerations, timing & complexity

Data gathering and processing should be factored into all program management plans. With the many models for data gathering instruments and databases available, it may be possible to simply modify existing instruments, thereby minimizing costs for external design consultants. However, if it is anticipated that the program is going to continue for a number of years and accumulate large amounts of data, it can be a wise investment to contract external technical experts or hire a full-time Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist (see next section) to assist the organization in designing a well-functioning data gathering system.

It is important to orient the entire staff to the comprehensive data gathering system. Identify which staff will be responsible for inputting data and processing data from partners. These staff, in turn, need to provide a comprehensive training to any partners that may be contributing to the data gathering system. The CAAHT team discovered that this needed to be followed up with extensive individual training and coaching as partners began to actually use the instrumentation. While this need not be a significant additional financial costs, it is an important investment of the organization's human resources, and should be factored into the project work plan and staff work load.

The data gathering and analysis process flows throughout the life of the project, from inception to final assessment. It is important to:

1. Plan the process in the early stage of the project;
2. Ensure that data is gathered systematically, regularly and frequently throughout the project; and
3. Confirm the results at intervals and through a final impact assessment process.

Complementary Activities

Data gathering applies to all areas of anti-trafficking work described in this Toolkit.

Programmatic prerequisites

The background and skills of the staff need to include a good knowledge of data collection processing and analyses. Those who are responsible for designing the data gathering system need a thorough understanding of the programs and activities to be conducted. It is important to understand how data will be collected from beneficiaries, particularly to assure that their rights for privacy are protected. Management and implementing staff need a clear understanding about how to use the instruments as well as a clear vision of how the data will be used by the organization and shared with others, including government and civil society actors.

Questions to ask before beginning this activity

- Who has a vested interest in the program and in the outcome of the data gathering?
- What do we want to know/learn from the data?
- How might the data be used, and by whom?

- Who has the right and need to know the output from the data?
- What is the general level of staff skill and software applications available for this data gathering process?
- Which instruments can be used, based on those skill and application capacities?
- Who will be responsible for compiling the data on a regular basis?
- How will we turn this data into information (see definitions in text box on the first page of this chapter)?
- How will we use this information for management decisions?
- How will we share that information with stakeholders? How often?

Lessons learned

- Use of unified instruments to collect data ensures consistency in comparable data and enables its use for many types of analysis.
- The use of databases allows for a better management of the information.
- Availability of up-to-date data enables good management decision making.
- Data gathering instruments should be established at the beginning of the program.
- Those entities and people who will be inputting the data need to agree on the meaning of the categories and definitions used in the instruments.
- All those responsible for data input need to be trained on how to use the instruments. Particular attention should be paid to ensuring they understand the definitions of categories and terminology used in the instrument.
- Data should be keyed in promptly, regularly and frequently.

For more information, please contact

Creative Associates International, Inc.: www.caii.com

Sylvia Ellison, Senior Associate: SylviaE@caii.com

Sarah Stephens, CAAHT Chief of Party: SarahS@caii.com

The Office of the National Anti-trafficking Coordinator, Ministry of the Interior: at_nationalcoordinator@yahoo.com

The Institute for Development Research Alternatives (IDRA):

The Albanian National Training and Technical Assistance Resource Center (ANTTARC): ngoc@abcom.al

Different & Equal (D&E): different&equal@icc-al.org

Vatra Psycho-Social Center, Vlore: qvatra@icc-al.org

Another Vision, Elbasan: Tjetervision@albmail.com

CAAHT staff trained in data gathering:

Alketa Gaxha, Grants Manager

Arben Tabaku, Research Coordinator

Elvana Gadeshi, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist

Ines Xhelili, Local Program Coordinator

3. A monitoring and evaluation staff position

Description

It is important to identify one or two staff members who are responsible for consolidating and process data.

Program monitoring and evaluation incorporates a number of particular skills as well as responsibilities. While it in can be most efficient to train a variety of staff and volunteers on how to use data gathering instruments particular to their program responsibilities, it is important to identify one or two staff members who are responsible for consolidating and processing all this data. In small projects that do not generate large quantities of data, this is often handled by the finance or accounting staff member.

Organizations with large program or multiple projects have discovered the value of including a Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist on the staff team. The staff member is responsible to collect, manage, analyze and report the data back to the organization management staff and donors. S/he may also carry training and coaching responsibilities with other staff members or external implementing partners.

Objectives

Comprehensive management of data gathering, analysis and reporting.

Outcome or Impact

- More effective management of data collected in the project.
- Better management of the organization's work and performance.
- Increased ability of the organization to produce comprehensive and accurate reporting.
- Increased comparability of data collected by different organizations that creates a full picture of the results achieved in a specific field of activity.

Implementation

A number of CAAHT grantees have promptly embraced the idea of having a designated staff to be directly responsible for the data management. After participating in the MIS trainings provided by the CAAHT program, the *Another Vision* organization in Elbasan decided to create a full-time Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) staff position. This has made a significant difference for Arian Çala, the Director of *Another Vision.* With the expanded and better organized information he receives from his M&E staff member, he says *"now I can sleep at night, because I actually know where things stand with my organization."*

Others found it more appropriate to integrate the M&E function with other responsibilities of one of their staff within the organization.

Desirable qualifications for M&E staff include:

- Post-graduate degree in monitoring and evaluation, social research, sociology or social work;
- Technical expertise in quantitative data gathering and reporting;
- Experience in evaluating the types of programs conducted by the organization;
- Strong verbal and written skills;
- Strong skills in Excel as well as other computer applications;
- Ability to work as part of a team; and
- Training experience in data gathering and analysis.

Now I can sleep at night, because I actually know where things stand with my organization. – Arian Çala, Director of *Another Vision in Elbasan.*

After the appropriate staff is identified, it is essential to provide them sufficient training to ensure they understand the programming to be monitored and have the capacity to develop the tools for this process.

Cost considerations, timing & complexity

A full-time M&E staff position must be built into the total organization budget. There must be sufficient workload for this position to warrant the investment. The choice between establishing a full-time M&E position versus assigning this responsibility to a current staff member must be made based on the basis of several factors, including volume of work and funding sustainability for the position.

Complementary activities

The work of an M&E staff member is related to the implementation of all activities described in this Toolkit.

Programmatic prerequisites

An assessment of the organization staff work and responsibilities is recommended in order to have a clear understanding of the management structure of the organization. This program and organizational assessment can identify whether there is sufficient workload and funding support to warrant a full-time M&E staff member.

Questions to ask before beginning this activity

- Why does our organization need to create a position for M&E?
- Can we do a re-structuring of the staff job descriptions in order to make efficient use of the staff and financial resources?
- Can this position be integrated with any other position within the structure of the organization?

- How we will ensure the appropriate training needed to the staff?
- Do we have the financial resources to cover the position?

Lessons learned

- Creating an M&E position helps the organization management staff to efficiently manage the organization work and staff
- The M&E position enables the organization to better manage the data generated by and about its work.
- A dedicated M&E staff member ensures more systematic collection of data, and enhances its use for the purposes of program management and reporting.

For more information, please contact

Creative Associates International, Inc.: www.caii.com
Sylvia Ellison, Senior Associate: SylviaE@caii.com
Sarah Stephens, CAAHT Chief of Party: SarahS@caii.com
Another Vision, Elbasan: Tjetervision@albmail.com
CAAHT staff trained in Monitoring and Evaluation:
Alketa Gaxha, Grants Manager
Arben Tabaku, CAAHT Research Coordinator
Dolor Tozaj, Local Program Coordinator
Elvana Gadeshi, CAAHT Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist
Ines Xhelili, Local Program Coordinator