

## **Effect of Strategic Planning on HIV and AIDS Project Implementation in Abuja**

Halliday Data Janet<sup>1</sup>, Adebambo Hameed Olusegun<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>(Department of Project Management Technology, School of Management Technology/  
The Federal University of Technology Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria)

*\*Corresponding Author: Halliday Data Janet<sup>1</sup>*

**ABSTRACT:** Project implementation strategies at state level is critical to ensure HIV intervention response is appropriate for local context and ensure that resources allocation yields greatest efficiency and impact. It was noted that civil society organizations failure to implement plans properly was they do not have strategic plans that aligns with Abuja state strategic plan. The study assessed effect of strategic planning on implementation of second HIV Program Development Project (HPDP2) in Abuja. Population of the study were 18 project managers, monitoring and evaluation officers, and finance officers respectively who participated in HPDP2 implementation. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 47 respondents using Krejcie's and Morgan sample size determination table. Well-structured questionnaire was used to obtain data from respondents. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 25.0 and smartPLS M3. The finding revealed a positive significant relationship between strategic planning and implementation of HPDP2 ( $SP \rightarrow HPDP2: \beta = 0.549, t = 1.391, P < 0.10$ ) and effect size between these variables is small. This study concludes that strategic planning lays the groundwork for successful project implementation. CSOs with clear, well defined, written down vision and mission statement has a better chance of been successful and implementing project successfully.

**KEYWORDS-**Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Mission Statement, Project Implementation, Strategic Planning, Vision Statement

### **I INTRODUCTION**

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa with a population of more than 180 million people. It is one of the countries in the world with the highest number of people living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) [1]. Based on recent findings from the 2018 Nigeria AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) Indicator and Impact Survey (NAIIS), the current national prevalence of HIV is estimated at 1.4% with a total estimated 1.9 million persons living with HIV in Nigeria [2]. The country has the second largest HIV epidemic in the world and one of the highest rates of new infection in sub-Saharan Africa [3]. The country had a prevalence of 3.0% [4] and 3,200,000 people living with HIV with an estimate of 220,000 new infections in 2017 [5]. Given the burden of HIV/AIDS, the Federal Government of Nigeria and the World Bank agreed to engage on a second HIV/AIDS Program Development Project (HPDP2). The US\$225 million International Development Association credit financing for HPDP2 was intended to support Nigeria for four and a half years - June 2009 to December 2013 (This financial support was extended to 2017) and served all states along with the Abuja. [6].

In Nigeria, the National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA) is responsible for coordinating the country's HIV and AIDS response. HPDP2 assisted NACA in developing the national strategic framework and the National Strategic Plan (NSP) 2010-2015 which aligns with key priorities outlined in the poverty reduction strategy for Nigeria (Nigeria Vision 20:20:20) and the National HIV Policy. Following the development of the NSP, NACA, in collaboration with her partners, supported the development of State Strategic Plans (SSP) for the thirty-six plus one states over the period 2010-2015. These state plans are also aligned with national priorities and thematic areas. Technical working groups were established to plan and provide technical advice on thematic areas. Civil society coordination arrangements were also established. These Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have had active involvement in the development of the multi-sectorial strategy. They include Civil Society Network for HIV and AIDS in Nigeria (CiSHAN) and Network of People Living HIV and AIDS in Nigeria (NEPWHAN), and Youth Networks. These networks have become recognized as critical players in the national response. Their activities in the areas of HIV prevention, treatment, support and care are included in the national HIV strategy, budget and reports [7].

Despite massive funding by government and international donors, HIV and AIDS is still a major health challenge in Abuja. The prevalence rate in Abuja had been fluctuating over the years between 6.3% and 10.2% with more females infected compared with males [8]. Recent findings in the NAIIS survey however revealed a

significant decrease in its prevalence rate to 1.6% [2]. The rising trend in the prevalence of was attributed to many factors which include the continuous influx of people from within and outside the country into Abuja because of its social-political and economic importance. Other contributory factors include increasing numbers of sex workers and homosexuals, drug use, increasing level of poverty and negative cultural practices [8]. FCT Agency for Control of AIDS (FACA) coordinates implementation at Abuja level. Programs are been implemented through grants to CSOs. The success of HIV/AIDS prevention - and other health interventions - is contingent upon strengthened and functioning CSOs with high levels of community engagement. Their capacity and influence through participatory approaches and integration within communities have strategically positioned them in the fight against HIV/AIDS and other health issues; their contribution in tackling the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the country has been significant. Where CSOs are indigenous to their communities, they have the ability to provide platforms for change, ensure demand creation for interventions and services, as well as establish active engagement of community structures [9]. Though CSOs have made their mark in the fight against HIV/AIDS, their response is still fragmented. They also suffer from organizational weaknesses, as they are dependent on external funding, have high turnover of staff, are often founded by an individual who has limited experience leading an organization, poor strategic planning, and have difficulty managing donor funding and adhering to reporting requirements [7].

Organized communities such as local CSOs have tried to address local needs including those that have arisen as a result of HIV infections. While the emergence of these groupings ought to provide the continuity and long-term commitment required for sustainable development, many CSOs do not have the organizational and technical capacities needed for designing, implementing, and monitoring effective HIV/AIDS interventions [10]. Without adequate organizational capacity, the CSOs could not efficiently use any technical skills they possessed. It was noted that failure to effectively implement plans properly was attributed to the fact that CSOs do not have strategic plans that compliment with the FCT HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan (FSP). Poor Monitoring and Evaluation capacity and poor understanding of project management practices were some of the weakness identified which affected the implementation of HPDP II [11]. In order to find solution for the missing gap and further recommend to the key stakeholders, this study assessed the effect of strategic planning on HPDP II implementation by CSOs in Abuja.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

During the past 15 years, several different approaches have been adopted in an attempt to slow the spread of HIV and minimize its impact on individuals, families, and society. It is noted that there is no simple formula that works for all countries. The most effective national responses are those designed to meet the specific needs of the country: they attack the particular situations that make people vulnerable to HIV and its impact, and make use of the particular strengths of the country's people and institutions. Governments engaged in development planning must understand the real magnitude of the HIV/AIDS problem in their country. Also, they must have an idea of likely epidemic consequences on individual and families, and on the society's overall development. On that basis, they must then decide what importance and priority level they want to attach to actions aimed at reducing the spread of the HIV and mitigating its impact. This implies focusing on strategies that can change its course and securing the resources for implementation. It also means that these strategies will become an integral part of the country's overall development plan [12].

NACA utilizes one National Strategic Framework (NSF), and one Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system - Nigeria National Response Information Management System (NNRIMS) which are operationally in line with "The Three Ones" principle – (one coordinating agency, one national plan and one M&E framework). It has led in the formulation and implementation of three national HIV and AIDS strategic plans for the periods 2001-2004, 2005-2009 and 2010-2015. The lifespan of the 2010-2015 NSF and NSP was extended to December 2016 to accommodate the technical and logistic mobilization necessary for the development of the new strategic framework. The NSF 2017 – 2021 and the revised NSF 2019 – 2021 is the fourth strategic document designed to guide the national response. The document builds on the achievements of the previous NSF with a focus on moving Nigeria to become an AIDS-free nation by 2030. It shall fast track high impact, low cost interventions that are scalable. It also serves as an instrument to realize the national aspiration of achieving the 90-90-90 targets by 2020. It recognizes the diversity in political structure, culture and geography; and respects the rights of all Nigerians to equitable access to HIV related services [7]. Continuously improving and recalibrating such an evidence informed strategy, driven by a more insightful understanding of the epidemic in our nation and recent global experience in the AIDS response, is the purpose of the revision of the 2017-2021 Strategic Framework. An unprecedented population based survey, NAIHS have recently been completed in order to better inform and guide the collective efforts of HIV interventions in Nigeria going forward [1].

Strategic planning defines not only the strategic framework of the national response, i.e. its fundamental principles, broad strategies, and institutional framework, but also the intermediate steps that need to be achieved in order to change the current situation into one that represents the objectives to be reached. The

NSF and NSP enable CSOs and field workers from states and communities to plan concrete strategic interventions that will contribute to the overall national response [12]. Strategic planning has been defined in several literatures. It is an all-encompassing long term plan of an organization which spells out its vision, mission, strategic goals, the specific game plan aimed at achieving the goals, implementation plan as well as plan of control, taking into account the internal and the external influences from the operating arena. It involves coming up with detailed plans to make sure that the strategies are implemented so as to achieve the needs sought. Since organizations are different, it is important that when designing strategic planning, characteristics of each organization should be put into consideration [13].

Previous studies, [14] have ascertained that one of the most important benefits of any strategic planning effort is that it allows your organization to bring its collective intelligence together to apply to external forces, internal forces, and the slate of current and emerging challenges and opportunities likely to impede or support the organization's attaining its vision and accomplishing its mission. According to findings of [15] to determine the influence of strategic planning by CSOs on implementation of HIV & AIDS projects in Imenti North Subcounty Kenya, Majority of CSOs had vision and mission statements which was an indication that organizations set mechanisms in place on where they wanted to be in future and CSOs not having a strategic planning could be because an organization was young or an organization saw there was no need of one. [16] explained that for organizations to succeed in its strategic plan, there must be proper formulation of vision and mission statements and a large number of people participating in formulating them. They contribute to the creation of institutional identity of an organization. [17] posited that mission and vision are standard and crucial element of strategy of an organization.

Literatures from [18] revealed that Project implementation is a systematic process of rigorously discussing who, what, how and when; constantly questioning; actively following up; and ensuring accountability. It is the process that turns strategies and plans into actions in order to accomplish strategic objectives and goals. It involves coordinating people and other resources to carry out the project's plans in order to achieve the project's objectives. Translating plans into action is the science of implementation. [19] states, "project implementation phase can be thought of as part of the project life cycle that starts after the project funding and approval and concludes with the successful handover of the end of the product to the client organization, including the contractual closeout of the project, lessons-learned and documentation, and archiving of the projects documents". [20] argues that project implementation is an afterthought, something that needs to be done after agreements are concluded. It oversees the formation of the implementation sub team, creates linkage to the core project team, advises on implementation planning, and establishes processes to resolve implementation issues. Implementation in strategic planning, translates the formulated plan into policies and procedures for achieving the grand decision. It involves all levels of management in moving the organization toward its mission. The process seeks to create a fit between the organization's formulated goal and its ongoing activities. Because implementation involves all levels of the organization, it results in the integration of all aspects of the organizations functioning. Effective implementation results in stated objectives, action plans, timetables, policies and procedures, and results in the organization moving efficiently toward fulfilment of its mission [21].

### **III. METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a quantitative research approach conducted in a cross-sectional design to assess the effect of strategic planning on HIV implementation by CSOs in Abuja. According to FACA, 18 CSOs were selected by the World Bank for HPDP II implementation in Abuja. The total population of the study is 54 staff, which consists of the project manager, finance manager, monitoring and evaluation officer of the selected 18 CSOs. These respondents were selected for the study because of their role and involvement in the implementation of HPDP II. The study selected a sample size of 47 from the target population using the sample size determination table by [22]. The sample was selected from this population by using a stratified random sampling method. Simple random sampling was then used to select the final respondents proportionately from the different strata. Survey questionnaire was self-administered to the selected sample for data collection. The choice of this data collection technique is informed by its ability to provide an efficient use of the time, energy and costs of the researcher [23]. The questionnaire obtained information on demographics of the respondents and the statistical description of the constructs was done by determining the statistical values of mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum values for all the constructs. The measurement of all the constructs was done using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 – strongly disagree to 5 – strongly agree to assess the respondent's knowledge of the organizations vision statement, mission statement, action plan and planning processes. Data analysis was done by using the smartPLS 2.0 M3 [24] to assess the measurement and the structural model and SPSS 25.0 was used to conduct descriptive analysis for the study.

#### IV. RESULTS

##### A. Demographic of the Respondents

The demographic analysis obtained from the correspondents varies with respect to the number of their years of working experiences. The result showed that 44.3% of the respondents falls between (1-5 years), 46.5% (6-10 years), 4.7% (10-15 years) and above 15 years' work experience respectively. The study revealed that most of the respondents have worked with their respective organization for a minimum to maximum period of 6-10 years.

##### B. Vision and Mission Statement of the Organization

The descriptive analysis of construct vision statement as shown in Table 1 revealed a minimum number of 1 and maximum value of 5 for all the items that measured the construct. The result of the analysis reveals a mean value of 4.95, 4.77, 4.65, 4.56, 4.56, and 4.28 with standard deviation of 0.21, 0.48, 0.48, 0.50, 0.50, and 0.43 indicating an agreement among the respondents to the organization having a vision and mission statement, the vision and mission statement is clearly understood, there are laid down strategies for the project, the vision and mission statement is agreed by all members of the project team, the vision and mission statement is well described, and the vision statement is used to guide mission and projects. However, mean value of 1.33 and 1.70 and standard deviation value of 0.89 and 0.94 indicates a disagreement among the respondents to the vision and mission statement never been written down and only few people were consulted in writing these statements.

**Table 1: Vision and Mission Statement of the Organization**

S/N	Items	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	The organization has a vision statement	43	4	5	4.95	0.21
2	The vision and mission statement of the organization is clearly understood	43	3	5	4.77	0.48
3	The vision and mission statement of the organization is agreed by all members of the project team	43	4	5	4.56	0.50
4	The vision and mission statement is well described	43	4	5	4.56	0.50
5	The vision mission and statement has never been written down	43	1	4	1.33	0.89
6	Only few people were consulted in writing the vision and mission statement	43	1	4	1.70	0.94
7	The vision and mission statement is used to guide projects	43	1	5	4.28	1.03
8	There are laid down strategies for the project	43	4	5	4.65	0.48

##### C. Organization Work Plan

The description of the extent to which organizations develop work plans in this study as presented in Table 2 reveals a minimum value of 4 for 'Project has work plans' and 'The organization knows the necessary interventions; has developed a work plan to guide project implementation' and minimum value of 1 for items 2, 3, 4 and 5 with all the items having a maximum value of 5 each. The mean value of 1.23 indicates that the respondents disagreed on the item.

**Table 2: Extent to which Organisations Develop Work Plans**

S/N	Item	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Project has work plans	43	4	5	4.77	0.43
2	Not aware of the need for one	43	1	5	1.51	0.83
3	The organization knows the necessary interventions to be carried out but has not developed a work plan.	43	1	2	1.23	0.43
4	The organization knows the necessary interventions; has developed a work plan for some to guide project implementation	43	1	5	4.19	1.24
5	The organization knows the necessary interventions; has developed a work plan to guide project implementation.	43	4	5	4.79	0.41
6	The organization clearly assign lead responsibility for action plan implementation to a person or, alternately, to a team	43	1	5	4.31	1.05

#### D. Strategic Planning Process of the Organization

The description of planning processes of the organization in this study as presented in Table 3 revealed a minimum value of 4 for 'The organization follows a defined set of procedures in its strategic planning process' which indicates that the respondents agree with the item; minimum value of 1 for item 2 and 4 with the items having a maximum value of 5', and a minimum value of 2 for item 1 with all the items having a maximum value of 5 each. The mean value of 3.09 indicates that the respondents are undecided on the item.

**Table 3: Strategic Planning Process of the Organization**

S/N	Item	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	The organization sets clearly defined and measurable performance standards for each plan element.	43	2	5	4.49	0.80
2	The organization planning process based on criteria by which options can be compared and selected.	43	1	5	4.02	1.04
3	The organization follows a defined set of procedures in its strategic planning process.	43	4	5	4.63	0.49
4	Sufficient resources are allocated for implementation.	43	1	5	3.95	1.21

#### E. Assessment of measurement model: Item Loadings, Average Variance Extracted and Composite Reliability

The measurement model was assessed through the convergent validity which indicates the degree to which several items measuring a certain concept agreed. The loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), and the composite reliability (CR) was assessed for the achievement of convergent validity. The result of the statistical analysis as shown in Table 4 indicates a good item loading above the threshold of 0.4 recommended by [25]. In term of the internal consistency of the items, the findings revealed a composite reliability value of 0.89 for HPDPPII implementation and 0.93 for strategy planning. These composite reliability values are above the threshold value 0.7 suggested by [25], indicating a good internal consistency of the constructs. In addition, the results of AVE, which indicates the amount of the extracted variance by the latent constructs revealed values revealed AVE value of 0.66 and 0.77 for HPDPPII implementation and strategic planning respectively which are greater than the recommended threshold of 0.5 [25]. Hence, the findings show that the values of items loading, composite reliability and the AVE all exceeded the threshold values and therefore indicate the achievement of convergent validity.

**Table 4: The Convergent Validity: Loading, AVE and Composite Reliability**

Constructs	Items	Loadings	AVE	CR	R2
HIV/AIDS Fund Project implementation	HAF1	0.74	0.66	0.89	0.16
	HAF4	0.86			
	HAF6	0.87			
	HAF7	0.77			
Strategic Planning	SPA2	0.87	0.77	0.93	
	SPM4	0.87			
	SPM6	0.91			
	SPV5	0.87			

#### F. Assessment of Structural Model

The study hypothesis posits that strategic planning by CSOs significantly affects HPDPPII implementation in Abuja. The PLS path analysis was assessed through the structural model to evaluate the effect of strategic planning on project implementation. Table 5 presents the result of the standard path coefficients ( $\beta$ ), standard error, t-value, and the decision taken on the hypothesis. The stated effect of strategic planning on HIV project implementation demonstrated evidences of significant effects. The hypothesis is significant at 10% (2-tail)

having a t-value greater than the threshold of 1.282 (energy sustainability and financial performance (SP -> HPDPPII:  $\beta = 0.55$ ;  $t = 1.39$ ,  $P < 0.10$ ).

**Table 5: Test of Hypothesis**

Path Coefficient	Standard Error	T Value	Decision
SP -> HPDPPII	0.39	1.39	Significant

### **G. Effect Size**

Having examined the significance of the hypothesized relationship, it is important to examine the extent to which the examined path affects the explaining power of the endogenous construct [26](Cohen, 1988). As the path coefficient cannot provide any information about the effect size of the exogenous latent variables on the endogenous construct. To determine the effect size, Cohen F2 value was use. As shown in Table 6, the value of the effect size of the relationship shows that strategic planning has a small effect on HPDPPII implementation.

**Table 6: Effect Size**

Relationship	R <sup>2</sup> Included	R <sup>2</sup> Excluded	F <sup>2</sup> (Effect size)	Decision
SP ->HPDPPII	0.165	0.128	0.04	Small

## **V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The findings from this study have revealed that majority CSOs had mission and vision statements and these statements are clearly understood by the organizations. These CSOs have developed strategies for the project and the vision statement is employed to guide the mission and project. This finding has provided proof to support the claim of [16] that mission statements have the function of guiding all processes of strategic planning and explains what organizations want to be and whom they serve. The findings also agree with [27] who states that CSOs without a clear vision and mission will likely find itself engaged in projects that have little connection to the community it seeks to serve. [28] suggested that a mission statement serves as a reference to review strategy, solves strategic dilemmas and may help in evaluation. People in nonprofit organizations usually aim to help change the society in some way, and therefore they are often imbued with a strong sense of mission. This recommendation by [28] is relevant to other CSOs in Abuja who do not have vision and mission statements. The study findings in addition revealed that not many people were consulted in writing the vision and mission statement and that these statements have never been written down. This could be because some of the organizations had vision and mission statements developed by the founders or senior management based within the area under study and it could also be that the CSOs rely on a selected group of partners, supported by the founded, to drive the process. Not involving these other key mangers throughout the formulation process generally makes implementation more difficult, as they have not had the advantage of participating in – even if it is only passive participation – the dialogues and thought processes in formulating the strategy. Once implementation phase commences, they often have to spend many more hours to understand the plan and implementation processes.

Furthermore, the result of the test of hypothesis held at a significant level,  $P < 0.10$  in this study revealed significant positive effects of strategic planning on HPDPPII implementation. This result suggests that a unit improvement in strategic planning by CSOs will improve the quality of HPDPPII implementation in Abuja. The result corroborates the evidence that vision and mission statements are standard and crucial element of strategy of an organization [17]. These statements set the directions for future work. As [16]. suggested, strategic plan success depends on the sufficient formulation of mission and vision statements, and broad participation in their formulation. [29] explained that the most important thing any organization can do to ensure success is to have a vision or plan.

## VI. CONCLUSION

This study found a significant effect of strategic planning on project implementation. Therefore, it concluded that strategic planning is an important factor to consider in increasing the likelihood that a project will be implemented successfully which was the case in this study. The study also concluded that the CSOs that participated in HPDP II implementation in Abuja are knowledgeable about strategic planning and its importance in project implementation and success. The study recommends a wide participation (at least a passive participation) of all other key people who are saddled with responsibility for managing the organizations infrastructure on a day-to-day basis in the formulation of the organizations strategic plan.

## VII. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study is limited to CSOs that implemented the HPDP II in Abuja and therefore recommends further studies on the effect of strategic planning among all CSOs implementing HIV and AIDS project in Abuja for generalization.

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**\*Corresponding Author: Halliday Data Janet<sup>1</sup>**

**<sup>1</sup>(Department of Project Management Technology, School of Management Technology/  
The Federal University of Technology Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria)**