

ACCOMPANIMENT: CORUS' APPROACH TO LOCAL CAPACITY STRENGTHENING



For us, accompaniment is an intentional, collaborative and respectful process

where Corus organizations and our partners support mutual effectiveness, learning and resilience.

Partnership is at the core of Corus International, a family of global leaders in international development and humanitarian assistance. For Corus organizations, strengthening local capacity means leveraging and elevating the existing capacity of local partners (community groups, civil society organizations, businesses, governments, networks) to drive innovative, transformational change.

Traditional capacity frameworks have long favored Global North models, too often overlooking critical ideas, skills and resources from the Global South. At Corus, we intentionally use the term “accompaniment” to describe our approach to capacity strengthening. This reflects our commitment to locally led development and recognizes the right and ability of local voices to drive meaningful change.

THE CORUS EFFECT

Corus International unites an array of nonprofit organizations and businesses, each with specialized expertise — from health to technology to economic development to emergency response. Corus features global public health leader IMA World Health, international development and aid organization Lutheran World Relief, technology for development consultancy CGA Technologies, impact investing firm Ground Up Investing, and direct-trade company Farmers Market Brands.



ACCOMPANIMENT IN ACTION: THE A-CORD FRAMEWORK

Capacity is not an insular concept. Our approach helps partners look within their organizations to ensure processes, structures and staff are skilled and working well together (i.e., **capacity within**), but it also recognizes the relational dimensions of partner success. We support partners in examining their connections with peers, communities, local and national government, donors and other development actors (i.e., **capacity between**). It is the two capacities working together that foster social capital and sustainability.

At the core of our accompaniment model lies the **A-CORD framework: To Assess — Commit, Organize, Relate and Deliver**. This framework facilitates a participatory process for organizations to self-analyze their strengths and challenges, supports their comprehensive action planning, and promotes continual collaboration, adaptation and learning.

The A-CORD framework divides capacity into four interconnected and interdependent areas. **Deliver** is at the top of the pyramid, representing the partner's technical proficiency in achieving visible and primary results. **Commit** occupies the center, shaping identity and organizational culture. **Organize** focuses on the processes and structures required for effective work management and project implementation. **Relate** reflects the partner's ability to forge connections with peers and networks.

By using this framework to understand and jointly structure priorities with our partners, we can integrate local capacity strengthening efforts into projects and relationships as part of our holistic accompaniment cycle.



[READ MORE](#)





PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: ACHAP'S EXPERIENCE WITH THE A-CORD FRAMEWORK

Corus organization IMA World Health has supported and accompanied our local partner the Africa Christian Health Associations Platform (ACHAP) since its founding in 2007. ACHAP is a regional faith-based organization for advocacy, networking and capacity building for Christian Health Associations (CHAs) and Church Health Networks across sub-Saharan Africa, currently encompassing 43 health associations providing critical health services in 14 countries.



Over IMA World Health's years of partnership with ACHAP, its **profile, capacity and influence have grown substantially.**

In a large-scale collaboration launched in 2022, IMA World Health and ACHAP partnered on an initiative to advance COVID-19 vaccine demand and delivery through the Osprey Foundation-funded project, Promoting COVID-19 Vaccine Equity through Faith-Based Networks in Africa (CoV-FaB). The project aims to reduce the loss of life and spread of COVID-19 in sub-Saharan Africa through the capacity strengthening of CHAs. To achieve this, ACHAP is committed to effectively engaging with international stakeholders to ensure that CHAs are recognized and supported as essential partners for global health security.

As part of these efforts, ACHAP adopted Corus' A-CORD framework to carry out a self-assessment of their organizational capacity. Upon completing the analysis, ACHAP created a detailed action plan to address identified gaps and instituted regular reviews to monitor its implementation. With ongoing support from Corus, ACHAP has begun proactively addressing areas for improvement, including fostering collaborations with the private sector, establishing feedback mechanisms, and enhancing their media presence. The insights gained from

the A-CORD assessment significantly influenced ACHAP's strategic planning, particularly in supporting their network of member CHAs. ACHAP intends to leverage their learnings from the framework and to systematically disseminate it to their members, thereby strengthening local capacity through a peer-to-peer model that collectively identifies and addresses the strengths and weaknesses of individual CHAs. Simultaneously, Corus intends to continue learning from ACHAP's experience with A-CORD and will optimize the framework based on partner feedback as it is utilized throughout the region.

Throughout its use of the framework, ACHAP noted that A-CORD differed from conventional organizational capacity assessment tools in some important ways. Firstly, it framed organizational development as an additive process, requiring continuous internal assessment to ensure relevance in a changing environment. This is as opposed to pass-or-fail compliance assessments that can have funding implications for an organization. ACHAP also discovered that the process of self-assessment fostered unity within the organization, as it highlighted the crucial role played by each member in areas such as advocacy, resource mobilization and accountability.



Corus' accompaniment model and A-CORD framework **empower local organizations**

like ACHAP to take the lead in their own capacity strengthening, be **adaptive to their specific contexts**, and look forward to **positive growth outcomes** rather than punitive, imposed outcomes.

ACHAP's affirming experience with A-CORD bodes well for its successful uptake in the CHAs. This iterative form of local capacity strengthening will, in turn, lead to the expansion of the most impactful strategies for vaccination and health emergency preparedness, ultimately bolstering the resilience of health systems across sub-Saharan Africa.

