



PATTERN BREAKING STRATEGIES



## Organizational Capacity Assessment

**Root Change's unique methodology for organizational capacity assessment and strengthening helps organizations around the world to be more vibrant, viable and effective in their response to development challenges. Through the assessment and planning process, organizations recognize their own potential and are able to make informed decisions about how best to address the challenges they face. Our methodology provides organizations with the tools and insights they need to regularly reflect on and learn from their experiences; review and adapt their plans and activities according to their purpose, context and resources; and improve their performance and impact.**

Designed to bring rigor and learning to the process of organizational capacity assessment and strengthening, Root Change's organizational capacity assessment (OCA) is a product of several years of research and field practice. This comprehensive process brings together communities of peer organizations (or complex organizations with multiple departments/program offices) to reflect upon their performance and set strategies to broaden their impact and affect significant, positive and lasting change.

Root Change's OCA services help clients build high-performing organizations by working with them to measure performance and implement improvement strategies. Our clients include local and international NGOs, donors, governments, and Fortune 500 corporations working in a wide variety of sectors and across all the continents of the world. OCA provides an array of organizational effectiveness services that include assessment, coaching and team building. It also incorporates process management services to help organizations achieve their desired vision, strategy and culture. Root Change's organizational capacity assessment and strengthening products and services help guide organizations in selecting the most appropriate activities, tools and strategies for capacity building and in anticipating and overcoming the greatest barriers to change.



### What makes Root Change's OCA unique?

- Our approach employs a structured facilitated discussion method using “**discussion anchors**” to bolster reliability and validity of the self assessment tool. Discussion anchors help to

highlight specific events which have occurred within specified time parameters and which are closely connected to the organization's ability to promote significant, positive, and lasting change.

- Our approach establishes a representative **cross-functional, cross-hierarchical organizational capacity assessment team**. In many cases this provides the first opportunity for open, structured communication across these traditional organizational boundaries.
- Our OCA introduces an organizational **consensus** dimension. The organization's consensus score measures diversity of opinion among team members in order to enrich organizational analysis and encourage capacity building through the analysis of divergent viewpoints.
- Our approach includes techniques that enable users to form peer learning groups where they can communicate about OCA findings and results as well as capacity building efforts within the user-community. It also allows them to **benchmark** their individual organizational scores against the community of peer organizations. As a result, organizations are able to analyze and compare their performance not only against their own previous scores or donor-specified objectives, but against an "industry standard". In reporting results and fostering communication among communities of organizations we use various kinds of technology, including the **Internet** where appropriate.
- In addition to basic assessment tools, we offer **companion tools** that help participants to apply their OCA results to the design of change initiatives that are firmly rooted in organizational realities.
- Finally, although we are conducting self-assessments which are, by nature, subjective and qualitative, we employ **advanced statistical techniques** in our data analysis to ensure construct validity and reliability.

## The OCA Process

### ***Participatory Tool Design***

OCA is not a pre-designed assessment tool but rather a client-focused methodology, which provides a framework for organizational stocktaking and action planning. OCA empowers organizations to themselves identify the priority capacity areas and indicators to be investigated and measured.

### ***Guided Self-Assessment***

Assessment teams composed of representative staff, board members and constituent representatives work with trained facilitators to answer discussion questions in a setting that closely resembles a focus group. Each discussion set is followed by a series of individually scored indicators. The qualitative and quantitative insights that emerge from this process open new channels of communication and information sharing and serve as a catalyst for team-building and organization-wide learning.

### ***Data-Guided Action Planning***

Data-guided action planning begins with the organization's interpretation of the data, which ensures the contextualization and validation of the results. It is here that organizations recognize and acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses and identify and act on their priorities.

### ***Reassessment for Continual Learning***

Root Change provides ongoing process management and coaching as organizations implement their action plans. Once every 8-12 months, organizations reassess themselves to monitor change. By regularly reassessing performance over time, organizations can track the effectiveness of their capacity building efforts.

**For more information on how you and your partner organizations can take advantage of Root Change's Organizational Capacity Assessment services, please contact Jacob Gray at [jgray@rootchange.org](mailto:jgray@rootchange.org).**