BUILDING CAPACITIES TOWARDS CSO NETWORK SUSTAINABILITY

Building Capacities Towards CSO Network Sustainability

Membership Development

CODE-NGO implements programs to strengthen the capacities of its member networks and base organizations as accountable and effective organizations.

Advocacy

CODE-NGO advocates for issues it deems essential for reducing poverty and improving governance. Our advocacies demonstrate our role as a trusted national voice of civil society organizations and as transformative leaders.

Knowledge Development and Management

CODE-NGO intends to build-up and strengthen structures and coordination mechanisms for research, information management and knowledge management. It manages the communities of practice for the Membership and Advocacy programs; maintains the members and partners database and handles communications.

The Caucus of Development NGO Networks (CODE-NGO) is the country's largest coalition of civil society organizations (CSOs) working for social development, with its 6 national networks and 6 regional networks representing more than 1,600 development NGOs, people's organizations (POs) and cooperatives nationwide. It is the trusted national voice of CSOs and it exercises transformative leadership.

Foreword

Strengthening the Capacity of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the Philippines project is probably the first time that an OD (organizational development) project of this breadth and scale – covering 139 organizations - was implemented in the Philippines. Funded by the Unites States Agency for International Development (USAID), the project's main objective was to develop and strengthen the organizational capacity of at least 120 target CSOs in governance and leadership; strategic planning and management; resource mobilization and development; program design, implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation; financial management; and administrative and personnel management through a combination of training and mentoring. It was implemented by a consortium led by the Ayala Foundation, Inc. The other members of the consortium were the Association of Foundations, Caucus of Development NGO Networks, Philippine Business for Social Progress, Philippine Council for NGO Certification, and the University of the Philippines Public Administration Research and Extension Services Foundation, Inc.

There were some networks, associations and federations of civil society organizations among the participating CSOs. If basic CSOs that are implementing direct services are having difficulties sustaining their operations and projects, one can imagine the challenges of sustaining a network which usually do not implement projects that provide direct services. In the project, we saw networks that were able to successfully address their organizational sustainability concerns.

Realizing the important role that CSO networks, associations and federations play in national development, the project convened a Peer Learning Exchange on CSO Network Sustainability. I am very happy that CODE-NGO has decided to continue what the project started by developing this guidebook on Building Capacities Towards CSO Network Sustainability.

I congratulate CODE-NGO for this important product that will be very useful for CSOs and CSO networks as well as development workers and agencies doing development work. To CODE-NGO, continue the good work of helping CSOs and CSO networks become more effective and sustainable organizations.

Ma. Socorro "Marissa" Camacho
Chief-of-Party
Strengthening the Capacity of Civil Society Organizations
(CSOs) in the Philippines Project

Preface

In the course of implementing the mentoring component of the Strengthening the Capacities of Philippine CSOs Project, a 3-year project (2012-2015) of USAID and a consortium of CSOs (led by Ayala Foundation (AFI) and which included CODE-NGO), capacity building concerns that are unique to CSO networks surfaced. These include managing vertical and horizontal relationships within the network's membership, ensuring quality and equal opportunities for participation of members and how these relate to effective governance of the network, and sustaining the network despite internal and external challenges, among others. These concerns, inherent to CSO networks, were not explicitly covered in the main capacity building interventions that were provided by the project to the participating CSOs as only a small minority of them were CSO networks. Yet these are major considerations that need to be addressed to strengthen the capacity of CSO networks.

CSO networks play a crucial role in strengthening CSOs and thus in advancing development in our country. They may be referred to as "networks", "alliances", "associations", "federations", "confederations", "coalitions" or other similar terms. They may be composed of NGOs or of people's organizations or of cooperatives or some or all of these and other types of CSOs. No matter how they are called or what types of organizations compose their membership, CSO networks facilitate capacity building among their members thru the exchange of information, good practices and lessons, allow for more efficient operations of the members thru resource sharing, and empower typically small organizations as they band, speak out and act together.

Recognizing the importance of CSO networks, the Strengthening CSOs project convened a Peer Learning Exchange (PLE) on CSO Network Sustainability just before it ended. The PLE intended to reinforce capacities and provide an opportunity for the participating CSO networks to further interact, share and learn from each other's practices and experience. The PLE also enabled them to identify solutions to the difficulties that their network may be encountering. The PLE was designed such that the other networks learn from the experience of more established CSO networks. It was geared towards sharing experiences on challenges and adoptable mechanisms and practices on membership relations, advocacy effectiveness, and operations and financial sustainability with the subsequent purpose of drafting this guidebook that will direct other networks in addressing sustainability concerns.

This guidebook is primarily intended for:

a) Civil society organizations (CSO) and CSO Networks, to provide technical guidance and reference on membership relations, advocacy effectiveness, and operations and financial sustainability. It is also intended to share examples of replicable mechanisms and good practices of the CSO networks that may also be utilized to strengthen and sustain CSO networks.

b) Development workers whose program/ project interventions include strengthening of organized groups in the community and networks of such groups, and

c) Organizations and agencies doing development work, i.e. bilateral aid agencies, government agencies, etc. in order to inform programming.

This guidebook has four main sections. The first describes CODE-NGO's Framework for CSO Network Sustainability. This is followed by three sections, with one each focusing on membership relations, advocacy effectiveness, and operations and financial sustainability. In each of these sections, there is (i) a case study of one CSO network, then a discussion of (ii) the important elements and indicators that are key to making CSO networks effective and sustainable, and (iii) red flags or early signs/ warnings of major problems and how these problems may be avoided or addressed.

Among the cases presented on member relations, advocacy effectiveness and operations and financial sustainability, these requirements for making CSO networks effective and sustainable come out: 1) Strong membership and constituency, and their active participation, 2) Effective governance and leadership, 3) Collegiality, representation and mutual responsibility of the leaders and members of the network, 4) Effective resource generation, and 5) Clear and functional monitoring and evaluation system.

Table of Contents

Introduction

CODE-NGO was formed in 1991 by its members to, among others, foster sharing of experiences, lessons and materials and tools so that they are able to build up the knowledge and skills needed for effective development work. The civil society organizations (CSOs) – NGOs, people's organizations and cooperatives – members and partners of CODE-NGO, the biggest CSO coalition in the country have been doing these since then. Over the years, we have seen how sharing and developing knowledge among ourselves and with other development CSOs has become more important and an imperative for collective action on different development issues and concerns. It was deemed necessary for the coalition to give more focus to knowledge development and management so that in the 2013-2017 Strategic Plan of CODE-NGO, we deliberately identified Knowledge Development and Management (KDM) as a stand-alone Key Result Area.

A vital element in our KDM efforts is the Communities of Practice (CoPs) program of CODE-NGO. We are working towards building communities of CSO leaders who have a common interest or concern related to development work, and who regularly share experiences, lessons, ideas, questions and solutions so that they become better at what they do. Examples of these are communities of Board/Council members of CSO networks focusing on CSO network governance or of CSO financial managers and staff or of advocates and practitioners of Bottom-up Budgeting or community-based disaster risk reduction and management.

We have found that the most important ingredient in the CoPs are the community members, the people who share the "practice" and are willing to share their experiences – both good and bad, and their lessons. In this age of the advances in information technology, exchanges within these CoPs have been mainly through online interactive fora. This method, after all, is much less expensive, both in terms of funds and time, compared to bringing together for face-to-face encounters CoP members from across the country.

All these is without prejudice to occasional meetings of the CoP members which are also important to enable them to share, dialogue and interact with each other personally and to bolster their inter-personal ties. Thus, we are thankful for opportunities for such meetings, including the Peer Learning Exchanges (PLEs) of the Strengthening the Capacities of Philippine CSOs Project, a project of USAID and an Ayala Foundation (AFI) - led consortium of CSOs, which included CODE-NGO.

We are also thankful that the PLE on CSO Network Sustainability has resulted to the creation of this guidebook. We hope that this guidebook becomes useful for CSO network leaders, members and staff and to those in government and in our development partners that support CSO networks.

We in CODE-NGO still have much to learn and to do to improve and strengthen our CoPs and our knowledge development and management efforts, but this guidebook, with the process that produced it, is already an important milestone. With the support of our leaders, members, staff and partners, we know that there will be many more such milestones in our knowledge development and management track towards sustainable and integrated development that is based on social justice, peace, respect and promotion of human rights and the protection of the environment.

Andrea Maria Patricia M. Sarenas
Chairperson, CODE-NGO
(February 2011 – February 2016)

1

FRAMEWORK FOR NETWORK SUSTAINABILITY

A Framework for Network Sustainability

- Relevance/
  External Impact
- Relevance
- Community
- members
- Core members
- Governance
- Human Resources
- Financial Resources
- members
- Society
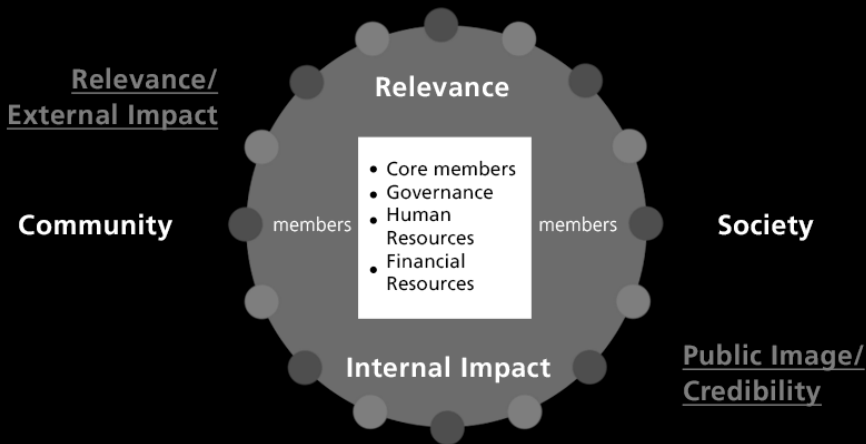- Internal Impact
- Public Image/
  Credibility

Figure 1. A Framework for Network Sustainability

What are the elements that build the sustainability of a CSO network? What do we need to work on to ensure that our network remains strong?

The members of CODE-NGO, a "network of networks", have identified six key elements of network sustainability: relevance and impact, core members, governance, human resources, financial resources and public image and credibility.[1]

1. Relevance and Impact of the CSO Network

A network becomes strong and sustainable only in so far as its added value is clearly felt by its members and by the community or society in which it operates. What is the network's reason for existing and for continuing to exist? Why would various CSOs continue to band together and work in unison?

The usual answers to these questions lead to typical roles of a CSO network -

a) Promoting the effectiveness and efficiency of its member organizations through capacity building workshops, forums and other activities and through information sharing on, for

example, good and bad CSO practices, government regulations, programs and policies, development opportunities and others;

b) Pursuing common advocacy on sectoral issues or geographical area issues, CSO-related issues, public interest issues and other concerns; and

c) Undertaking joint programs and projects so as to have greater leverage with donors and other partners for impact and scale.

In all these, and for greater effectiveness, the network maximizes the synergy that comes with the collaboration and mutual support of its member organizations. The network also optimizes the efficiency that comes from "economies of scale" for activities like staff development, publications, seminars and workshops, facilities and others.

One can measure the relevance and impact of a CSO network by the level of satisfaction of its member organizations. Are the members happy with the programs, projects and activities of the network? Do they feel that their needs are serviced by the network?

It is also important to gauge whether the CSO network and its members are relevant to the community or society that they proclaim they serve. Are they responsive to the concerns and needs of their "public"? Have they become isolated from or been left behind by current social realities?

> ⚠ **ISSUE: If the primary purpose of a CSO network has already been fulfilled or is no longer relevant, should the network reinvent itself or should it fold up and cease to exist?**
>
> ●
>
> This question is especially important for CSO networks established to respond to very specific issues, e.g. the advocacy for a law or policy or for jointly undertaking a specific program (e.g. a program to promote community based resource management).
>
> The network may choose either option, but if it chooses to reinvent itself, this must be done only after a thorough and participatory process of discussion among its members resulting to a new, well-defined reason for being. What must be avoided are CSO networks which continue to operate beyond their original purpose only because some of its leaders, members or staff have become attached to one another; consequently, they drift from one project or activity to another without a clear direction.

2. Core members

A network is a coming together of various organizations. It cannot survive if its members are too few or are inactive. It can only be sustained if it has a sufficient number of member organizations which share information and knowledge with one another, lead or join in common advocacies, contribute human and financial resources needed by the network, and support each other in different ways.

"As a voluntary mechanism for learning and communication among autonomous participants, a network depends upon the inputs given by its members. If there are no contributions, then there is no networking and, hence, no network." (Engel; Täuber 1993)

3. Network Governance

A key determinant of network sustainability is the way it is governed. Sustainable CSO networks need to have governance systems and practices that are participatory, inclusive, transparent and accountable. Only this kind of governance sustains its membership and maintains its credibility among various partners and stakeholders.

Participation, inclusiveness, transparency and accountability (PITA) in governance includes a democratically elected and representative Board or Council; clear decision-making rules and processes; and effective internal organizational communication and reporting mechanisms among its leaders, staff and secretariat, as well as with the network's partners and stakeholders. Decisions are made for its policy-making, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation functions.

4. Human Resources

Building and sustaining CSO networks require specific skills, especially skills in inter-personal relationship management, communication, process facilitation, organizational development and management, advocacy and resource mobilization. It is quite difficult to find persons with at least a basic grasp of all these skills for the leadership and secretariat of the networks.

Nevertheless, it is vital for the network to be able to find and maintain these people in its leadership and secretariat. This would require adequate and proper incentives, including non-financial support and recognition for the leaders, and appropriate salaries, benefits and non-monetary rewards for the staff.

At the same time, there must be a democratic and inclusive sharing of leadership roles and positions in the network and a sufficient entry of new blood in the secretariat. Clear rules are required for this. An effective mechanism to draw from the pool of active leaders and members of its member CSOs is also desirable.

> *ISSUE: How do networks keep good people in its leadership and ensure, at the same time, that new, dynamic, and democratic leadership is maintained?*
>
> ●
>
> Leaders of many networks have term limits. A policy of rotating leadership among its members may also be established. These ensure that the leadership positions are not dominated by a member or cluster of members.
>
> The challenge is how to keep the former leaders active in the network so that they can continue to contribute to network sustainability. They may be invited to join advisory committees of the network or of specific programs and projects. They may also be asked to perform particular tasks for the networks on a voluntary or paid basis.

5. Financial Resources

An important but very difficult element for network sustainability is financial sustainability.

Ensuring financial sustainability requires the political will of member organizations to pay reasonable fees to support the network. These fees could be a fixed amount per year or payments for availing particular services of the network such as training, consultancy, policy researches and market studies.

Still, knowing that most CSOs cannot afford to pay high annual dues or service fees, it is essential for the network to develop diversified sources of revenues, including grants from donor institutions, donations from supporters, incomes from fund raising activities, incomes from social enterprises, and service fees from non-members (foundations and other CSOs, government agencies, business groups, etc.).

The networks also have to work on minimizing their costs, including maintaining "lean and mean" secretariats, tapping volunteers, and optimizing savings from "scale economies" with their members or with other networks. Examples of these scale economies are: producing common publications and training programs, and sharing services (e.g. messengerial, personnel recruitment) and facilities.

6. Public Image and Credibility

The public image and credibility of a CSO network also affects its sustainability. How various groups and sectors, especially government, donors

and other CSOs, view the network is important for its effectiveness and its capacity to draw support for its work. If the network is seen to be ineffective, weak, or worse, lacking in integrity and legitimacy, it would be very difficult for it to become sustainable.

Public image is based on perception, which is not always identical to what is real. A network that is weak or lacking in integrity may be perceived as strong and legitimate by many. Conversely, a network may have a tainted image, but is, in reality, strong and effective.

This implies that networks have to consciously work on communicating who they are and the work that they do to their various "publics". Networks also have to be careful about their actions and how these can be perceived, or "mis-perceived".

2

MEMBERSHIP RELATIONS OF CSO NETWORKS

PHILSSA
Partnerships for sustainable communities.

The Partnership of Philippine Support Service Agencies (PHILSSA) was established on 31 May 1988 and registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission on 14 February 1990 as a non-stock service network of social development non-government organizations based in urban centers nationwide. Upon its formation, PHILSSA embarked on a mission of prototyping innovative paradigms of sustainable development for the effective empowerment of urban sectors, namely, the slum dwellers, the formal and informal labor force, the youth, women, children, and the development workers themselves. The members of the PHILSSA network are engaged in varied fields of development service, such as education and training, research and documentation, legal service, socio-economic and other technical support, issue and policy advocacy and other innovative endeavors.

1. Coordination

As a national network of NGOs working towards an inclusive, transformative and sustainable urbanization, PHILSSA has 61 members in the National Capital Region (NCR), Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. Having diverse programs and services, finding a coordination system that is cost-effective, efficient and allows members to actively participate was one of the main challenges it encountered at first. In order to provide the basic support that members need in their programs/ projects, PHILSSA employed the following strategies and mechanisms:

1.1 Formation of Clusters. Members were organized into a) thematic groups or according to the services they provide to the community, b) geographic areas wherein organizations in the same region or province are grouped together, and c) thematic with geographic clustering, based primarily on geographic location but also considers the member's priority program for cooperation with other members like land and housing, children and youth, disaster risk reduction, etc.;

1.2 Strengthening of relationships. In order to supplement the support that the network secretariat provides to the members, mechanisms for the members to provide support to each other and for them to partner outside of the network need to be put in place in order to strengthen working relationships. In the case of PHILSSA, this was done through:

a. Network consortium projects – aside from the resources that these brought to the network, it provided an impetus for the members to meet regularly, to coordinate and work with each other, to develop good communication links and to collaborate with each other for additional opportunities

b. Bilateral partnerships/ engagements – linkages and engagement of other stakeholders outside of the network was initiated and nurtured especially

with organizations having similar development goals;

1.3 Sustaining the cluster as a coordination mechanism. Once a functioning and effective mechanism is established, it is important to:

• Set clear guidelines, functions, directions of the organization. It has to be clear why members meet and what are the common agenda of the network

• Define structures of coordination and communication and develop mechanisms for regular meetings to facilitate coordination

• Equip members with tools and provide resources to continue the mechanism.

2. Monitoring

Another important aspect of Member Relations is keeping track of the members, and the two key aspects of this are:

2.1 Having data or information about the network's members. As a network, this is a core and essential requirement that will inform or guide:

• Information exchanges and decision-making within the network

• Programs and services that the network can provide for members

• Direction and plans of the network for sustainability;

2.2 Connecting with members through:

• Getting to know the leaders and

staff not only by name, but knowing their skills and capacities as well in order to facilitate collaboration and partnerships.

• Understanding the relations and dynamics of each member in the network by recognizing their strengths and weaknesses and going further by keenly observing power dynamics within each organization to better understand the members.

• Being acquainted with the needs and interests of the members and synchronizing the network plans, programs and services to these.

3. Participation

One of the pitfalls and major challenges of a network with members dispersed geographically and are working on different advocacies is how to motivate members to actively participate in network undertakings. In the case of PHILSSA, these were addressed through steps listed below and by providing incentives for participation:

3.1 Working on interests and needs of members

• Addressing or complementing gaps and needs expressed by the members

• Contributing to the members' interests and plans by mutually reinforcing strengths of the members and the network as a whole

• Developing capacities and building on the strengths, then working together towards finding solutions that will help the members sustain

or address their needs and in turn strengthen their members and/or their network;

3.2 Providing venues and opportunities for members' participation and building on capacities and strengths of members

• *Regional clusters* – aside from being a venue for participation, the importance of these cluster meetings is that they are able to see the big picture, what's happening in the area, make collective decisions and identify opportunities to help the network and the members as well;

• *Project development and implementation* – this maximizes strengths of members and is also a way of providing technical support in project development and management.

4. Governance

Key to a sustainable network is the ability to address membership issues through a transparent process that is governed by clear policies and guidelines and this is reinforced by:

4.1 Strong network leadership that is able to understand relations and dynamics within the network;

4.2 Differential but complementary roles in the structure of the organization/ network and each member knowing his/ her role in the organization:

• Secretariat
• Board of Trustees
• General Assembly;

4.3 Implementation of good governance across all members, leading by example and encouraging others to practice it as well in order to develop good relationships between network members and other partners.

PHILSSA Partnership Principles

Autonomy. PHILSSA recognizes and strengthens the independence of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including their right to self-determination and self-governance, as long as the network's commonly defined values and aspirations are not negated.

Collegiality. PHILSSA is a member-driven network, thus leadership is collective and democratic, putting weight on co-ownership, mutual responsibility and shared identity, assuring partners of equitable representation and meaningful participation.

Subsidiarity. PHILSSA, in exercising the tenet of sustainable development of "thinking globally, acting locally", acknowledges the competence and expertise of partners to carry out initiatives at their appropriate levels.

Complementation. PHILSSA members, in practicing collegiality and subsidiarity, must necessarily build on each other's strengths and reinforce one another's endeavours and accomplishments.

Membership relations is an important component of managing networks. It refers to how the members of the network interact with each other and how the network Board and secretariat facilitate such interaction. It highlights the important role of the secretariat and the Board of the network in facilitating the flow of communication and in managing the issues and concerns of the members with each other, or with the Board and the secretariat.

9 Key Elements of Effective Membership Relations in CSO Networks

From the small group discussions in the PLE Workshop, participants came up with 9 key elements of effective membership relations in CSO networks:

1. Clear basis of unity. Organizations come together to form a network based on a common agenda or task and/or shared values as their basis of unity. The common agenda or shared value should continually be relevant to members – how members find value in being part of the network can make or break the network. This basis of unity should be periodically reviewed to ensure that it continues to be relevant, and should be made clear to all members throughout the life of the network. This periodic review process should be participatory, consultative and evidence-based.

2. Clear governance structure. The role of governing a network is lodged with its Board of Trustees or Council. A network is usually composed of member organizations with various interests and representing various sectors. Thus, it is often necessary that these interests or concerns must be represented in the Board. There should be governance policies where the roles of the officers and members of the Board are clear, as well as their terms of office, process of election and grounds for removal from office.

3. Competent human resource (Board and secretariat). The network Board, under the leadership of the Chairperson, must be able to provide oversight, policy direction and fiduciary functions (financial accountability) over the affairs of the network. Thus, it is often important to have the right mix of Board members who could provide expert advice or guidance to the network management on these matters.

The Board's role is distinct from the equally important function of the Executive Director (ED) or Network Coordinator of managing the day-to-day operations of the network and of implementing the directions of the Board. The network management and staff, on the other hand, is expected to provide efficient program/project management and development support to members. Thus, a two-way, mutually supportive relations between the Board Chairperson and ED is vital in the effective managing of relations within the network. It is also important to establish "duty of care" – or of promoting the welfare of the network secretariat staff, in the form of just compensation and benefits, training

and opportunities for advancement and developing or building successors for the secretariat and network leadership.

4. Financial resources. Financial resources of the network is important to support the identified goals for effective member relations, e.g. effective communication, getting the right people to coordinate or manage the activities of the network, implement the programs and activities of the network, etc. Everyone in the network has responsibility in ensuring that there are financial resources to support these activities: the Board is primarily responsible for ensuring the financial sustainability of the network, the ED may lead the preparation of proposals or project development and resource mobilization activities and the members must also contribute to raising resources for the network; no member should be a free-rider.

5. Effective communication. To be effective, communication should facilitate a two-way relation between and among the network secretariat, Boards and members. This two-way relation usually happens at two levels: (a) between and among members and (b) between the Board, secretariat and members. The communication processes at these levels should not only be transactional – based on payment of dues and submission of reportorial requirements as members, or sending out perfunctory information or advisories as secretariat, etc. It should be characterized by relations among partners that recognize strengths and contributions of both parties. A personal, nurturing environment within the network is conducive for effective communication.

6. Sense of ownership and belongingness of members in the network. There is sense of ownership and belongingness among members in a network when they see clear benefits from being a member, as well as opportunities to contribute to the advancement of the network. An empowered collective or network arises from empowered and autonomous members.

7. Quality and quantity of members. As the members are the lifeblood of a CSO network, the quality and quantity of its membership are also important determinants of effective membership relations. Depending on the purpose of the CSO network, quantity or having a large number of members may matter to establish scale or scope to achieve network goals. However, equally important is the quality of membership – the members' level of involvement, commitment and contribution to network goals. To establish quality and quantity of membership, members' roles and responsibilities, as well as network services to members, must be clarified. There must also be clear policies on selection, training or capacity building, retention and recognition of members.

8. Subsidiarity and complementarity. The network should observe these principles to ensure harmonious relations with members. Subsidiarity means the network acknowledges competencies and expertise of its members to carry out initiatives and decisions at their appropriate levels. The network should

avoid competition with their members. Also, it must always be kept in mind that the network is not the secretariat, but the members who compose it. Both parties should understand that their respective but complementary roles result to effective membership relations.

9. Constant review, evaluation and reflection processes. The network must be able to provide avenues for members to come together for learning exchange, evaluating network's actions, learning from their defeats and celebrate their gains. These reflection sessions can be done periodically as part of the network's regular meetings and consultations, general assemblies or strategic planning sessions.

C. EARLY WARNINGS OF CHALLENGES TO MEMBERSHIP RELATIONS

Participants from the PLE Workshop's small group discussions identified the following red flags or early warnings of challenges to sustaining effective membership relations and corresponding actions to avoid these, as follows:

Red flags or early warnings to sustaining effective membership relations:	Actions to address this challenge:
a. No basic information about members	• Prioritize updating of membership information, profile or directory and make it a regular process (Annually? Every 3 years?). • Establish due process for delisting inactive members, esp. those that cannot be contacted anymore.
b. Inactive members, resigning members, and/or members with high expectations or 1-way expectations	• Clarify membership policies on selection, training and retention for active members, and incentives for exemplary members. • Provide pre-membership education seminar or membership orientation sessions on their rights and responsibilities.
c. Poor or declining attendance in network activities	• Evaluate the quality of services to members, agenda, processes of conducting meetings, and even logistical concerns such as venue and food. • Provide incentive system for members; celebrate their successes. • Innovate on learning exchange or seminar topics – e.g., identify emerging concerns and technologies. • Reach out to/identify the interests of the members (poor or declining attendance may also be due to change in the members' own directions or agenda). • Review membership policy on adding or de-listing.

Red flags or early warnings to sustaining effective membership relations:	Actions to address this challenge:
d. Non-payment of membership dues	• Reach out to members; find out reasons. • Issue billing statements in a timely manner. • Deduct from members' receivables with their consent.
e. Competition between members and network in projects or programs	• Clarify partnership principles on complementation and subsidiarity. • Network to facilitate consortium building; clarify scope/area of engagement among members. *Note, however, that not all competition is unhealthy. They could encourage better programs or services among members.*
f. Representing individual decision over organizational or network decision (if the organization is closely identified with the leader)	• Orientation by the Chair or Board members on the network's governance policies and code of conduct. • Clarify Board roles in Governance Policies and/or in oath of office.
g. Written policies that are not practiced	• Schedule periodic review and updating of policies. • Provide policy orientation or reminders to members.
h. Conflict of interest	• Clarify conflict of interest policy and get sign-offs from Board and staff periodically (annually?). • Ask the concerned party to inhibit from participating in the decision-making process that may involve conflict of interest on his/her part or the part the organization s/he represents.

Table 1. Red flags or early warnings to sustaining effective membership relations

3

ADVOCACY EFFECTIVENESS OF CSO NETWORKS

Advancing communities towards solidarity

A. CASE 2: The AADC Experience

The Agri-Aqua Development Coalition – Mindanao (AADC) is a network or coalition of people's organizations (POs) which has been around for 20 years. Its focus is on advocacy, particularly on agrarian and fisheries reforms.

AADC's Eight-point Basis of Unity includes: 1) Agrarian reform and rural development, 2) Fisheries and aquatic reform, 3) Ancestral domain, 4) Peace, 5) Economic development, 6) Sustainable development, 7) Gender and equity, and 8) Participatory governance. The coalition values participation, collective action and solidarity.

For its Issue Development and Advocacy Framework, AADC follows the following process:

1. Issue identification and validation, wherein needs and gaps are looked into;

2. Research, which studies the needs and impact;

3. Core group building, which involves the identification and involvement of key persons or groups that would analyze the issues and lead in the advocacy;

4. Issue analysis;

5. Community mobilization and claim making; and

6. Evaluation.

AADC has three (3) levels of advocacy work: local, national and international. The corresponding objectives and targets for each level are presented in the following table:

Levels of Advocacy Work	Objective	Target
Local	Claim basic and vital social services (e.g., water, health) and access to land/water resources	Local governments, local offices of national government agencies
National	Changes in national policies to secure and sustain local gains	President, national government agencies, Senate, House of Representatives
International	Changes in global arrangements, policies of foreign government	United Nations (UN), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), World Trade Organization (WTO), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), foreign governments

Table 2. Levels of Advocacy Work

For a clearer perspective of how the coalition works at these levels, here are a few examples:

Levels of Advocacy Work	Objective	Target
Local	Advocacy for the provision of housing for poor small fishers	Local governments, local offices of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources
National	Advocacy to craft new Fisheries Code that provides protection for small-scale fishery	President, Senate, House of Representatives
International	Advocacy in Canada to pressure the Philippine government to pass the new Fisheries Code	Canadian communities and national and local governments

Table 3. Levels of Advocacy Work (Examples)

AADC's advocacy work also targets the local and national governments as well as the private sector. At the local government level, AADC focuses on advocating for local tax incentives for enterprises of small cooperatives, Institutional support for farming technology systems (e.g. local ordinance for the adoption of organic farming), People's participation in local planning and budgeting (e.g. POs' council members being active in Bottom-up Budgeting or BuB and gender responsive budgeting), Ecosystems management and restoration (e.g. watershed management, caring for the ecosystem), and Disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

As part of helping its member organizations to effectively advocate for the passing of ordinances by the local councils, AADC has done the following –

1. capacity-building on laws, including the Local Government

Code; this is done thru regional training seminars and monthly local coalition meetings;

2. getting strategic positions in the Municipal Development Councils (MDCs) and local special bodies (LSBs).

One lesson for AADC is that LGUs tend to listen more to their PO leaders when they see the work of POs on the ground.

'Non-controversial' ordinances that do not involve intense conflict are easily passed when there are POs or other civil society organizations (CSOs) in the LSBs. It is also important to build relationships with the local government officials and with other stakeholders on the ground.

For 'controversial' ordinances like the Fisheries Code, which involves battling with commercial fishers, it is more difficult. Some PO leaders have

died fighting for their rights. In these instances, it is important to be able to mobilize people to show support for the issue. This becomes a 'numbers game'. The AADC Secretariat helps in issues like this by assisting in strategizing in order to counter threats and harassment. In the strategies, it is important to identify champions and sustain linkages with these champions at both the local and national levels.

Further, to strengthening work/ partnerships with the government, AADC has the following good practices:

a. In most provinces/municipalities, AADC's member POs strive to get critical positions in LSBs, such as the Chairperson position. Their members who are regular members also maximize their participation in LSBs. They participate in monitoring, including the bidding of projects (as part of the Bids and Awards Committees). Their PO leaders also target getting into key positions in the sectoral councils of the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC).

b. Establishing the important role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the basic sector as POs are being recognized and respected by LGUs. In ASEAN integration, solidarity building is important among sectors even at the international level.

At the national government level, AADC's advocacy work is on land tenurial improvement through land reform and tenurial rights of upland communities (e.g., ancestral domains of indigenous peoples, state-community forest management agreements, etc.),

improved access and preferential right to use the 15-km coastal waters for small and marginal fishers, and effective implementation of DRR/CCA laws.

AADC also partners with the private sector through business engagement with small holder producers, establishing mutual trust between the private business sector and small holders, the latter as a reliable part of the value chain who are able to meet quality standards and volume and to deliver on time. AADC helps to get better price and payment schemes -fair price, cash-on-delivery (COD) or payment in 3-5 days, not 30 days and technical and logistical support through incentives. AADC also helps to improve the ways of doing business, by, for example, fixing anomalies or corruption and red tape on the ground and fostering a good partnership with local producers.

To guarantee fair price for community products, there is a written Memorandum of Agreement or MOA that ensures the terms. Forms during transactions also serve as the marketing agreement. Cards are laid on the table when building a relationship with the private sector. Negotiations are done, for instance on subsidy on transportation expenses in order to deliver quality goods on time with the appropriate volume. In cases of violations, complaints may be made with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) or other agencies.

AADC is networking with overseas partners but also partners within the country (e.g. Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources

in Rural Areas (PHILDHRRA) and Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Samahang Magsasaka (PAKISAMA). MINCODE (Mindanao Coalition of Development NGO Networks), of which AADC is a member, is also gearing towards the direction of economic and industrial development through the consolidation of products/commodities, and enterprise development even with non-members. There is inter-network coordination and complementation.

AADC's determination in pushing for their advocacies has resulted to communities having greater benefit from the fruits of their labor. Community needs were addressed. These include potable water systems, improved health services in villages, and agricultural support for small farmers and fishers.

Through the introduction of local government policies, services and support for local communities have improved. These include local laws that allocate funds for agricultural technicians that are capable of training farmers on organic farming, local laws on community-managed disaster risk reduction and management, and local laws on investments and enterprise support for micro, small and medium scale economic activities of cooperatives.

Mechanisms and processes in local governments that ensure transparency, accountability and participation of local communities have also been improved. At least 25% of the members of local development councils are sectoral and community representatives. Local communities are also acting as monitors of local government spending and projects to ensure proper use of funds.

The aforementioned results were made possible with the following contributing factors:

1. Consensus on clear objectives among prime movers (agenda-building)

2. Capable community development facilitators and PO leaders

3. Significant number of accredited POs who sit in the local special bodies (LSBs)

4. Identified champions within local government units (LGUs) and national government agencies (NGAs)

5. Established partnerships with various stakeholders. It is important to have solidarity in advocacy.

Solidarity-building, collective action and participation are important to a network. To be a member of AADC, the coalition of POs on the ground should demonstrate that they can work collectively and are not just there to get benefits. They know that they will really work as the prime movers of the coalition.

Advocacy work is an indispensable component of being a civil society organization.

B. ELEMENTS FOR ADVOCACY EFFECTIVENESS

Advocacy effectiveness is defined as creating an impact that is felt by the community and in turn mobilizes them to support the advocacy. Doing advocacy involves various actions which aim to influence decisions within the socio-political and economic systems so as to improve the lives of the citizens particularly the vulnerable or oppressed sectors. Thus, it is important for CSO networks to know how to effectively advocate for their agenda.

Here are some elements for effective advocacy by CSO networks:

1. Clear Advocacy Agenda. It is vital for the CSO network to have a clear, relevant and pro-poor advocacy and development agenda. The key sectoral or geographical groups who will benefit from this agenda should be clearly identified.

The advocacy agenda should result from a participatory, inclusive and consultative process where all key stakeholders are involved. It should also be grounded on facts and analysis to clarify the actual issues and address the pressing needs of the communities.

The agenda should not only include "motherhood" statements but also specific recommendations for the government and/or other decision or policy makers. The agenda should be translated into specific priority policies, programs or projects for the CSOs and the citizens. These proposed laws, policies, ordinances, programs and projects should be drafted and submitted to relevant agencies/bodies, and should then be the clear focus of the advocacy.

2. Strong Constituency. The network should have active members and supporters for its advocacy. They should have an effective coordinating mechanism for the involvement of their members and other partners.

3. Representation and Leadership. The leaders of the network should be able to represent the interests and welfare of its members in the relevant councils or decision-making bodies. They should have the ability and capacity to actively and effectively participate in the processes of these councils or bodies. They should effectively and regularly consult with and report to their members regarding their representations in the various councils or bodies.

The CSO network and its representatives should be able to guide other CSOs and influence other sectors (government, funding partners, church, academe, business, and media) for its advocacy. They should take lead and/or become an active member of any coalition that they have expertise and interest in. They should be able to maintain their credibility and influence in the coalitions.

They need to be able to identify and work with different champions who can support or lead the approval of their agenda and recommendations by the concerned councils and bodies.

4. Networking and Alliance Building. Doing an advocacy is a "joint venture" where the network needs to find allies to work with. Thus, working together in partnership and collaboration with other leaders and groups within civil society, among the business sector and in government should be nurtured and strengthened.

They should also ensure that they have consistent messaging and advocacy with their allies.

5. Resource Mobilization. The network should be able to mobilize resources from internal and external sources to support and sustain its advocacy efforts.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation. To measure advocacy effectiveness, the network should monitor and evaluate the agenda development, advocacy and policy/program/ project implementation and other related activities. The results of this should be properly documented and shared to promote the replication and sustainability of the gains of the advocacy.

C. EARLY WARNINGS OF CHALLLENGES TO ADVOCACY EFFECTIVENESS

The network should also recognize some markers or early warnings of the challenges in doing advocacy.

Red flags/early warnings of sustainability challenges/ problems:	Actions to address this challenge:
a. Inactive participation of members and other sectors in the advocacy	• Direct involvement of the members and other groups from the poor and marginalized sectors in the whole process; need to actively reach out to the members and these other groups • Awareness raising and education activities • Ensuring that not only basic sectors but also other stakeholders such as government, church, academe and even business are well represented in the process so that they take 'ownership' of the advocacy
b. No consensus on the issues or agenda	• Participatory and inclusive consultations and discussions, and consensus building processes need to be done.

Red flags/early warnings of sustainability challenges/ problems:	Actions to address this challenge:
c. "Analysis Paralysis" – Most of the networks members cannot move forward from the meetings and consultations. Many decisions and actions are never taken, which end in paralysis.	• Review and clarify the objectives of their advocacies and revisit the plans • Do consensus building; focus first on "low lying fruits" or on what simple but significant actions that involve everyone
d. No continuity of the advocacy, lack of widespread clamor or support	• Evaluation/feedbacking/reflection/ discernment session leading to action planning • Reach out to other organized groups/ key individuals and expand the core group • Maximize the use of social media and other online mechanism to reach a wider audience

Table 4. Red flags or early warnings of sustainability challenges/problems

4

OPERATIONS AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF CSO NETWORKS

Antique Federation of Non-Government Organizations

A. CASE 3: The AFON Experience

The Antique Federation of Non-Government Organizations (AFON) was organized on July 2, 1988 and was registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) on August 17, 1989. It has been operating for 27 years. It has 11 Secretariat staff, 1 volunteer, 9 members of the Board of Trustees and 9 member NGOs, namely:

NGO	Program Focus
1. Antique Development Foundation	enterprise development, governance, environment
2. Antique Federation of Cooperatives	cooperative development and strengthening
3. Antique Human Development Program	governance, environment
4. Ahon Sa Hirap, Inc.	microfinance
5. Insol Development Foundation	business development services
6. Hantique-Igcabuchi Center-Hublag Evelio (Social Action Center)	disaster management, governance, environment
7. PROCESS Foundation-Panay, Inc.	governance, paralegal development, environment, sustainable agriculture
8. Palanan-awon Pangkauswagan Sang Antique	health, environment, child sponsorships
9. Taytay Sa Kauswagan, Inc.	microfinance

Table 5. Antique Federation of Non-Government Organizations

AFON envisions an innovative, globally competitive federation of NGOs towards community-led development. Its mission is to enhance the development roles and capacities of NGOs and community institutions. The federation is working for five (5) goals:

1. **Mainstreamed development agenda and plans.** Community issues and needs shall be mainstreamed or integrated to be part of the development agenda and plans of the local government units (LGUs), national government agencies (NGAs) and other development partners.

2. **Public discourse on development issues.** Emerging development issues shall be popularized for timely information, internalization and collective action of the people and communities.

3. **NGO specialization and complementation.** NGOs shall build on their expertise, focus on their respective area of specialization instead of competing with other members, and enhance complementation of each other's programs.

4. Sustainability (self-sufficiency) of AFON. AFON shall be able to raise internal and external funds to be self-sufficient enough to sustain its operations and services for its members and community institutions.

5. "Owning organizations" in the communities. Community institutions as "owning organizations" of development issues, projects, services or initiatives shall be strengthened (capacity development).

The federation is guided by its core values:

1. Stakeholdership - sense of ownership and buy-in;

2. Passion - call beyond duty, sense of service, willingness and commitment;

3. Empowerment - leadership/ participation, decision-making;

4. Integrity – credibility;

5. Mutual respect and trust – complementation; and

6. Service-oriented - result-driven

AFON's programs and services include:

1. Partnerships, linkages and advocacy

2. Resource sustainability

   a. HEALTH Plus Social Enterprise - pharmaceutical distribution

   b. AFON Resource and Research Center (ARRC) - income from

training and facilitation of workshops.

   c. Project proposal development – external opportunities, complementation of members, not to compete, but rather to complement with members.

3. Capacity-building - training for members and community institutions.

Sustainability (Self-sufficiency) of AFON

AFON aims to be able to raise internal or external funds to be self-sufficient enough to sustain its operations and services for its members and community institutions. Here are some strategies the federation employs to sustain its operations:

1. External resource mobilization

   a. Continuing project proposal preparation for grants, targeting at least 1 approved project proposal per year. The project proposal should not compete with other proposals of the members because there will then be conflict in the network.

   b. Programs/projects accessed for the

TIP: Don't lose hope. Just keep on writing. It may be rejected at first try, but be patient and persevere.

past 6 years have been implemented in collaboration with member NGOs to sustain the development of the organization. AFON is helping as well in the sustainability of the members through the following:

• Local Economic Development Program in partnership with Trias (Belgian NGO)

• Strengthening Marginalized Sectors Participation in Local Governance in San Remigio, Antique (World Bank-Civil Society Fund)

• Social Accountability Project in partnership with European Union

• Typhoon Yolanda Rehabilitation Fund in partnership with Trias

• People-Led Monitoring and Evaluation System (PLMES) in partnership with USAID Phil-Am Fund – Gerry Roxas Foundation.

2. Internally generated revenues

a. Annual membership dues – small amount of money that can be used for operations but not for the sustainability of the organization.

b. HEALTH Plus Social Enterprise (in partnership with the National Pharmaceutical Foundation and the Department of Health) – 100% of the income from this goes to AFON as wholesaler/distributor. This is the source of its sustainability now.

c. AFON Resource and Research Center (ARRC) – revenue generating center providing services for a fee (consultancy, training, research and documentation, facilitation).

It is good to have a funding partner but one should not depend on the donor. The ARRC was inspired by PBSP's Social Development Management Institute (SDMI). AFON did a concept paper and a list of their services through an inventory of our members' expertise, including the background and skills of the Board and staff. They also used available materials and developed training modules. These services are matched with the needs of the LGUs and communities.

The individual facilitator's earnings is shared with his/her organization and with AFON; a percentage goes to the individual/facilitator, a percentage goes to the NGO and a percentage goes to AFON. For ARRC projects, 70% goes to participating members, particularly those facilitating or acting as resource persons and 30% goes to AFON. This mechanism has Board approval and it is important that it is discussed and approved. The goal is to extend services to sustain the network by tapping the expertise within the network first before exploring outside. This mechanism is also helping in the sustainability of the member organizations and not only for the network and its secretariat.

In recent years, the ARRC has, for example, served as Local Poverty Reduction Action Plan (LPRAP) Facilitators/Mobilizers with the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) for the Bottom-up Budgeting (BuB) Program, and as local CSO partner for the Department

of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) - Japan Social Development Fund-Community Driven Entrepreneurial Development (JSDF CDED) pilot project in partnership with Pinoy Me Foundation in San Remigio, Antique.

ARRC is now planning to apply as accredited extension service provider of Agricultural Training Institute for agricultural training seminars.

3. Partnership with LGUs and National Government Agencies (NGAs)

Start with short conversations during meetings with government officials to have good communications with the LGUs.   Also, maximize the use of resource materials in training kits to share acquired knowledge/ skills and earn from it.

Here are some partnerships of AFON with LGUs/NGAs:

• Peace and development project in partnership with the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP),

• Citizens Led Monitoring Project in partnership with the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC),

• Capacity Building for CSOs from the Provincial Government (from 20% Internal Revenue Allotment or IRA, which is its local development fund),

• Local and Regional Economic Development Program (Capacity Building for Staff) in partnership

with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and GTZ, and

• Joint Programme on Youth Employment and Migration (JP YEM) Program in partnership with the Provincial Government and the International Labor Organization or ILO (Capacity Building for Staff) on Youth Entrepreneurship.

4. Partnership with other CSOs on capacity-building

a. Ayala Foundation, Inc. (AFI) – Strengthening the Capacities of CSOs Project: AFON made use of the resource materials in training workshops, not just to raise funds for sustainability, but also for the sustainability of the knowledge/ skills for the organization and the members.

b. CODE-NGO capacity-building support for networks through the Western Visayas Network of Social Development NGOs, Inc. (WEVNET).

An organization must have a risk management plan especially for taxes that may result from its resource mobilization initiatives. This must be carefully studied and put in place (reminder for organizations to study tax implications):

• Issue of taking up 'tax-credit income' in selling services

• Tax exemption is not absolute. It is limited to charitable, religious and educational purposes. A hospital may be tax-exempt from its medical services, but not from clinic rentals

or parking fees; entrance fees may be considered as donations but rentals as income are taxable.

• Laws are prone to different interpretations; it is good to consult tax experts and share lessons learned within the network.

In sustaining the federation, AFON also adopts the following network principles/mechanisms:

a. Programs/services should not compete but complement with the members – know all the programs/ services of the members

b. Programs and services should be in line with the vision, mission, goals, core values and strategic plan

c. Regular Board Meetings (quarterly), Regular Staff Meetings (bi-monthly) and Regular Strategic Planning (every 5 years)

d. Annual Federation Review, Assessment and Planning – to have a dialogue/conversation with the members

e. Annual General Assembly – General Information Sheet (GIS), Minutes for the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Non-US Organization Pre-Award Survey (NUPAS) for strategic planning and for strategic review

f. Regular Project Steering Committee Meetings (monthly)

g. Timely compliance with regulatory requirements (Bureau of Internal Revenue or BIR, SEC, Philippine

Health Insurance Corporation (PHIC), Pagtutulungan sa Kinabukasan: Ikaw, Bangko, Industria at Gobyerno or Pag-IBIG, Social Security System or SSS, Business Permit) – updating of all legal documents and proper filing

h. Continuing internal and external resource mobilization (be updated with opportunities)

i. LGU accreditations (every 3 years)

j. Continuing networking and partnership building (LGUs, NGAs, CSOs, development partners)

k. Help support the sustainability of the members, and not only of the Secretariat

l. No direct project/program implementation – this must be in collaboration/partnership with the members

m. No direct coordination with any staff of a member-NGO staff; coordination is through the NGO Manager, the latter will be the one to deal with their respective staff

n. Documented and implemented policies, systems, processes (updated manuals) – what is written must be the one to be implemented

o. Applying learnings from trainings, conferences back home.

As with any other organization, AFON is not without challenges. It strives to address the following:

1. Staff turn-over – how to retain our trained staff because of other

outside more attractive opportunities (involvement of profits and other benefits)

2. Very stiff competition in fund sourcing – lack of funding agencies and there are thousands of CSOs

3. Enhancement of internal fund generation strategies – develop

strategies to generate funds to sustain the operations of the network

4. Only 1 is a regular staff, 10 are project-based – for sustainability of the network we must have at least 3 regular staff (ED, Admin. and Finance Officer, Programs Head).

B. ELEMENTS FOR OPERATIONS AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Operations and Financial Sustainability is defined as the ability of a CSO network to function effectively and to generate sufficient funds and other resources to support its program operations, administration and services to members.

In order to develop this ability, it is necessary that the CSO network's officers, members, and staff imbibe and practice the following principles or values:

a. Mutual responsibility and sustenance – Both the network and its members contribute to each other's growth and development since one cannot exist without the other.

b. Autonomy, subsidiarity, solidarity, and complementation – The network is composed of independent, self-governed members. It acknowledges its members' competencies to carry out initiatives at their appropriate levels and does not compete with members in the latter's areas of expertise. Both the network and its members understand their respective roles and mutually support each other according to their respective competencies and scope of work and influence.

c. Transparency and accountability – The network and its members demonstrate transparency and accountability in their operations. They work with each other and with other partners on the basis of honesty and full information in terms of decision-making and have no hidden agenda in the way they operate their core business. Transparency means the extent and quality of information on activities and resources that an organization is willing to disclose, and the mechanisms for accessing such information. Accountability is understood in terms of the following: (i) financial – answering for the use of resources, (ii) performance – documenting and reporting results vis-à-vis expectations, goals, targets and quality standards, (iii) voice – veracity of what one says and authority with which one speaks and (iv) accountability to improve – responding to feedback and assessments and reporting on actions taken.[2]

d. Quality or servant leadership – The network abides by its principles and core values, leads by example, and places its members' concerns ahead of it.

The sustainability of the network's operations and finances is fundamentally dependent on the heart of its existence – its relevance to and impact in society – and the "hands" that commit what to work on. These tasks should all be contained in systems, policies and procedures about how it operates, how it administers itself, how its members are able to contribute, how it generates resources (financial, material, and human), and how it partners or links with other like-minded organizations for mutual benefit.

Important Element/s for effective Operations/Financial Sustainability of CSO Networks:	Defined as/ characterized by:
a. Relevance and Impact	Clearly stated vision, mission, goals, and core values
	Documented strategic plan (with goals, performance indicators, baseline data, and annual targets)
b. Effective governance and leadership	Functional secretariat
	Functional board and committees
	Multi-sectoral membership
	Regular meetings and general assemblies
c. Program operations – designed, implemented, and regularly reviewed	Core programs and services aligned with the VMGs, core values, and strategic plan
	Core programs and services complement (do not compete) those of the members
	Collaborative projects with members
	Operational systems
	Monitoring and evaluation system
d. Administration	Documented and consistently implemented policies and systems (organizational, operational, financial/ fund management, HR, membership, administrative, and volunteer management)
	Full-time program staff
	Project-based staff and volunteers
e. Membership	Active participation of members in the crafting and assessment of the VMGs, core values, and strategic plan
	Members that are supportive of the VMGs, core values, and strategic plan
	Strengthened members through capacity building and knowledge development and management

Important Element/s for effective Operations/Financial Sustainability of CSO Networks:	Defined as/ characterized by:
f. Resource generation	Designed and implemented resource generation plan towards financial stability
	Internally generated resources and diversified sources
	Access to external funds
g. Partnership and linkages	Nurtured partnership with existing organizations
	Established partnership with new organizations
h. Public Image and Credibility	Network of supporters – businesses, professionals, religious leaders, etc.

Table 6. Important elements for effective operations/financial sustainability of CSO networks

C. EARLY WARNINGS OF CHALLENGES TO OPERATIONS AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

There are no short cuts to attaining sustainability for one's network. It requires steadfastness and hard work to achieve majority of the description or characteristics enumerated above. Along the way, it would help to identify certain experiences of the networks as "problematic" and to acknowledge these early on. Below is a list of such red flags and what you can do to address or resolve these immediately.

Red flags/early warnings of sustainability challenges/ problems:	Actions to address this challenge:
a. Net loss; income statements in the red	• Regularize BOT meetings for organizational review • Conduct focused group discussion with members • Collect membership dues • Conduct purposeful fund raisers • Implement resource sharing
b. Irregular BOT/Council meetings	• Regularize meetings; examine causes for irregularity of meetings and address them
c. Frequent bickering among members and officers	• Conduct team-building activities and dialogue • Employ conflict resolution techniques • Conduct peer mentoring/ coaching

Red flags/early warnings of sustainability challenges/ problems:	Actions to address this challenge:
d. Insufficient funds for two successive years of operations	• Design and implement resource (financial, material, and human) mobilization plan
e. Dwindling attendance in general assemblies and meetings	• Maximize online technologies, ex. Skype, webinars • Boost interest of members to participate in network activities
f. No full-time staff	• Member organizations can temporarily detail its staff to the network
g. No office	• Temporarily hold office in a member organization's office
h. Inability to submit quality and timely project reports	• Review workload vis-à-vis number of staff and/or staff performance • Employ volunteers as additional human resources of the organization
i. Inability to submit regulatory requirements	• Schedule work that needs to be done in advance in order to submit on time or work on timelines for submission

Table 7. Red flags/early warnings of operations and financial sustainability problems

Conclusion

CSO networks play a crucial role in strengthening CSOs and thus in advancing development in our country. Yet, in many ways, they encounter more sustainability challenges that individual CSOs.

This Guidebook, including the three cases presented here, provide an understanding of the factors necessary to sustain an effective CSO network.

Among these are:

1) strong membership and constituency, and their active participation,
2) effective governance and leadership,
3) collegiality, representation and mutual responsibility of the leaders and members of the network,
4) effective resource generation, and
5) clear and functional monitoring and evaluation and other organizational systems.

Acknowledgements/Contributors

Caucus of Development NGO Networks (CODE-NGO)
4F Llanar Building, 77 Xavierville Avenue corner B. Gonzales Street,
Loyola Heights 1108 Quezon City, Philippines
Tels. (+632) 9202595, 4356616, 4331776
Fax: (+632) 9202595 loc. 101
Email: caucus@code-ngo.org
Website: www.code-ngo.org

Caucus of Development NGO Networks
@CODE_NGO