



East, Central and Southern
Africa Health Community
Fostering Regional Cooperation for Better Health

Knowledge Café After Action Review



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Learning objectives

1. To enable participants appreciate the importance of conducting an AAR
2. To share ECSA's experience in the utilization of AAR

What is an AAR? An After Action Review (AAR) is a brief meeting of team members to reflect on an event or task they have just accomplished and discuss what can be done better or differently in the future

Goals of an AAR: AAR's allow the team to learn from its experience in order to take the lessons learned into the next phase of the project or to accomplish the task more effectively the next time it is done.

- Capture best practices and identify lessons learned from experience
- Capture multiple perspectives of what happened and why
- Encourage feedback for improved performance

ECSA's Experience in Utilizing AAR. ECSA so far conducted a number of AARs:

1. Global Fund Grant application process
2. Preparations and Hosting of the 62nd Health Ministers Conference

After Action Review for the - 62nd Health Ministers Conference

Introduction: The East Central and Southern Africa – Health Community (ECSA-HC) over the years has been hosting annual Best Practices Forums (BPF), Directors Joint Consultative Committees (DJCC) and Health Ministers Conferences (HMC).

In 2015, the ECSA-HC in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, Mauritius set out to host the 9th BPF, 25th DJCC and the 62nd HMC from November 30th to 4th December at the Intercontinental Resort in the republic of Mauritius. This meeting was meant to bring together ECSA Ministers of Health, senior officials from the Ministries of Health, Heads of Research and Training Institutions, experts in relevant fields of health, researchers and different development and collaborating partners working in health.

Details of the AAR: The purpose of the AAR was to explore ways in which the BPF/DJCC and HMC would be better organized, hosted and most important how the conference will bring more value to the ECSA Member States, collaborating partners and other stakeholders

- **When was the AAR conducted?** One week after the HMC
- **Who participated?** All staff members, this is because all members of staff are involved in the preparation of the HMC and a good proportion of the staff take part in the HMC
- **How was it conducted?**
 - Face to face meeting in the ECSA-HC boardroom. All staff were invited.
 - The AAR guiding questions were circulated to all staff members two days prior to the meeting
 - The meeting was facilitated by one of the KM champions at ECSA-HC, there was a note taker
 - Chair persons of different committees and members are given an opportunity to discuss their tasks before the entire team comments
 - Action points/recommendations were read out at the end of the AAR and consensus was sort from the participants
- **Successes we have experienced from using AAR.**
 - Following the AAR on the HMC we are already implementing recommendations discussed at the HMC AAR. I.e. Earlier planning
 - Commitment from management broadly on knowledge management and the use of AAR as a KM tool.
- **Lessons learned:**
 - It is important to prepare an AAR questionnaire and send out in advance.
 - Have a good meeting place.
 - Ensure that there is both a facilitator and a note-taker.
 - Do not make the session too formal—because you want people to participate. Take into consideration your organization’s setting and how different staff relate.
 - Continuously remind colleagues that this is a learning process not a victimization process.
 - Involve all the people who were involved in the activity.
 - Commitment from management is important. If they appreciate that an AAR is important then they will also work on the recommendations to improve future activities.

Discussion questions to spark conversation

1. Think of activity or project you are carrying out in your organization and share briefly what the activity is and how you will conduct the AAR
2. Do AARs have to be strictly formal? Yes or No
3. What are some of the deliverables of conducting an AAR?