

Overview of SAT Implementing Partnership Process

SAT supports the community response to HIV and AIDS through in-depth partnerships and wider networking, skills exchange and lesson sharing throughout the region. We have around 200 partners operating at community, national, regional and international levels:

◆ **Implementing Partners** are community groups and networks that receive SAT capacity development grants. These grants support community-level HIV and AIDS activities or national networking and advocacy activities, organisational development and core support.

◆ **School Without Walls Partners** are community-level or national networking organisations that (i) regularly attend our skills training workshops or (ii) organisations and institutions with the skills or experience to facilitate training, host study visits or mentor SAT's Implementing Partners.

◆ **Strategic Partners** include international and regional NGOs, regional or global networking organisations, research institutions and donors. These partnerships are mutually beneficial, focusing on capacity building, skills training, scaling-up community responses, Good Practice Strategy, research, advocacy or resource mobilisation.

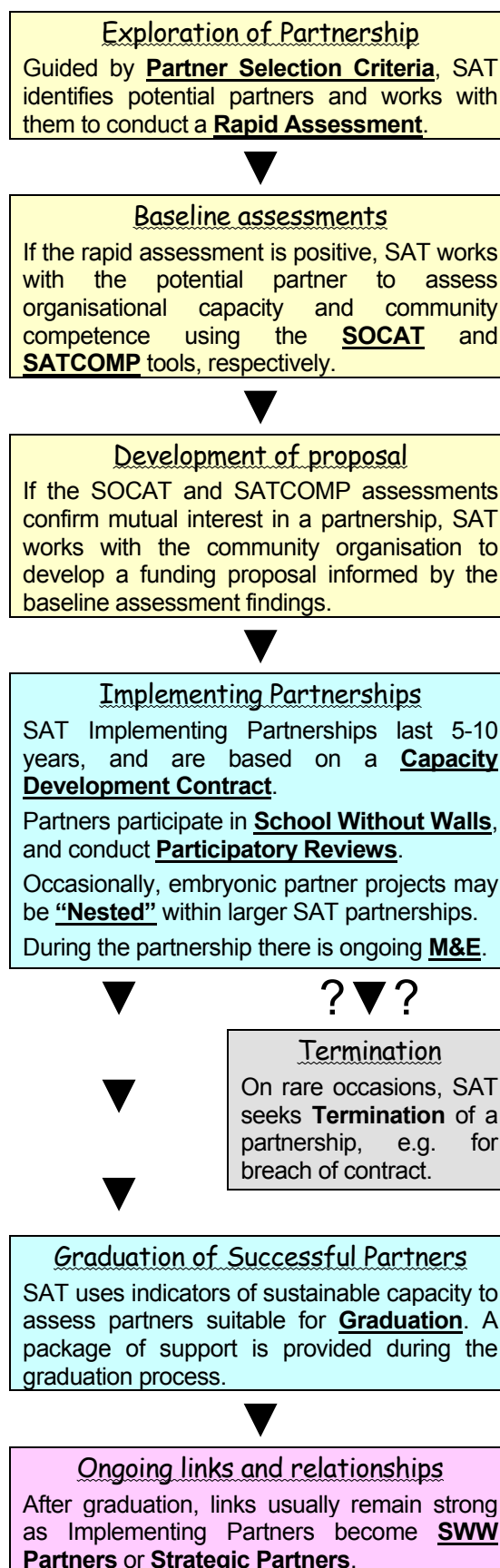
Focus on Implementing Partnerships

These relationships form the core of our work. **Implementing Partnerships** are designed to strengthen the organisational capacity of the partner, helping them become more effective, efficient, relevant and financially viable. This organisational capacity development improves their ability to:

- Encourage behaviour changes that result in decreased HIV transmission
- Help communities care for men, women, and children living with AIDS
- Help communities support families and children affected by AIDS
- Create and sustain comprehensive responses to the needs of the communities they serve and, in particular, better meet the needs of children affected by HIV and AIDS
- Mobilise sufficient resources to ensure their sustainability and ability to meet increasing (and increasingly comprehensive) needs
- Help create a social climate of reduced vulnerability to HIV and AIDS by promoting gender equality and respect of human rights and children's rights

This document

The main stages and features of the partnership process are identified in the flowchart opposite. This document explains our relationship with Implementing Partners and defines key terms that we use in our work.



A) Establishing the partnership

► SAT Partner Selection Criteria

SAT uses the following criteria to identify and assess potential partners:

Activity relevant to HIV & AIDS:

SAT is looking for organisations whose activities decrease the community vulnerability to HIV or increase its capacity to cope with HIV and AIDS. However, we apply a broad interpretation of “HIV and AIDS related activity”. In the past, SAT has played a catalyst role in supporting groups and activities that were not considered in the mainstream of AIDS programming, e.g. domestic violence and child abuse. This has been highly rewarding and will be continued.

Meeting the needs of children

SAT has made a strategic commitment to better meet the needs of children affected by AIDS. In exploring potential partnerships, SAT therefore prioritises community groups already focusing on CABA issues or those expressing a strong interest to do so.

Need & potential for capacity development:

Our mandate is to develop the capacity of community groups responding to HIV and AIDS. Therefore, a major consideration is the possible partner's need and its potential for capacity building. Well-organised programmes, with a broad resource or donor base are less attractive to SAT than new groups that may sometimes have little to show beyond the enthusiasm of their members. Over time, SAT has developed expertise in supporting the early growth of community organisations.

Community base & local control:

Most types of local organisation are eligible for consideration as a SAT partner. However, all candidates must have a strong and broad community base. This can be demonstrated, for example, either through the involvement of a large number of volunteers, or successful involvement of community stakeholders in governance of the organisation.

Commitment to social justice:

All SAT partners must have a demonstrated commitment to social justice, human rights, gender equality and the rights of children. These are basic principles underlying our work. SAT encourages potential partners to focus on meeting the needs of socially and economically disadvantaged groups and individuals. We will not support any groups or organisations that discriminate against members or beneficiaries on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, social or HIV status without any plausible rationale of social justice.

Co-ordination & organisational links:

All SAT partners are encouraged to work within their respective national frameworks. Partners must also show willingness to share their skills and expertise. This is at the core of the School Without Walls philosophy (see later). Therefore, commitment to this process is an important criterion for decisions about starting (and also terminating) partnerships. SAT has always encouraged organisational replication and 'budding'. For this to be possible there has to be a good environment for organisational linkages. Mechanisms such as “nesting” of projects in stronger organisations (see later) and mentoring relationships are used to groom new groups for direct SAT support.

Geographic clustering

SAT's experience is that geographical clustering of partners is essential for an effective organisational capacity building process to take place. Clustering ensures that SAT Programme Officers can provide adequate support to partners, and ensures relatively easy access and frequent exchanges between partner organisations.

Emerging foci

In the development of SAT's new strategic plan, greater emphasis is being placed on creating clusters of partners in under-served areas, particularly by exploring programming methodologies for reaching remote rural populations, and partnering possibilities in areas where local epidemics reflect regional dynamics, e.g. border areas and transport corridors (in so doing adding value by co-ordinating SAT activities regionally)

► Rapid Assessment Process

SAT's Rapid Assessment Guidelines (available separately) operationalise our partner selection criteria to determine the suitability of an organisation for partnership with SAT. Potential partners are small and upcoming community based organisations with capacity development needs (as opposed to already established organisations).

Rapid assessments take approximately 2-3 hours and help SAT decide on the way forward, i.e. whether to proceed to conduct baselines for community HIV competence (i.e. SATCOMP) and organisational capacity (i.e. SOCAT). A maximum of 6-10 representatives are invited to attend from the potential partner, including board members, management, staff and community volunteers. An attempt should be made to strike a gender balance among participants.

Areas covered in the rapid assessment

- Basic details of the organisation, its history, vision, mission and governance.
- The level of community participation and ownership in the organisation.
- Causes and effects of HIV and AIDS in the area served, and implications for the community.
- Main programmes and activities, coverage and catchment areas.
- Activities to meet the needs of children affected by AIDS, and/or vision for CABA work.
- Gender awareness in planning, implementing and evaluating programmes and activities.
- Beneficiaries, eligibility and targeting criteria.
- Monitoring and evaluation.
- Finance and administration - annual budget, reporting systems, resource mobilisation, staffing.
- Volunteer management issues.
- Successes and achievements / constraints and problems.

Rapid Assessment Report

These reports are simple and short (maximum 3 pages), structured as follows:

- 1) Introduction: description of the organisation
- 2) Programming: details of the HIV and AIDS programmes being implemented
- 3) Finance: details of the current annual budget, funding sources, financial management
- 4) Summary and recommendations: summary, recommendations by the SAT team and proposed way forward.

► SOCAT

SOCAT stands for "SAT organisational capacity assessment tool" (available separately). This involves a one-day workshop with SAT partner organisations, organised by the partner and facilitated by SAT staff. The workshop takes the form of a focus group discussion using a standard checklist. The group is facilitated by a SAT staff member (usually the Country Programme Officer) and is made up of a

range of stakeholders from the partner organisation (i.e. Board, Director / Management team, staff, volunteers).

The tools are designed to guide a group discussion about organisational and programmatic strengths and weaknesses in relation to the six core subject areas. Again, we are linking the processes of M&E and ongoing partner support and capacity building. Ultimately, the workshop is designed to enable SAT and the partner to identify whether the partner has achieved the following key “standards” of organisational capacity:

- **Strategic and Operational Planning:** Long term 3-5 year strategic plan and systems of regular review and updating in place
- **Volunteer Management:** Systems for recruiting, training, managing and retaining volunteers in place.
- **General Human Resources:** General human resources system (recruiting, training, salary and appraisals) established and operational.
- **Governance:** Governance structures (role of board, director/management team, and governance systems) in place.
- **Resource Mobilisation and Management:** The organisation has established systems for mobilising resources to meet the needs of the organisation and its work.
- **Learning and Sharing:** The organisation has demonstrated ability to translate skills acquired through SWW into programming
- **Advocacy and Networking:** The organisation’s advocacy and networking activities effectively link issues of HIV and gender equality, human rights and child rights.

► SATCOMP

SATCOMP stands for “SAT community competence assessment tool” (available separately). This involves a one-day participatory workshop with community stakeholders, facilitated by SAT staff and staff/volunteers from the relevant SAT partner. For practical purposes of M&E, SAT views community competence as comprised of three broad components.

- Presence of, and activation of, feelings of **solidarity** and **willingness to serve** the community.
- Presence of, and access to, **sustainable resources**.
- (Community) **Empowerment and skills**.

Solidarity and willingness to serve the community

This component focuses on the strength and closeness of relationships within a community, the motivations of community members to respond to the challenges and impacts of HIV and AIDS. Key aspects here are compassion, mutual reliance and feelings of mutual benefit, trust, altruism, common values, unity and social cohesion – the things that bring people together and compel them to care for or assist each other.

(Sustainable) Resources

Caring and motivated people require resources to be able to effect change. Resources are defined broadly, to include physical, financial, human and institutional resources. Physical resources might include a place to meet, land to cultivate, information materials, blankets, livestock, thatch for housing, etc. Financial resources include money, savings and access to credit. Human resources include the necessary people to undertake necessary work, i.e. volunteers and staff. Institutional resources include schools, clinics, churches, etc. This component focuses on the acquisition and mobilisation of resources to respond to the challenges and impacts of HIV and AIDS.

(Community) Empowerment and skills

Even caring and motivated people with relevant resources at their disposal, will have a minimal impact if they are not sufficiently empowered and skilled to plan and implement meaningful actions. This component focuses on the capacity of the community to generate and maintain sustainable response systems characterised by a high level of self-reliance, development of own resources and ability to

mobilise external resources, capacity to assess their own needs and problems and respond to them, capacity to self-organise and self-monitor their actions.

“True” community competence

It is a core belief at SAT that all communities are, to some extent, competent. Our work is to support the increase of community competence, not its creation. However, the three components interact in various ways resulting in varying levels and types of community competence. “True” community competence exists when there is an overlap between all three components. Simply stated, SAT’s work seeks to support the expansion of that area of overlap.

► Capacity Development Contract

We have a Capacity Development Contract (CDC) with each of our Implementing Partners. At present*, these contracts have a life span of 12 months, with a provision for renewal. They cover specified administrative, personnel, infrastructure, activity costs and usually an annual participatory review (see later).

CDC funds are disbursed in two instalments. Partners are required to submit narrative reports every six months to report on their activities. They are also required to submit monthly financial reports with original receipts. Upon receipt of the financial report for the sixth month, SAT releases the second disbursement. Funds remaining unspent at the end of the contract may result in no-cost contract extensions. Timely renewal of CDCs is assured if partners submit a suitable proposal at least two months before the end of their current contract.

SAT staff run training workshops to familiarise partners with contractual terms and procedures. SAT has also published the reference document, **Accounting Guidelines for SAT Partners**.

** SAT is currently exploring the possibility of establishing long-term Memorandum of Understanding with its partners, to provide a strategic framework for annual workplans and budgets*

B) During the partnership

► School Without Walls (SWW)

The origins of SWW:

When SAT started in 1990, it was based on a traditional North-South technical assistance model. Skills and knowledge were to be transferred from North America to Southern Africa to improve the local response to AIDS. The knowledge was meant to trickle down via a ‘Training of Trainers’ (TOT) approach to a large group of African field workers.

However, it was soon obvious that this approach did not meet the real capacity development needs of community-based organisations. TOT provided by the international experts was usually directed at African academics and professionals. These people were rarely well placed or able to translate new knowledge into useful skills for community workers. Furthermore, though TOT led to an increase in knowledge, it did not necessarily lead to an increase in practical skill. Most formal training schemes provided one-off learning opportunities with limited ongoing support to ensure the incorporation of new skills into project implementation.

Also, significantly, most of the people already involved in responding to the emerging HIV epidemic were COMMUNITY MEMBERS, not professionals with academic training. The additional skills that community activists and volunteers needed were more readily available within the region. This is the stimulus for the School Without Walls: a network of peers, learning and sharing lessons from their practical experiences of responding to HIV and AIDS in communities across Southern Africa.

SWW basics:

- SWW is based on learning by seeing and doing in real settings. Training tends to emphasise 'how to do', more than 'what to do'.
- SWW utilises and builds local technical support capabilities, and forges local relationships. Transfer of skills is organisation-to-organisation.
- The emphasis on networking, co-operation and facilitation ensures SWW is responsive to partner needs and the changing AIDS environment.
- SAT partners contribute expertise, time, physical and human resources, and links to downstream organisations and institutions.
- SAT is facilitator, planner and co-ordinator of SWW. It supplies the overall structure, and most of the financial resources required.

Aspects & activities of SWW

Skills training workshops: These workshops last between two and five days and are facilitated and hosted by SAT partners or SAT itself. They are attended primarily by SAT partners, but other organisations – mostly SWW Partners - also take part. The workshops can include personal coaching, group exercises and field visits. The skills offered range from practical, site-based teaching sessions at national level, to more technical training at regional level. The workshops provide a way for new organisations and for new staff/volunteers to rapidly acquire knowledge and skills. They also create a forum for new and more experienced partners to exchange programme experience and to find solutions to problems mutually encountered. Workshop topics include both technical HIV and AIDS programming issues and organisational development issues.

Organisation-to-organisation mentoring: Here, experienced SAT partners mentor new groups over a period lasting weeks, months or even years. Staff of the mentoring organisation help the recipient organisation to design programmes, supervise and monitor activities, and solve technical or administrative problems, according to their needs and demand. Mentoring relationships can include a provision for apprenticeships. Staff or volunteers from one SAT partner spend a period of one to four weeks with another SAT partner, usually a well-established programme. This allows the apprentice to gain practical experience that can be shared with colleagues on return and integrated into programme activities. Mentoring often develops into long-term organisational relationships of benefit to both parties. Mentoring is provided by organisations that:

- Implement HIV and AIDS activities of proven effectiveness.
- Demonstrate commitment to serving vulnerable groups in their communities.
- Have training capability and the desire to share their knowledge and experience.
- Work methodically and systematically and have a strong emphasis on accountability.
- Have the initiative and ability to sustain mentoring follow-up.

Structured study visits: Less experienced groups or organisations that want to introduce new activities visit more experienced organisations to observe their programmes in action. The visiting and host organisations are carefully matched to ensure the relevance of the concepts and skills to be transferred.

Support & monitoring visits: Partners completing SWW skills workshops or other SWW activities are visited by SAT staff or the staff/volunteers of mentoring partner organisations, their activities observed, difficulties discussed and solutions and improvements agreed upon.

Network meetings: These meetings are a mechanism of mutual support and learning for community-based organisations. They are non-bureaucratic - i.e. they do not have any staff or secretariat (and therefore do not challenge formal, national networks). Participants define what is discussed, shared and learned. In this way, SAT networks allow new priorities and needs to be identified rapidly and translated into programming responses. The networks may be national or regional and participant organisations are drawn from SAT partners and others with an interest or activities in specific areas

such as children affected by HIV and AIDS. Mainstreaming of gender is emphasised in all network activities.

One particular type of network meeting is referred to as “cross networking”. Cross-networking is designed to widen the goals and perspectives of organisations working in areas related to the response to HIV. Cross networking meetings bring together activists on gender equality, human rights, community development and AIDS from different countries in Southern Africa. This allows diverse organisations to identify common areas of activity and interest, and assists in the cross fertilisation of HIV and gender programming.

SWW Contracts

SWW contracts are developed for all SWW activities. Funds are advanced quarterly based on a quarterly work plan. At the end of the quarter, all funds have to be accounted for according to services provided.

The SWW contract may be with a SAT Implementing Partner, for example to fund a national skills training workshop or a study visit. This funding is separate from and additional to the Capacity Development Contract established with the partner.

SWW contracts may also be signed with other types of SAT partner (see below), in effect buying their services to provide technical support for SAT partners. Organisations that have gone through the SAT capacity development partnership process are first preference when SAT is identifying partners to be contracted through this type of SWW contract. These organisations may be specialised in:

- Training or development of learning materials.
- Providing on-site technical support.
- Specialised technical areas of programming.
- Facilitating meetings, networks and other fora.

► Participatory Review

This is an opportunity for SAT partner organisations and their stakeholders to reflect on the events of the past year and to think ahead for the development of new plans for the following year. The intention is to assess and analyse the impact, effectiveness, and challenges of the organisation. This is a vital part of the SAT monitoring and evaluation framework, and an essential activity for partners in ensuring their continuing attention to results-based management. The review also provides an opportunity to plan for next year's activities and, if necessary, for the organisation to amend its objectives and strategies to ensure their ongoing relevance and effectiveness in meeting identified needs.

SAT is currently finalising Participatory Review guidelines for partners.

► “Nesting” of Projects

Some organisations are so new or so inexperienced that they lack the basic requirements of accountability. They are run entirely by volunteers and may have no formal status, no address of their own, and may not even have a bank account.

SAT has developed an effective mechanism to support emerging community groups. This mechanism – referred to as ‘Nested contracts’ - precedes a direct contractual relationship between SAT and the community group under a Capacity Development Contract. The nested contract is signed with a larger and more experienced, local hosting organisation, which provides support and supervision to the emerging group.

► M&E

Routine M&E for SAT Implementing Partners includes:

- Monitoring of all SWW activities.
- Monthly financial reports.
- Quarterly collation of CABA, home based care and counselling data.
- Annual update of SOCAT (organisational capacity).
- Occasional update or SATCOMP (community competence).
- Ad hoc evaluations (often linked to proposed partner graduation).

► Termination of partnership

It is very rare for SAT to prematurely end - or 'terminate' - a relationship with a partner. This only happens when a partner is in breach of contract or they have demonstrated inadequate progress in capacity development.

Breach of contract

SAT partnerships are built on mutual trust. SAT discloses all relevant information about its strategies and finances to its partners, and meets its contractual obligations. We expect the same of our partners. SAT will terminate partnerships with organisations for reasons such as:

- Repeated failure to submit timely financial or narrative reports.
- Refusal to provide organisational information (e.g. membership, governance, sources of income, annual budget, etc.).
- Submission of falsified reports or information.
- Refusal to participate in organisational capacity building activities and skills exchange.
- Refusal to meet monitoring requirements as specified in the partnership agreement.

Inadequate progress in capacity development

Where problems arise, SAT monitoring systems pick up signs of lack of progress at an early stage and SAT staff do their best to assist partners. Unfortunately however, not all organisations are successful. SAT's policy of prioritising relatively new and vulnerable groups / organisations takes into account the fact that some of these partners will not be able to grow into sustainable, strong, community-based organisations.

When a group fails to establish itself and progress at a suitable pace and to a suitable level despite intensive support from SAT, the partnership will be terminated.

In this difficult process, SAT exercises great care and tolerance; the partnership will only be terminated if there is no reasonable chance of solving the problems that are hindering capacity development.

C) Re-defining the partnership

► Graduation – success of capacity development

Relationships must evolve to remain healthy. SAT supports community organisations to develop their capacity and, ultimately, sustain and continue to improve their work without our support. If this is achieved, SAT shifts its support to new partners with lower levels of capacity and repeats the process. In such successful situations, we refer to the process of changing our relationship with the mature partner as 'graduation'.

Importantly, relationships with partners do not end with the final Capacity Development Contract. We seek to create an ever-expanding and ever-richer network of sharing and learning. After graduation, SAT invites Implementing Partners to become SWW Partners. In specific cases, the ongoing relationship with SAT will take the form of a SWW contract to provide skills training or mentoring.

Determining the precise level of capacity development of a partner is not easy and it is an ongoing challenge to identify clear end points to the SAT partnership process. There is no clear-cut, rigid process that can yield decisions for graduation. Rather, graduation decisions take into account partner perspectives, SAT staff judgements, and are guided by the following indicators:

<p>Organisational indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sound financial base supported by multiple donors. ➤ Transparent & functional governance & management structure. ➤ Adequate accommodation & assets, managed in a satisfactory way. ➤ Financial records audited annually. ➤ Demonstrated ability to effectively plan, manage & monitor programme implementation ➤ Success in mainstreaming gender 	<p>Programmatic indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Demonstrated ability to mobilise, train, support & retain of community volunteers ➤ Demonstrated quality & appropriateness of services (i.e. targeting vulnerable groups & meeting needs) ➤ Development & effective management of comprehensive programmes ➤ Demonstrated ability to translate skills acquired through SWW into programming ➤ Success in mainstreaming gender
<p>Strategic indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Long term strategic plans & appropriate mechanisms for reviewing, monitoring & updating them. ➤ Organisation has undergone at least one external evaluation that confirms that a high level of organisational & programmatic capacity has been achieved. 	

► SWW Partners

School Without Walls Partners are community-level or national networking organisations that regularly attend SAT’s skills training workshops or organisations/institutions with the skills or experience to facilitate training, host study visits or mentor SAT’s implementing partners.

► Strategic Partners

Strategic Partners include international NGOs, regional initiatives, regional or global networking organisations, research institutions and donors. These partnerships are mutually beneficial, focusing on capacity building, skills training, scaling-up community responses, Good Practice Strategy, research and advocacy or resource mobilisation.