

ADVOCACY EXPERT SERIES

Building and Maintaining
Networks and
Coalitions

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Developed by
Pact Tanzania

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	i
Introduction	ii
Understanding Alliances, Networks and Coalitions	6
What are Networks?	6
What are Coalitions?	6
What are Alliances?	6
Networks	9
Purpose of a Network	9
Elements of Forming and Maintaining Networks	9
Network Structures	12
Coalitions and Alliances	19
Different types of Coalitions	19
Managing Conflict	23
Conflict in networks and Coalitions	23
Responding to Conflict	24
Negotiation	25
What if this does not Work	26
Case Studies	27
Gender land Task Force	27
The Labor Rights Advocacy Team	30
NGO Policy Forum	31
Summary and Conclusions	33
Bibliography and Resources	34

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The Series consists of 6 Manuals:

- Policy and Law Making in Tanzania
- Civil Society and Advocacy
- Media Guide
- Building and Maintaining Networks and Coalitions
- Community Mobilisation
- Gender Mainstreaming

These manuals can be used separately, but together, form a comprehensive resource on conducting advocacy in Tanzania.

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We dedicate these manuals to Tanzanian Civil Society Organizations, who play a crucial role in the development of this beautiful country.

Introduction

This guide to Building and Maintaining Networks and Coalitions grew out of Pact Tanzania's experience in implementing the Tanzania Advocacy Partnership Program (TAPP). The material and lessons learned have come from a number of sources as well as from Pact's NGO partners

This guide explains the differences and similarities between Networks and Coalitions. It provides a basic outline on the formation of each as well as a discussion on various structures and things to pay attention to as one initiates or joins a network or coalition. There is a chapter on how to manage conflict and three case studies from Tanzania. These case studies were presented at a Pact Tanzania workshop in 2004.

While non-governmental organizations are the primary target user of this manual, it is expected that the guide will be used by a wide range of organizations representing civil society to interact with government at all levels. This manual is designed to present the information in a simple and straightforward manner, but it does not have all the answers or steps regarding network formation and management in Tanzania. We encourage the reader to seek a variety of sources to learn more about networks, and advocacy coalitions here in Tanzania.

We thank USAID Tanzania for funding the production of this booklet and the entire Advocacy Expert Series. We encourage you to copy all or part of this guide and to share it with others. This book may not be sold.

1

Understanding Alliances, Networks and Coalitions

In the NGO world, there is constant talk about networking and coalition building. This is especially true in the area of advocacy. To create positive change in our communities, in society and even in our workplaces, organizations and individuals need to come together to collaborate and achieve common goals. The result of this coming together and collaboration has been called a variety of terms - Alliances, Coalitions and Networks.

For our purposes, it helps to have some basic definitions that distinguish coalitions, alliances and networks. But in practice, these terms are used flexibly.

What are Networks?

Networks consist of individuals or organizations that share information, ideas and resources to accomplish individual or group goals. Networking is a process of acquiring resources and building power by using or creating linkages between two or more individuals, groups, or organizations. Networks tend to be loose, flexible associations of people and groups brought together by a common interest or concern to share information and ideas.

What are Coalitions?

Coalitions are groups of people or organizations working together to pursue a single goal. Coalitions often have a more formalized structure with the members making a long-term commitment to share responsibilities and resources. Their permanence can give clout and leverage. Whenever possible, organizations should seek to build or join a coalition to strength impact of their advocacy.

What are Alliances?

Alliances generally involve short term relationships among members and are focused on a specific objective. Being limited in time and goal, alliances tend to be less demanding on members.

Pact's experience around the globe is that NGOs in different countries use different names for their advocacy groups-some are called networks and others are called coalitions. The structures and procedures ascribed to these groups also vary. In Tanzania, there are a number of formal advocacy groups registered with the government as NGO Networks. These networks are made up of member organizations that have come together because of shared interests. They did not necessarily form the network for the purpose of conducting a specific advocacy campaign but rather came together for multiple reasons and purposes. The coalitions that form in Tanzania tend to be very focused on an advocacy theme and the participants are civil society organizations and networks. The name chosen by an advocacy group is unimportant. What matters is that the entire membership understands and agrees on the name, the structure, and the operating procedures.

For the purposes of this manual, we will use the term NETWORK to refer to groups collaborating together for different purposes and the term COALITION to refer to advocacy groups or networks working to achieve a common goal.

2

Networks

Purpose of a network

The primary objective of networks as well as their design and degree of formalization may differ and may also change over time. But independent of how they are organized, networks always tend to be (or become) exclusive. They summon a group of people or organizations that share certain values and/or objectives. They arise out of a need to gain access to power, finance, information and anything else that is relevant to their constituencies. They depend on inputs and contributions from all their members. The following are the purposes of networks:

- To work as a forum of updating issues
- To furnish member organizations with new ideas
- To pull together meager resources
- To facilitate the use of resources
- To build capacity of members in achieving benefit
- To protect smaller organizations in the group
- To create bigger recognition
- To provide framework for carrying out activities
- To have systematic mechanism of strengthening relations
- To build a strong front for advocacy
- To learn from each others experiences

Elements for Forming and Maintaining Networks

Forming the Network

- Establish a clear purpose or mission.
- Involve individuals and organizations that share the mission.
- Build a commitment to participatory process and collaboration.

Maintaining the Network

Organization

- Define clear, specialized roles.
- Establish a loose or fluid organizational structure. Vertical, hierarchical structures do not build strong networks.

- Compile a skills inventory, including the skills/expertise of individual members and institutional resources (fax, Internet, meeting space, etc.).
- Prepare to fill expertise gaps by recruiting new members.
- Establish a communication system - how will the members communicate with each other? Newsletter, email, telephone, regular meetings?
- Create a member database (name, address, organization mission, type and focus of organization, etc.).

Questions to Ask in Forming Networks

- How do you define the network?
- What is the purpose of the network?
- Is a formal network necessary?
- What is the mission of the network?
- Which organizations or individuals share this mission?
- How many organizations should be invited to join? How many agreed?
- How would you invite them?
- What agenda would you set for the initial meeting?
- What result do you want from the first meeting?
- What type of commitment are they willing to make?

Leadership

- Share leadership functions (i.e., rotating coordinating committee).
- Set realistic goals and objectives.
- Divide into subgroups/task forces to take on specific tasks according to expertise.
- Spread responsibilities across all members to reduce workload and avoid burnout.
- Promote participatory planning and decision making.
- Foster trust and collaboration among members.
- Keep members motivated by acknowledging their contributions.

Questions to Ask in Maintaining Networks

- What is the mission of the network?
- What is our legal structure?
- How large is the membership?
- What are the skills and resources of the group? Where are the gaps?
- How will decisions be made?
- How will all members stay informed?
- How will consensus be reached?
- How will you maintain a balance of power?
- How will conflicts be managed/resolved?
- How will members develop a plan of action?
- How will activities be coordinated?
- How will tasks be assigned?
- How will network activities be documented?
- How will you monitor and evaluate activities?
- How will the network be sustainable - financially and programmatically?
- Will there be a separate secretariat or one housed in a member's office?

Meetings/Documentation

- Meet only when necessary.
- Set specific agenda and circulate it ahead of time. Follow the agenda and keep meetings brief. Finish meetings on time and rotate the facilitation role.
- Keep attendance list and record meeting minutes for dissemination after meeting.

- Use members' facilitation skills to help the network reach consensus and resolve conflict.
- Discuss difficult issues openly during meetings.
- Maintain a network notebook to document activities, decisions, etc.



Network Structures

Principles of Structure

The different activities that networks engage in require different capacities from the member organizations as well as different organizational structures and degrees of formalization of the network itself. For example, a network in which the main (or only) function is to encourage information sharing among members does not demand elaborate structures as organizations or multi-purpose networks.

Formalization of the network will be imperative where money is involved. Most networks have solved this problem by refraining from fund-raising and demanding that all costs for networking activities or projects run by member organizations shall be carried by these organizations themselves.

A formal network is much more than a series of boxes and lines neatly arranged on an organization chart. Structure reflects the way a network delivers its programs and services and achieves its goals. There are several principles that guide network structure.

- The structure enables the organization to fulfill its statement of purpose and plans
- The networks are designed to meet human needs and achieve a purpose
- The network's structure must be appropriate to its goals, objectives and plans, the environment in which it exists, the technology available to it and its human and financial resources
- An appropriate structure will effectively control the allocation and application of resources
- The network's structure should enhance decision-making and problem-solving processes in a way that reduces power struggles and interpersonal conflicts.

Structural Development

The overriding principle governing the design of network structure is that the structure should help the network to achieve its goals. The focus of any effort to design a structure is the need to divide up the work. This requires the creation of organizational units. These units may include committees (also known as task forces, working groups), a coordination unit (this could be a Secretariat(s), office staff-paid or unpaid) and a decision-making body. Create only those units needed to assure the achievement of the Statement of Purpose.



Considerations when you get to the point of deciding on a structure are:

When you are ready to start the process of defining the structure for your network you should ask yourself:

- What work needs to be done?
- What kind of groups or committees do we need to form to do the work?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of each group or committee?
- How do we want to govern and/or manage ourselves within the groups and the network as a whole?
- Who will be in charge of what parts?
- Where are network members located?
- What will help us work together as efficiently as possible?
- How do we want to communicate and cooperate between the various groups that make up the network?
- How do we ensure communications between the groups that make up the network and the decision-making body happens?
- Do we want to hire staff? If so, for what functions?
- Where will they be located?

Once you have reached agreement on these questions you can detail the structure by drawing a diagram of the groups that make up the network, and listing lines of authority for doing the work and managing the network. An important matter for the understanding of networks is information flows, their patterns and directions. These flows are closely related to the types of activities pursued within the network. Mapping these flows reveals a great deal about the character, limitations and possibilities of any network. **Do not forget that networks tend to change their structures over time to meet their evolving needs.**

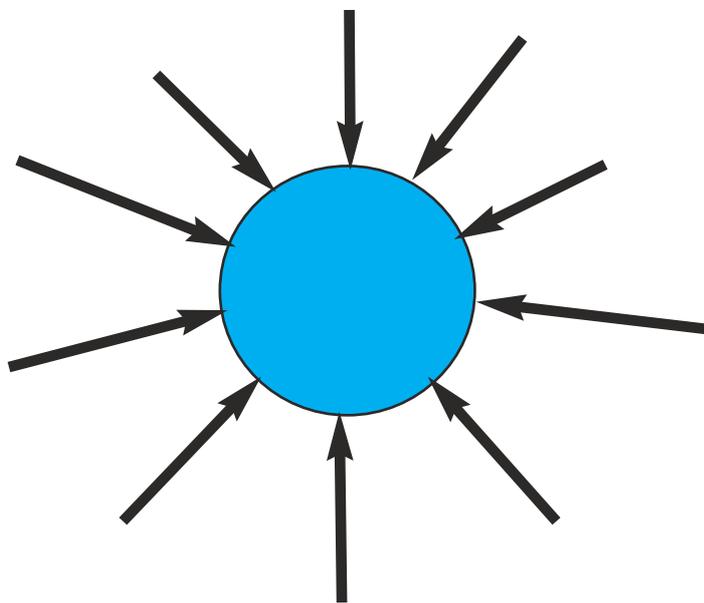
Thoughts on How Networks Organize Themselves

How networks organize themselves is a difficult concept to explain. Perhaps this is because there are so many networks with unique structures and functions that it is difficult to generalize. The following two examples offer different but complimentary explanations of network structures.

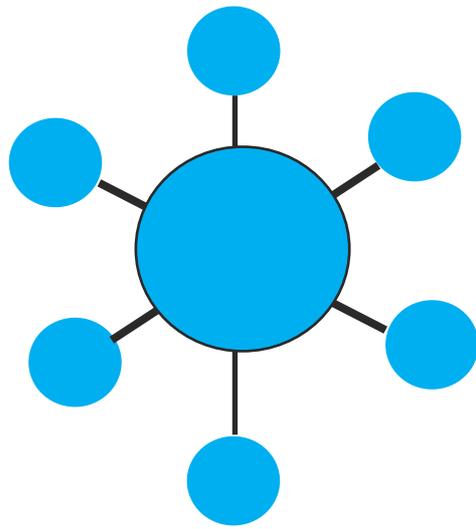
If you find the models helpful in understanding the structures of networks you may want to adapt them to the needs of your network.

Example 1

Collaborations usually adopt one of two structures: **a table or a wheel**. In the table structure, everyone comes together to make the necessary decisions (such groups are usually seated around a table). In the wheel, small groups take more independent action. A group at the hub coordinates information and activities, but the small groups may have little contact with each other. However, no structure is pure. The table model may have task forces or sub-committees that act like spokes on the wheel, making recommendations back to the larger group or taking action on behalf of the "table". On the other hand, the spokes on the wheel may each operate like a "table" where all members make the decisions.



"Table" Structure



" Wheel" Structure

Example 2

There are many types of networks. Here are the three major ones:

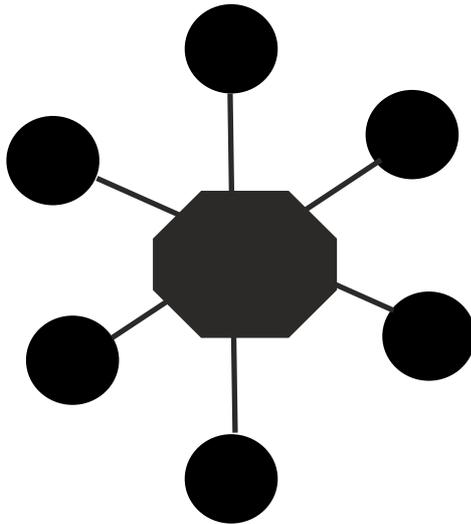


Diagram A

In Diagram A, all information, support and exchanges go through the centre, a Secretariat or a Committee. If the partners communicate, they do so through the Central body.

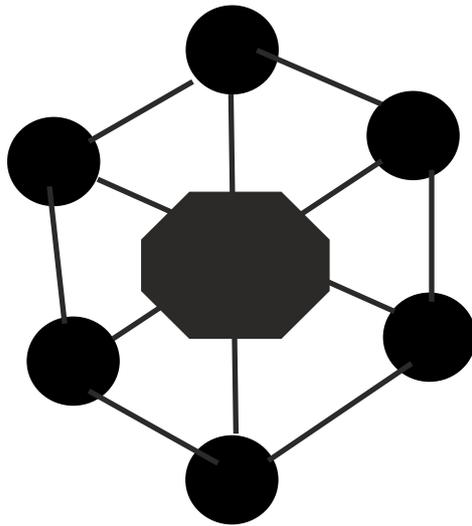


Diagram B

In Diagram B, there is a better balance. The nucleus is the centre of the network; it will always play a major role but the partners begin to collaborate directly, without referring to the Centre. Communication between the members is limited however.

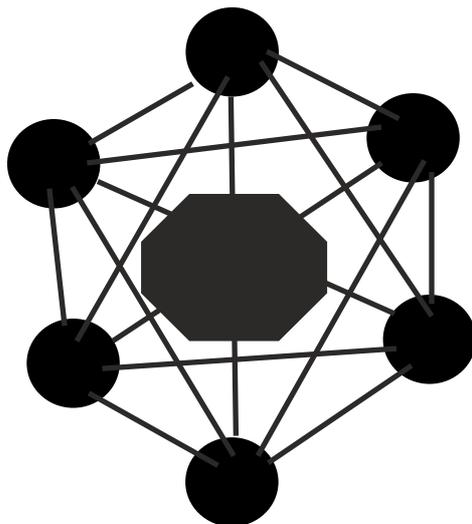


Diagram C

In Diagram C, there is direct and systematic communication among the different members of the network. The Centre is a support service for action carried out by partners. Please note that the above represent only a few of the many models that exist for structuring a network. When developing a structure keep in mind that every network has unique organizational and communication needs.

The main criteria for developing a structure should be need rather than the existence of "proven" models. Also, experience has shown that network structures are rarely static: they change over time. To help ensure that the structure of your network remains relevant to needs and changing circumstances, it is a good idea to formally review your structure at regular intervals (i.e., every one or two years) and make the necessary changes.

Examples of Tanzanian Networks

- Tabora NGO Cluster (TANGOC)
- Kilimanjaro NGOs Cluster on STIs/HIV/AIDS and Reproductive Health Interventions (KINSHAI)
- Dodoma Environmental Network (DONET)
- Zanzibar NGOs Cluster (ZANGOC)
- Advocacy Network for AIDS in Tanzania (ANAT)
- Pastoralist NGO's (PINGOs) Forum
- Small Farmers Association (MVIWATA)
- National Policy Forum (NPF)

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful
committed citizens can change the world;
indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.*

Margaret Mead

3

Coalitions and Alliances

A Coalition is a group of people or organizations working together to pursue a single goal. In coalitions, all members make a long term commitment to share responsibilities and resources. Whenever possible, advocacy organizations should seek to build a join a coalition to strengthen the impact of their campaign and advocacy work. Coalitions allow advocates to share information, ideas, and resources with other organizations as well as distribute the risks and responsibilities of the advocacy campaign among the members. Alliances are less permanent than coalitions but share many of the same benefits:

- Increased access to decision makers and other contacts
- Improved credibility and visibility
- Opportunities to broaden public support
- Opportunity to strengthen civil society on the whole

Different NGOs have different areas of expertise, difference resources and attract, different stakeholders. Building a diverse coalition with a variety of NGOs will increase one's chances of success and prove to the decision makers in power that there is broad social support for the desired policy change. Decision makers are also more likely to pay attention to coalitions - and alliances - as they bring a stronger voice to the decision making table.

Different types of coalitions

There are different types of coalitions and alliances. Geographically, they may be local, regional, national or transnational. They may be formed to achieve one short term objective. The coalition/alliance is dissolved when the issue has been solved or the event has been coordinated.



Coalitions may also be set up to address one or more long term issue as one-issue or event coalitions which only have to agree on one particular issue. Coalitions that focus on more than one but related issues, such as nutrition and health; childcare needs and elderly health care; or population and the environment have to be very strategic in how they operate. This more permanent type of coalition recognizes the value of mobilizing together for action over a longer time.

Coalitions and alliances also differ in terms of structure. Some may be formally organized and highly structured with headquarters and permanent staff. Others are informal and flexible, relying on volunteers.

Donors who support advocacy are often eager to support coalitions. Coalitions have, in some cases, been promoted as the "perfect" vehicle for NGO collaboration. As a result, some coalitions are donor-initiated or donor-created. Coalitions are usually strongest if they grow organically out of common interests. Experience shows that they are unlikely to survive if they are externally imposed.



Coalition checklist

Membership: Who do you want to work with? What are the criteria for joining our coalition? A large, diverse group of participating organizations will expand our coalition's knowledge, skills, and resources but may be difficult to manage. A small group will be easier to manage but may not have the same level of impact or influence. In both situations, the coalition should have a clear statement of principles that defines our purpose, mission, goals, and benefits of membership.

Commitment: What are the expectations of the coalition members? Where, when, and how often does the coalition meet? The coalition must meet frequently enough to keep all members informed, involved, and motivated. The coalition must also create reasonable expectations of work and responsibilities among members. In addition to a statement of principles, the coalition should have written policies regarding behavior and obligations of members that are consistent and fair and respected by all members.

Decision-Making: How will the decision making process work? The coalition's decision-making process must be built on the principles of equality and democracy and include opportunities for group discussion, procedures for conflict resolution, methods for delegating tasks, and a scheduled rotation of leadership responsibilities.

Communication: How will members communicate with each other? A system of communication must be established that allows members to exchange information and ideas quickly and efficiently. All members must commit to attending regular meetings and events. Records of all meeting agendas, minutes, and decisions made and actions taken should be organized and available to members. The coalition should also select a spokesperson and create a communication plan for crisis situations.

Examples of Tanzanian Advocacy Coalitions

- Anti Female Genital Mutilation Network (AFNET)
- Gender Land Task Force
- Civil Society anti-corruption Coalition (CAC)
- Natural Resources Management Working Group
- HIV/AIDS and Orphans Coalition (KIWAKUKI)



*Coming together is a beginning;
keeping together is progress; working together is success.*

Henry Ford

4

Managing Conflict

Conflict in Networks and Coalitions

Although members of a coalition and network are committed to a common purpose, they may approach tasks and decisions quite differently. This is particularly true when the network is going through a process of change: deciding what and how they are going to do things differently. Conflict in networking and networks is, therefore, inevitable. A constructive approach to this reality is to expect it and develop the skills to resolve it. In order to understand conflict in networks it is helpful to give it a definition and to look at the potential sources of conflict:

A conflict is a problem involving at least two parties, both with emotional allegiance to a different point of view.

It is important to recognize the potential sources of conflict which include:

Assumptions and Perceptions

Different people view the same situation and see it differently, because their past experiences and personal beliefs and values differ.

Individual Values, Needs and Goals

The values, needs and goals of an individual may be in conflict with another's values, needs and goals.

Organizational Values, Needs and Goals

The values, needs and goals of an organization may be in conflict with the values, needs and goals of the coalition/network or other members.

Emotions

Powerful emotions such as fear, anger, anxiety and frustration, often block communication or distort perceptions to the point of conflict with others.

Competition

Struggles for time, money, attention, performance and personal or group success can be healthy or destructive.

Lack of Information or Clarity

Members perceive that they do not have all the information or do not understand the information. Alternatively, individuals may possess the information but fail to understand it. People understand differently and this can result in conflict.

Individual Communication and Influence Style

Insensitive or inappropriate interaction with others can create resistance. An aggressive approach that belittles others usually causes conflict. An over-accommodating passive nature can also cause frustrations which lead to conflict.

Responding to Conflict

Individuals react to conflict in a variety of ways. There are three basic response strategies.

Avoidance

Some people try to avoid conflict entirely. They suppress their reactions or remove themselves from the troublesome situation (e.g., resign from the network). They prefer to ignore or deny the existence of a problem and/or may lack the skills needed to deal with the conflict. The response will work if escape is possible. Overall, it is not an effective response strategy.

Defusing

Defusing is a delaying action. Individuals using this approach will either put off dealing with the conflict (until another time), or focus on minor points while avoiding the major issues. Like avoidance, this response will work if delay is possible, but it is not an effective response strategy.

Confrontation

This response involves confrontation of the differences between people. The member with the most power wins. This strategy is effective from the point of view of the "winner." From the "loser's" point of view, the conflict is not over.

Effective negotiation is based on concern for others, mutual respect, and a focus on the purpose, goals and objectives of the network. Members resolving a conflict in a "win-win" style think this way:

*"You and I have a conflict.
I respect your needs and I respect my own as well.
I will not use my power over you so that I may win.
But I cannot give in and let you win at the
expense of my needs and goals.
Let's work together for a solution that will satisfy
both our needs. That way, we both win."*

The win-win method results in faster decisions, of higher quality. The method builds better interpersonal relationships and a stronger commitment to carrying out the decisions reached. Each party is clear on its position; there is mutual respect for abilities, values and expertise, and all parties work toward a win-win solution.

The following steps could serve as a guideline for a conflict resolution process using the "win-win" principle.

1. Decide who will facilitate the process for resolving the conflict. Ask a group member or a third party facilitator, mediator, or arbitrator to lead the group. Or hold an outside session just for those directly involved in the conflict.
2. Review the current situation, define facts and revisit the results you need to achieve. Ask, "If we want to achieve these results, what must we do about this conflict?" Then determine which issues the network must resolve to do its work.
3. Ask the parties involved in the conflict to define their needs.
4. Search for alternatives and their implications;
5. Decide on the solution and action steps for implementation.

Sometimes personal hostility and other conflicts cannot be resolved. Here it is important to explore alternative approaches.

Confront the situation outright. Call a meeting and insist that the disagreeing individuals agree on a process to settle the dispute. Consider an outside facilitator. If settlement is impossible, create a working agreement and agree to disagree while working together in the network. This can and does work.



Confront the situation through people of influence. Collectively, ask important people (Members of the Governing Body, other members) associated with each of the warring individuals and/or organizations to intervene. This option allows the conflicting parties to fight in another and more appropriate arena than the network.

Work without the fighting parties. Prolonged periods of conflict between specific members can be stressful for all network members and it can damage the network itself. When all else fails consider working without the people and/or organizations involved in the seemingly irresolvable conflict. Few networks are so dependent on one or two people or organizations that they would not survive asking the fighting parties to leave the network.

4

Case studies

Gender Land Task Force (GLTF)

The Gender Land Task Force (GLTF) was a coalition of more than ten NGOs established in March 1997 under the coordination of Tanzania Women Lawyers Association (TAWLA). Originally, the intention was for GLTF to have representatives from all over Tanzania. However, due to financial constraints the majority of the coalition members came from Dar es Salaam.

Goal

See that a gender sensitive land law was passed that took into account the interests of the majority of marginalized groups of women, men and youth.

Purpose

The main purpose of the GLTF was to ensure that the recommendations from the March 1997 actions would be incorporated in the proposed Draft Land Bill. To accomplish this responsibility, the coalition members divided roles and assigned responsibilities amongst themselves as follows:

Key GLTF Members

- Tanzania Women Lawyers Association (TAWLA)
- Tanzania Gender Network Program (TGNP)
- Tanzania Media Women Association (TAMWA)
- National Organization for Children Welfare and Human Relief (NOCHU)
- Women Advancement Trust (WAT)
- Shirika la Wanawake Tanzania (SUWATA)
- Legal AID Scheme for Women (WLAC)
- Tanzania Home Economics Association (TAHEA)
- Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF)
- Institute of Development Studies (IDS) - - Women Study Group
- Faith Based Organizations (FBOs)

TAWLA	Overall coordinator and convener of GLTF meetings Reviewed the draft Bill and made appropriate legal interpretations
TAMWA	Media advocacy and publicity
TGNP	Parliamentary Lobbying
TAHEA	Public awareness creation and mobilization
WLAC	Community mobilization/outreach activities
WILDAF	Public awareness raising
NOCHU	Public awareness raising
WAT	Public awareness raising
IDS	Political Parties and Trade Union
FBOs	Sensitizing Women Religious members

Steps to Success

After the initial March 1997 consultation workshop, coalition members embarked on their respective activities. The activities accomplished in the first phase (March 1997 - February 1998) included:

- Reading and analyzing the draft Bill from a gender perspective
- Public awareness raising activities
- Workshops and working sessions to sensitize and lobby key actors on gender issues
- Lobbying parliamentarians, drafters of the Land Bill, Commissioner for Lands, senior land officers through working, sessions, workshops, seminars and TGNP's GDSS seminars
- Production and dissemination of flyers and handouts
- Identification and lobbying of MP allies
- Coalition members meetings, which were in themselves capacity building for coalition members
- Fund raising
- Initiating and sustaining the land debate
- Advocacy and mobilization of the public in the regions
- Dissemination of the Bill
- Publicity of Task Force activities for soliciting public support

Successes

There were a number of successes that came out of the GLTF. The GLTF was recognized as a voice advocating for the rights of women and disenfranchised and providing alternative language to the Bill. Through the GLTF, the members felt more empowered working together and it was possible to have stronger movement. There were no duplications of effort and synergy arose as all members knew their specific role to play during the campaign. The members spoke with one voice and through the GLTF, the campaigners were able to reach many people. The GLTF was able to achieve great success as 85 percent of their recommendations were incorporated into the Land Act.

Lessons learned

- Formulation of networks can create ambiguity. Clear vision and focused intention is crucial. In the beginning, there was some conflict as issues were being agreed upon.
- Transparency is very crucial in any network. Apart from other things, transparency on issues of money is crucial. In a group, people are interested in handling cash.
- The host bears a great burden in terms of resources
- Having different levels and areas of expertise in the network makes it more effective
- Staying focused and dedicated to the cause was the key factor.
- Knowing what you want is important.
- Once the success was achieved, the individual organizations could go on with their own missions

The Labor Rights Advocacy Team (LRAT) was formed in 2003 as a result of training conducted by the East Africa Human Rights Foundation in Uganda. The role of the coalition was to identify the different problems facing the labor force in Tanzania and to advocate for better labor laws and the rights of workers in the country.

This team is a coalition of seven organizations: LHRC, TLS, TAWLA, WLAC, TAMWA, TGNP and TUCTA. The coalition was formed with the common objective of advocating for better labor laws and the adherence of the international labor standards by the government. It is being coordinated by the Legal and Human Rights Center.

Strengths

- Work was shared between different partners thus making it easy to fulfill the objectives of the network.
- By having more people involved it is easy for the work to be taken more seriously and issues that are being addressed to be taken up.
- Diversification of ideas. Since all the NGOs come into the network with different perspectives. This permits the added advantage of multiple angles from which to view the issue.

Successes

The network managed to get recognition by the government and their recommendations and inputs were included in the new labor law.

Challenges

One of the greatest challenges was balancing the activities of the network with those of the individual organizations. The members discovered that, consciously or not, each of them made attempts to put forth their own agenda as the agenda of the coalition. Funding of activities was also a problem and led to the collapse of some of the network activities. Core funding was not available, so much of the fundraising was for specific activities or events which made sustainability an issue. The degree of commitment among members was also different. This was seen in the inconsistent attendance at meetings and the level of resource contributions.

Lessons learned

- Members that are recruited should carefully examine what they want to gain from joining the coalition. There is no value in joining, just to join.
- There is a need to have a strong vision and mission of the network to avoid being driven to do activities that are not in the coalition's best interest.

NGO Policy Forum (NPF)

NPF is a network representing 84 non-governmental organizations in Tanzania. As the government began to prepare policies on various topics affecting civil society, the Forum was started in 1993 as a means to engage NGOs and citizens in the policy formulation process. The NPF came into real prominence in 2002 and is now the leading network of NGOs focusing on nation-wide policy issues

NPF Activities

NPF is currently focusing on three policy processes - the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), the Budget Process (specifically through MTEF and PER), and the Local Government Reform Program (LGRP)

NPF Successes

The policy environment in Tanzania is changing very fast. At the same time, communications structures in Tanzania are too weak to permit extensive participation in the policy making chain. Civil society organizations, however, can more easily obtain and disseminate policy information.

Sharing information among NGOs helps them do policy analysis.

OBJECTIVES OF THE NPF

- Enhanced, democratic and accountable governance
- Improved quality of life
- Safeguarded human rights
- Constructive and effective participation of NGOs in policy-making and allowing more space for policy engagement by NGOs
- Enhanced capacity of NGOs to analyze policies and advocate for change
- Improved monitoring of impact and implications of policies
- Increase access to relevant, understandable policy information.

NPF coordinated an approach to participation in policy processes (emphasizing more thorough analysis, greater voice and more influence). The network was key in providing CSOs with a broader and deeper understanding of and participation in policy-making processes through improved access to information and capacity enhancement.

NPF Challenges

One of NPF problems is that policy is not correlated with budget allocation, thus the Forum has decided to advocate for linking of policy groups with budget groups. Other challenges are:

- How to increase membership and participation of NGOs not based in Dar es Salaam
- How to improve participation by and information sharing mechanisms among NPF members. It is difficult for members to participate actively and consistently even those based in Dar es Salaam.
- Participation versus co-optation (Where is the line drawn? What is the real impact on the ground?)
- The collective versus the individual voice: There must be a balance.
- How to resist becoming a gate-keeper
- Policy documents are written in technical language that is not easily understood by many

4

Summary and Conclusion

Throughout this manual, networking and coalition building have been identified as one of the most important activities of any advocacy campaign. It not only helps your campaign reach its objectives; it also gets your message known to more people in the community. This is key to creating change and fulfilling your collective goals.

The beauty of networks is that they celebrate diversity and create new paradigms for thinking and action. They are a superb means of exchanging information through newsletters, electronically, through the web or at various forums. This provides a cross fertilization of ideas and approaches in important advocacy issues such as influencing public policy and fostering public dialogue. Networks help to disseminate best practices and create common standards for quality and promote methodologies that work. All in all, networks and coalitions provide NGOs with greater impact and reach.

What works for effective advocacy?

Be strategic
Be proactive
Be inclusive
Be constructive
Be active
Inform and be informed

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