



BEATING THE DRUM

Stories of Influencing Networks

Edited by: Nynke Kuperus, Marieke Meeske, Saskia van Veen,
Impact Measurement and Knowledge Team, Oxfam Novib

BEATING THE DRUM

Stories of Influencing Networks

Edited by: Nynke Kuperus, Marieke Meeske, Saskia van Veen,
Impact Measurement and Knowledge Team, Oxfam Novib

PREFACE

The world is a global village where small organizations can feel increasingly insignificant. Local communities are connected to a globalized economy that is driven by global flows of goods, services, capital, workers and knowledge. Within this global order, states, citizens, flora and fauna are impacted by the actions of international organizations, multinational corporations and global finance. To tackle local problems, local and national communities need networks to share knowledge, share resources and amplify their voice. When united in networks, Civil Society Organizations are better able to increase their influence, take a stand, find solutions and shape policy. Formal and informal networks of like-minded people and organizations provide civil society with the resources needed to overcome the status quo and advocate for positive change in the global economy.

There is no single path to develop a networked mindset – we need to learn from our experiences, failures, dilemmas and solutions. The cases in this publication provide insights into strategies to establish (start-up) networks, coalitions and alliances. We also emphasize the importance of defining clear common goals as well as identifying the achievements of the networks (and the organizations within them) and the short- and long-term benefits for the cause. The cases stress the importance of ensuring effective communication within networks as well as acknowledging differences among members. These differences represent assets that require the network to allocate specialist roles to the participants. These cases provide insight into how to mobilize communities, citizens and actors and ensure coordinated action. Effective coordination and communication are key to network success. The cases show that technology plays a key role in coordination and communication, both inside and outside networks. Furthermore, networks can have a transformative effect on their members. Network growth requires adjustments by members, for example, in terms of targeting, collaboration, learning and the degree of formalization.

The collection of stories presented in this publication shows hope for citizens' power and action, especially when combined across the globe in networks, regardless of whether these are global, northern, southern or other types of networks. Of course, how a network is portrayed is highly dependent upon the writer's perspective. Most cases in this publication are written from the perspective of the initiator, coordinator, co-convenor or funder. This may result in some bias. However, as you can read, the authors succeeded in providing us with a glimpse behind the scenes, allowing us to reflect upon their work. The great value of this publication lies in the fact that these networks not only provide insight into their functioning but also their thinking, and the dilemmas they face. These insights into the dilemmas make this publication essential reading for influencing practitioners around the globe.

Review Committee, June 2020

Erik Boonstoppel — Project Leader Strategic Partnership Dialogue and Dissent at Oxfam Novib

Paul Engel — Senior Consultant Knowledge, Perspectives and Innovation and Chair of the board of Both Ends

Velina Petrova — Knowledge for Impact Director at Oxfam International

Gerhard Schuil — Manager Research and Advice at the Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO)

Paul Shotton — Principal Lecturer at The Hague University of Applied Science

CONTENTS

Preface	3
Abbreviations	6
INTRODUCTION	8
A journey backstage	9
INFLUENCING INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS	14
Transnationalizing domestic issues	15
Banning nuclear weapons	19
Corporate accountability for human rights and the environment	27
A positive list for pets in the EU	37
Collective action for change	44
INFLUENCING NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS	46
Connecting national voices	47
Localized humanitarian aid in Bangladesh	51
Influencing sexual health and rights in Malawi	61
Opposition to sexual and reproductive health rights networks in Indonesia	71

The nexus between influencing and service delivery	77
INFLUENCING AT MULTIPLE LEVELS	80
Influencing across borders	81
Football and land rights for 3 million people in Liberia	85
Women in the Afghan police	95
Civil society and multi-level health advocacy in the global financing facility	105
Powerful play	114
CONCLUSION	116
Finding your ensemble	117
Bibliography	124
Acknowledgements	129
Colophon	133

ABBREVIATIONS

AAP	Animal Advocacy and Protection	NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
AMREF	African Medical and Research Foundation	NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ASV	Alliance Satu Visi	NL	The Netherlands
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019	OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
CSO	Civil Society Organization	RMNCAH-N	Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, and Adolescent Health and Nutrition
EfA	Eurogroup for Animals	SOMO	Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations
EU	European Union	SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights
GFF	Global Financing Facility	UK	United Kingdom
GUSO	Get Up Speak Out	UN	United Nations
ICAN	International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
IPBES	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services	UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force	US	United States
KUHP	Draft of the Penal Code	WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding	WPSO	Women and Peace Studies Organization
NAHAB	National Alliance of Humanitarian Actors	WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

INTRODUCTION

A JOURNEY BACKSTAGE

The frame drum on the cover of this book is a drum that is used to gather people and create space for dialogue. Around the world the drum is used in the present, just as it was in the past. Beating this drum gives an individual the power to raise their voice. The vibration of the drum is believed to remove unnecessary emotions and thoughts, which enables conversations to take place on a more equal footing and be supported by emotional bonding. The drum is taken here as a metaphor for people coming together in a network for influencing. The mindset of the people is focused on achieving change together and developing mutually beneficial connections and partnerships of equals. In this publication, we want to learn more from practice about how influencing networks work and how they achieve change.

This introduction starts with some definitions and theoretical considerations that guide our analysis, and it also introduces the overarching learning questions that prompted this publication. Let's start by looking more closely at the definition of influencing – 'systematic efforts to change power relationships, attitudes, social norms and behaviours; the formulation and implementation of official policies, laws and regulations, budgets and company policies and practices in ways that promote more just and sustainable societies without poverty' (Oxfam, 2019). This definition of influencing can be approached as a strategic endeavor as well as a creative and messy process. Depending on the context, influencing strategies can include: cultivating active citizenship; building the capacity of state institutions to engage poor and marginalized people in participating in decision-making; advocating and campaigning for changes to government and corporate decision-making processes, policy, and practice; influencing attitudes, social norms, and behaviours; supporting the poverty reduction roles of social movements and civil society organizations (CSOs); and supporting, spreading and scaling up innovative development solutions (Oxfam, 2019). The power of influencing lies in the selection of an appropriate combination of such strategies to fit the window of opportunity emerging in the context of a given theme. This publication provides many examples of the belief that influencing can be used in all contexts and thematic areas and at all levels. It can stand alone or, as is more often the case, be integrated into programme and humanitarian work (Oxfam, 2019).

A combination of strategies has a more powerful influence and is best achieved by working together. This explains why influencing often happens in coalitions or networks to advance interests in a policy process (Heaney & Lorenz, 2013; Junk 2019). Partnerships and alliances are considered key for effective influencing (Oxfam, 2019). The benefits of working together in mutually beneficial partnerships (Oxfam Australia, 2017) include: (1) a louder and more credible voice for the network; (2) expanded access to decision-makers; (3) mutual organizational advantages through skill-sharing and broadened exposure to each other's practices; and (4) lessened risk through a united voice rather than advocacy by a lone

organization (Oxfam Australia, 2017; Te Lintelo et al., 2016) Furthermore, active cooperation increases the success of lobby efforts (Junk, 2019). The cases in this publication will show that having a shared narrative and related objectives are key in bringing focus and scale to the influencing activities of the network and its individual members. Yet, having this shared narrative is not enough. A position paper is a start, not an end (Labovic, 2017). Pooling human and financial resources within a network is advantageous but also proves to be an incentive for new members to join a network.

The terms network, alliance and coalition, are commonly used by civil society groups to refer to their collaborations for influencing, although there are many other terms in use as well. For this publication, we follow Oxfam Australia (2017) in arguing that the term 'network' seems the most inclusive term, and we chose to use this term in this publication.

The nine examples in this publication demonstrate that influencing as a network does not have a one-size-fits-all approach. Influencing networks target different arenas of decision-making, and each comes with a different model, relationships, approaches, and strategies for exercising influence. The three Parts of the publication tell us more about the experiences of the nine influencing networks that have allowed us to look backstage and learn from their experiences. The cases are personal accounts and reflections from key players in the networks.

This publication does not aim to provide an independent reflection. Rather, practitioners share insights into how they have selected and employed (combinations of) different strategies, their working methods and how they operate to ensure appropriate mutually beneficial partnerships and capacity development. The cases will also describe the successes, the dilemmas overcome and some lessons from the failures. Successes, dilemmas and failures all demonstrate how influencing networks move at the pace of the trust they build.

In the fast-moving reality of influencing networks, there is little room for reflection. That is why this publication seeks to contribute by taking a moment to look back and learn from one's own practice and that of others. We used three overarching learning questions (drawn from influencing practitioners) to shape the analysis. The first question focused on partnerships and how partnerships become mutually beneficial. A second question focused on the creation of a shared narrative and shared objectives. Lastly, practitioners were asked about the role of capacity development in their influencing networks.

Throughout this publication, there are pertinent insights into power relationships. We look at the importance of internal and external communication, including the intercultural aspects of communication, and the role of public support and how it can shape a window of opportunity for influencing networks to take the next step and be successful.

How this publication came about

Influencing is a fast-growing part of the Oxfam Novib's work. To learn more about influencing in networks, Oxfam Novib initiated this publication to exchange lessons learned from a wide variety of actors in the development sector. This publication is part of a comprehensive learning trajectory implemented by the Strategic Partnership towards a worldwide influencing network (Oxfam Novib, SOMO and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs). The learning trajectory seeks to reflect on and learn from the successes, failures and dilemmas that influencing networks experience in practice. Other workstreams of the overall learning trajectory focus internally on regional learning and roundtable reflection

sessions within Oxfam's Worldwide Influencing Network. The intention of this publication is for the carefully selected compelling stories to inspire. By jointly reflecting on insights from a variety of influencing networks, this publication seeks to reach an audience both inside and outside Oxfam and to facilitate learning and generate new ideas on this important topic to further smart practice. The publication will be followed by a series of webinars in which we connect networks and learn together from each other in an interactive way. This publication can be viewed as a first step of a much longer journey.

The cases presented in this publication come from across the world to address a wide array of issues ranging from animal protection in Europe, to global nuclear disarmament, to engendering a national police force. This publication has three Parts. Each Part refers to a different level, or combination of levels, and influencing targets. In Part 1, three cases are presented that target intergovernmental organizations: (a) negotiating nuclear abolition through the United Nations, by PAX; (b) seeking corporate accountability via the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), by OECD Watch; and (c) the lobby for a positive pets list in the European Union, by AAP Animal Advocacy and Protection. Part 2, is focused on targeting national decision-makers, the three cases involve (a) alliance building for localizing humanitarian aid in Bangladesh, by NAHAB; (b) resilience-building for effective alliances, by the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Alliance Malawi and Rutgers; and (c) dealing with hoax attacks by opponents of SRHR in Indonesia, by Alliance Satu Visi. Part 3 focuses on cases that show how influencing at multiple levels is done. Part 3 includes: (a) a collaboration between the CSO Working Group on Land Rights Reform in Liberia and the global campaign Land Rights Now for passing the Land Rights Act in Liberia; (b) an informal collaboration between various actors at different levels for the integration of women in the Afghan police, by Oxfam Novib and Oxfam Afghanistan; and (c) a collaboration at national, international, and



global levels for the inclusion of civil society in the Global Financing Facility (GFF), by Wemos and other members of the GFF Civil Society Coordinating Group. The publication ends with a conclusion that reflects on the three learning questions that guided the development of this reflective work.

As national authorities are almost always among the targets of influencing networks, several cases overlap. The grouping of cases is, therefore, not meant to provide a typology, but rather to highlight particular issues for reflection at the main levels of operation. The three Parts that form this publication are not meant to be read as mutually exclusive categories, but rather as a series of complementary areas of focus in a larger continuum of decision-making.

This publication is written with the intention that you will enjoy reading these diverse and insightful cases and that they have a positive impact on your own work.

INFLUENCING INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

TRANSNATIONALIZING DOMESTIC ISSUES

Powerful examples of influencing networks lobbying intergovernmental organizations for policy change inspire this Part. The stories of these influencing networks illustrate the variety of factors that prompt organizations to work together across borders and, by doing so, bring about change that potentially impacts a much larger group of people than their own constituency. The influencing networks presented in this first Part are drawn by the critical role that international organizations play in shaping society's norms and beliefs, but they also realize that the most pressing challenges facing humanity are 'collective-action problems' that cannot be solved by single countries alone (Green, 2016). The internationalization of domestic policy issues is also illustrated by the increase of intergovernmental organizations active today. In fact, on average, a country is a member of 43 intergovernmental organizations (Cao, 2009).

The resistance that influencing networks meet at the national level can prompt them to target intergovernmental organizations to achieve change. One illustration of this is the demand of indigenous people that their rights are upheld by non-traditional authorities. Indeed, in the 1970s, when several groups of indigenous people lacked a constructive dialogue with the states that hosted them, they increasingly trans-nationalized their influencing activities and had delegates actively participating in international debates, especially those organized through United Nations forums (Powless, 2012). Soon enough, a transnational Indigenous Movement was formed, and in 1982 this joint effort received recognition when the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations was established. Powless (2012), himself a First Nations' youth activist from Canada, explained in his compelling essay on this case that the indigenous groups came to view the United Nations as an intergovernmental body with significant soft power over the individual states when it comes to setting policy-norms and defining peoplehood and the associated rights. Some years later, in 1987, the Working Group on Indigenous Populations was mandated to produce a draft declaration to promote Indigenous Rights, which twenty years later, in 2007, became the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The vast majority (144 member states) voted in favour of the Declaration; there were 11 abstentions and four votes against. The four states objecting, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United States, were all countries that host large indigenous populations and voted against at first, but later withdrew their opposition and supported the Declaration, albeit with some caveats (Powless, 2012; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2007).

The short story of successful influencing by indigenous people is about making a sub-national or national policy gap a 'collective action problem' at an intergovernmental organization. It illustrates the importance of the convening role that the international system can play, and how the open doors of an intergovernmental organization can prompt change at

the national or even sub-national level. It also constitutes an example of what Cao (2009) referred to as the ability of an intergovernmental organization to bring about collective action through collaboration and to support coordination among states.

Intergovernmental organizations can be defined as: ‘entities created with sufficient organizational structure and autonomy to provide formal, ongoing, multilateral processes of decision-making between states, along with the capacity to execute the collective will of their members (states)’ (Vogly et al., 2008). This definition highlights both the process of interactions within intergovernmental organizations and the possibility of collective outcomes from them. Furthermore, formal, ongoing processes of interaction within an organization, require ongoing administration and organization. Influencing networks include intergovernmental organizations as a target, particularly when facing a collective problem, or seeking to transform a national challenge into a problem that requires international action.

In this Part, three very different stories of networks influencing intergovernmental organizations are presented. The first story is presented by the largest peace organization in the Netherlands: PAX. Their story is about the journey of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), which was launched in 2007 with the aim of influencing the UN general assembly for nuclear disarmament. The main objective of the campaign, a multilateral, legally-binding instrument banning nuclear weapons, was negotiated in 2017, and ICAN was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for this achievement. The second case is a story about a global network seeking to advance accountability for corporate human rights and environmental impacts through the activities of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The OECD Watch network came into existence in 2003 to target the OECD because of the OECD’s unique potential to influence international norms and its access to remedy through responsible business conduct. OECD Watch has now grown into a network with about 130 members from 50 countries. In this story, we learn about this network’s experiences, successes and dilemmas. The third and last case in this first Part is the story of Animal Advocacy and Protection (AAP) – presenting the case on behalf of the influencing network of European partners, and most importantly the Eurogroup for Animals (EFA) – and its efforts to influence the European Union and its member states to adopt a positive list of pet animals. Because of the pan-European nature of the exotic pet trade, and the freedom of movement of goods allowed within the European Union, a European Union-wide positive list would be necessary to tackle this issue effectively. Naturally, the legislators of the European Union (Commission, Council and Parliament) were, from the beginning, the logical influencing target.



BAN THE BOMB

BAN

We
Amb White

Photo credit: Ralf Schlesener

BANNING NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Key objective: The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear weapons (ICAN), represented by civil society organizations all over the world, was instrumental in achieving the negotiation and adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Setsuko Thurlow is a survivor. At 13 years old, she was the only girl in her entire school to survive the bombing of Hiroshima. All her life, Setsuko has advocated for the experiences of survivors like herself never to be forgotten. Setsuko's testimony, like all testimonies from Hibakusha (the word used to describe survivors of the US atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki), is deeply personal and emotional, while also conveying a powerful message: no more nuclear weapons.

By Maaïke Beenes (PAX)

Nuclear weapons are the worst weapon ever created. They cannot be developed, produced or used without causing indiscriminate intergenerational harm. Although only used twice in warfare, the use, testing, and production of nuclear weapons have changed ecosystems forever. The nuclear weapons era has diverted resources and destroyed communities for decades. The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear weapons (ICAN) was established to motivate people and politicians to end the existential threat posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons.



International campaigns can motivate people and politicians to engage

Civil society's resistance to nuclear weapons has existed as long as the weapons themselves. Diverse groups and individuals engage in activism against 'the bomb', from catholic nuns breaking into nuclear weapons facilities to medical professionals researching the impact of nuclear conflict on global food supplies. These diverse actors together form an ecosystem that has strong connections but also diverging approaches.

The network

ICAN was launched globally in 2007 by International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (ICAN, n.d. a). CSOs from around the world joined the coalition. In a civil society that juggles multiple approaches to nuclear weapons, what made ICAN special was the resolute focus on the impact of the weapons and the need for an international treaty to make nuclear weapons illegal. Since 2007, ICAN has grown significantly. It now engages 547 partner organizations in 103 countries and has a staff team of nine based in Geneva, Melbourne and New York.

ICAN is a legal entity with a staff team and governance board (ICAN, n.d. b). It is governed by an International Steering



Group that consists of ten organizations and which is responsible for the overall strategy and governance of the campaign. The staff team produces resources such as briefing papers and social media content that ICAN partner organizations can then use in their advocacy, communications and lobby meetings. The staff team also has strong relations with the diplomatic disarmament communities in Geneva and New York, the International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, as well as other international organizations. There are strong connections between partner organizations as well as between partners and the secretariat in Geneva. To join ICAN, organizations agree to promote the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, to identify publicly with ICAN, to keep ICAN staff informed of any related plans and activities, and to operate non-violently (ICAN, n.d. c). Capacity, financial resources and approaches differ widely, and being a partner of ICAN can take many different forms. As a collective, the campaign has excellent access to both national and international decision-makers.

The network also has its own power dynamics and associated dilemmas. This is a result of different factors, including differences in the resources available to the different ICAN partner organizations. Most of the better-resourced organizations are from Western Europe or North America. One way these differences have been addressed is through supporting partner organizations with grants programs. Even so, when looking at ICAN

delegations to United Nations conferences, for example, participation is skewed towards people from Western Europe and North America. At times, partner organizations that are not members of the International Steering Group of the campaign have also felt a lack of transparency from that group. Efforts are being made to improve transparency, for instance, by sharing minutes after every leadership meeting with the broader campaign. There are also explorative conversations ongoing about how the ICAN participants in such meetings, as well as the leadership of ICAN itself, can be more reflective of the diverse constituency of the network.

Strengths and mutually beneficial partnerships

The wider anti-nuclear movement has not had such a unified focus and is sometimes characterized by wide-ranging priorities and differences of opinion. A key strength of ICAN has been the collective focus on a single goal: a treaty banning

nuclear weapons. This has helped the campaign because it does not require everyone to agree on everything, just on the one goal of getting a treaty banning nuclear weapons.

Different ICAN partner organizations have widely varying areas of expertise. This diversity is a great asset to the coalition. Areas of thematic expertise within ICAN include (intersectional approaches to) feminism, legal issues, including existing international (humanitarian) law, medical and scientific knowledge of the effects of nuclear weapons and private sector involvement in nuclear arsenals. The diversity of organizations within ICAN means that some individuals or organizations focus mostly on research and content creation, while others are much better placed for grassroots activism, social media organizing or lobbying state representatives. Using these different skill sets is an important part of the inside/outside strategies used by ICAN.

The PAX project Don't Bank on the Bomb that started almost ten years ago is an example of how ICAN partner organizations can contribute specific expertise to the campaign (Don't Bank on the Bomb, n.d.). PAX publishes research on private companies involved in the nuclear weapons complex as well as the links of that industry with the financial sector. Don't Bank on the Bomb aims to encourage divestment from nuclear weapons producers, and contribute to the stigma associated with nuclear weapons. The research is a valuable tool for campaigners, who can use it to raise public awareness and engage with financial institutions themselves. The research creates thought leadership and contributes to the shared narrative of the network.

Another strength is the social gatherings related to the campaign. Making space to celebrate successes, and having fun together is considered important. ICAN built itself a reputation for throwing great parties. This works not only for building strong personal connections within the coalition but also for making connections with people outside the coalition. Inviting diplomats to informal drinks is also a great way to build relationships with diplomats of like-minded states. It even helps to bond with delegations of states that are not generally allies.

Influencing intergovernmental organizations

The goal ICAN set out to achieve was the adoption of a new international legally-binding instrument banning nuclear weapons and leading to their complete elimination. International debate on nuclear weapons was already taking place within both the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). Both of these arenas provided limited space for civil society to participate in the debate and engage with diplomatic delegations.

In 2010, the Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons adopted a document that



*Research commissioned
by the network or
members thereof
contributes to a strong
shared narrative*

expressed ‘deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons’. This was a significant moment in reframing the debate on nuclear weapons from one focused on ‘hard’ state security to the impact of nuclear weapons on human bodies and the natural environment. This was taken up by a core group of states that led a process to further develop knowledge of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. Conferences focussing on different aspects of this issue were organized by Norway (2013), Mexico (2014) and Austria (2014).

At the 2014 conference in Vienna, Austria pledged ‘to identify and pursue effective measures to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons’. This ‘Humanitarian Pledge’ was subsequently supported by 125 states from around the world. After further discussions in 2016 by the Open-Ended Working Group organized by the UNGA, the assembly decided to ‘convene a United Nations conference in 2017, to negotiate a legally-binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, towards their total elimination’ (United Nations General Assembly, 2016). Negotiations then took place in March, June and July 2017, leading to the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 7 July 2017 (United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, n.d.).

Obstacles

The first obstacle to the work of ICAN is common to CSOs and coalitions: resource scarcity. Other actors in the system have extensive resources at their disposal and vested interests in maintaining the status quo. The political clout of the nuclear-weapon states is felt not just by ICAN, but also by smaller states that are put under pressure and threatened with the withdrawal of international cooperation, financial or military aid to deter them from joining the Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. And it is not just governments: the private sector has billions in contracts to develop, produce and maintain nuclear weapons for the world’s nuclear arsenals.

A second obstacle is the international system around disarmament, peace and security. Traditionally, debates and institutions are focused on hard security issues, prioritizing military security over human security and excluding the voices of anyone who does not fit the traditional picture of a security expert. This particularly impacts people of colour and women. This also means that often the security interests of small countries and countries without nuclear weapons, such as the Marshall Islands, are not taken as seriously as those of the United States. Challenging this culture that rewards states and people for having ‘bigger buttons’ is one of the ways ICAN and the broader humanitarian disarmament community have tried to undermine the idea that nuclear weapons are legitimate. But demanding attention for the experiences of survivors of nuclear weapons use (including testing) is still sometimes characterized as emotional or soft.



*Availability of funds
and source of funds
have implications for the
agility of the network*

Success and failure

Woven through this story are different lessons related to how an issue can move through international decision-making arenas and the roles that both states and civil society can play in this process. One lesson is that having a forum to discuss an issue is of great value. In 2010, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons had been in effect for 40 years but had not delivered on one of its key pillars: nuclear disarmament. Despite this, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons meetings did offer a space for states to continue to raise the issue and for civil society to engage in this debate. The language in the 2010 outcome document on ‘catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons’ may not have resulted in many concrete steps within the treaty itself but was a major impetus for the subsequent process that, in the end, led to the Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Clearly, development in one international forum can have important spill-over effects on others.

This story also shows how civil society, working together with like-minded states, can have a major influence by reframing debates. The key driver of the process towards the Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was a shift from a debate that was dominated by a few, to a narrative that recognized the right to security and protection of the many. This change in narrative democratized the disarmament debate. One-way ICAN was able to contribute to this shift was by ensuring the voice of survivors was heard. Bringing the personal stories of survivors to the formal and technical diplomatic discussions brought back the human factor into the discussion. It showed the real impact of the nuclear weapons diplomats were talking about.

Of course, there have not just been successes. ICAN has not yet been able to increase vocal support from North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member states and nuclear-weapon states for the Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. This was expected from the start but changing the positions of the nuclear-weapon states and their allies will be needed to achieve nuclear abolition. A second challenge is the relatively limited amount of public attention. Even though the nuclear threat does receive media attention around incidents in Iran or North Korea, for example, the Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons has had less media attention. This is also related to the global focus on climate change. One way this is being addressed is to explain more clearly the deep ties between nuclear weapons and climate change.



*Human story functions
as a strong, convincing
argument in an
otherwise abstract and
political discourse*

From The Hague to New York — a case in a case

In the end, decision-making on high-level issues like nuclear disarmament is done in capitals. Connecting the international disarmament debate and national politics, though, is crucial. The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear weapons (ICAN) does this through its partner organizations, which are active in over 100 countries around the world. Each country faces its own political dynamics domestically, so strategies to achieve impact are diverse. PAX is the main ICAN partner in the Netherlands, and this is the story of how PAX influenced subsequent Dutch governments to support the nuclear ban treaty.

In 2014, the same year the ‘Humanitarian Pledge’ was launched and started to receive global support, PAX launched a citizens’ initiative (‘burgerinitiatief’) in The Netherlands. If such a petition gathers more than 40,000 signatures, the Dutch Parliament is obliged to discuss its proposal. The proposition was a national ban on nuclear weapons. In 2014 and 2015, PAX co-workers visited the city centre of Utrecht during lunch breaks, worked with volunteers going onto the streets in their own cities and to festivals and campaigned online to gather as many signatures as possible. Organizations including

the Dutch Red Cross, ASN Bank, Doctors for Peace and the Dutch Humanist Society also helped to collect signatures. In September 2015, over 45,000 signatures were delivered to the Parliament. Unsurprisingly, the incumbent government asked the Parliament to reject the initiative. Although the Parliament did not adopt the proposal for a national ban, it did adopt a resolution demanding the government to actively support the start of negotiations for an international prohibition on nuclear weapons.

This proved effective when the United Nations General Assembly decided to start negotiations on a treaty banning nuclear weapons. The result was that the Netherlands was the only NATO member-state to participate in the negotiations, despite the huge pressure by the other NATO member states to boycott the negotiations. Although, in the end, The Netherlands did not support the adoption of the Treaty (the Dutch Government continues to argue that it cannot join the treaty in light of NATO obligations), the story shows the importance of public pressure and domestic politics in influencing international processes.

Conclusion

ICAN is a network of hundreds of CSOs from all around the world. It has played a major role in achieving a prohibition treaty on the last weapon of mass destruction that has not yet been prohibited: nuclear weapons. Over the last five years, the major dilemmas included the nature of international disarmament diplomacy, resource scarcity, and diversity and inclusion within the campaign itself. These matters are likely to continue shaping progress in the coming years, and have an impact on how well ICAN and like-minded states can achieve universalization of the Treaty and ultimately complete nuclear abolition.

Having clear and shared objectives was a strong connecting factor in this network, while the exchange of knowledge is a key ingredient for the partnerships to be mutually beneficial. A variety of expertise, from legal knowledge to feminism, is available in the network and is used by the network to inform the strategy and activities of the campaign. In addition, commissioned research also helped sharpen the shared narrative and common objectives of the network. This network places great emphasis on connecting socially and uses and organizes events to develop and reinforce relationships in a different setting.

There have been many successes for ICAN and its partner organizations, always in cooperation with like-minded states and organizations like the International Committee of the Red Cross. The most important success has been the negotiation and adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. In 2017, ICAN was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 'ground-breaking efforts to achieve a treaty-based prohibition of such weapons' (Nobel Prize, n.d.). This was a huge recognition of the hard work of all the ICAN campaigners over the years. For PAX specifically, the participation of the Netherlands in these negotiations was also a major success. More broadly, ICAN has been one of the most important actors in reframing the nuclear weapons debate around human stories, and the impact nuclear weapons have on humans and the environment.



Nobel Peace Prize Ceremony, Sunday 10 December 2017. Photo credit: Jo Straube



CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Key objective: OECD Watch, a global network of over 130 member organizations from more than 50 countries, seeks to advance corporate accountability for corporate human rights and environmental impacts, with a particular focus on using the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises as a tool for holding companies and governments accountable.

‘We have come to the Netherlands seeking justice because there is nowhere else to go,’ said Aurelio Chino, leader of Fediquep Federación del Pastaza, an organization that represents Quechua communities from the Pastaza River, in Peru’s northern Amazonian Loreto region. ‘In our own country, we were called terrorists when our only option was to pick up our spears to protest against the tainting of our rivers, our land, our fish and our animals,’ said Chino from The Hague. ‘We are using the OECD Guidelines in the hope that here we will be treated like human beings and that the Dutch government can convince the oil company Pluspetrol to take responsibility for the terrible harm the oil industry has done to our peoples. The OECD Watch network is helping us in this effort.’ (The Guardian, 2020; Pols, 2020).

*By Marian G. Ingrams and
Joseph M. Wilde-Ramsing
(OECD Watch coordinators)*

OECD Watch is a global network that started in 2003 and seeks to advance accountability for corporate human rights and environmental impacts through the activities of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). OECD Watch is one of three official stakeholder advisors to the OECD Investment Committee, which is responsible for implementing the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (the Guidelines), the leading international standard for companies on responsible business conduct across a wide range of topics. The OECD and its Guidelines offer great potential for advancing responsible business conduct globally because the Guidelines are widely recognized.

The Guidelines are government-backed standards for corporate behaviour that have a unique, globally accessible grievance mechanism – the network of National Contact Points. Communities, workers and CSOs like OECD Watch can use the National Contact Points system to hold corporations to account when they fail to follow the standards established in the Guidelines. A significant milestone for the OECD Watch network was its formal recognition as a key stakeholder (alongside a business advisory group and a union advisory group) in the 2011 revision of the Guidelines. This constitutes an important element of influence and implies, among other things, that OECD Watch now has the right to challenge (using a specific procedure) any

(mis)interpretation of the Guidelines by National Contact Points in dealing with complaints these National Contact Points have received. OECD Watch is the first and, to date, only stakeholder that has used this right.

In 2003, OECD Watch was formed by a group of eight non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (led by the Netherlands-based Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO) and Oxfam Novib) to test the viability of the newly-created grievance mechanisms of the National Contact Points, in facilitating remedy for communities harmed by business activity. Over the years, the membership of OECD Watch has grown at a rate of ten new members per year and diversified to include 50% membership from the Global South. The current network has about 130 members from 50 countries. Organizations join the network for different reasons; some want to use the network to further their work on a specific issue, while others have a more general interest in human rights and international influencing. Also, in terms of the level of activity and engagement, there are large variations with approximately 20% being very active, for instance, by filing complaints, releasing research, contributing financially and in-kind and providing input into reports. In contrast, others are more silent and passive members who become active only for a particular complaint that is of interest to them. Network members are asked to pay a voluntary membership fee to support the network's activities; approximately 30–40 organizations make an annual contribution. Most members pay contributions that range from €100–1,000 per year, although some have contributed more, in some cases, up to €80,000–100,000 in some years. Other income comes from OECD governments and private foundations, namely more project-based fundraising for specific OECD Watch work.



*Formalization of
influencing networks
happens over time*

The network is not a legal entity, but it has become slightly more formalized over the years, with a small (1.1 Full Time Equivalent staff) secretariat, written governance procedures, and an internally elected steering board with designated oversight and planning responsibilities. Currently, the steering board consists of nine members (including SOMO) who host the secretariat. The members of the steering board serve for terms of three years (maximum two terms, and the network strives for regional and topical diversity). The current steering board is made up of organizations based in Kenya, India, South Korea, Argentina, Peru, Canada, France and the Netherlands.

The model of the network can be best described as a series of organizations loosely collaborating for change. No single organization or key group of CSOs governs the network. All organizations linked to the network vary their engagement based on topical interest and capacity. Members communicate with each other through the network, sharing expertise, advice, experiences and resources. Large, international members like World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Oxfam, Transparency International and Friends of the Earth can connect with the large number of small grassroots organizations in the Global South that are part of the network. The network's power comes from its broad membership, lending its branding, expertise, unique grassroots and global policy advocacy experience towards the promotion of responsible business conduct.

Influencing the OECD

The OECD Watch network came into existence to target the OECD because of the OECD's unique potential in influencing international norms and accessing remedy to ensure responsible business conduct. The OECD's Investment Committee and its Working Party on Responsible Business Conduct implement the Guidelines. The Guidelines are a set of recommendations from governments to business on good conduct across a range of issues, from human rights and the environment to labour and industrial relations, taxation, and supply chain due diligence. The Guidelines are extraterritorial in scope and cover all types and sizes of companies, all sectors, and all geographies. They also include a built-in complaint mechanism that binds OECD member and adherent states – through the government-supported National Contact Points – to both promote the Guidelines to businesses and other stakeholders and to help resolve claims by communities and workers who allege a corporation has breached the Guidelines' standards.

From the start, the Guidelines have always had an important potential for shaping norms for business and facilitating remedy for impacted communities. The example the OECD sets through its implementation of the Guidelines has real impact by encouraging better policies from its member and even non-member states. This makes it critical for civil society to influence the OECD's Responsible Business Conduct agenda. OECD Watch does this in several ways. As an institutional stakeholder to the OECD, OECD Watch brings members to attend regular stakeholder consultations to raise community and NGO criticism, recommendations, and requests of the OECD's agenda.

The network is both reactive and pro-active. For nearly two decades, OECD Watch has helped communities around the world to improve the responsible business conduct feedback mechanisms by testing them with complaints to the National Contact Points. Then, OECD Watch uses its complaint database to identify trends in the performance of the National Contact Points and the nature of the harms caused by business. This data underpins the network's key demands for policymakers, the network's agenda, which it shares with the OECD and the public through reports, factsheets, submissions, and guidance on strengthening access to remedy for impacted communities. OECD Watch has also successfully urged the Working Party on Responsible Business Conduct to work beyond the Guidelines to develop practical human rights and environmental



Photo credit: Adrian Mulya



Influencing network supports communities to test feedback mechanism of intergovernmental organization

due diligence guidance for companies across all sectors plus specialist guidance for particular sectors. To advance this guidance, the network and its members have co-chaired and participated in several advisory groups negotiating the fine text of this guidance. OECD Watch also regularly recommends people to sit on panels at OECD events to speak on critical human rights topics and thereby ensures representation of a diverse array of expert presenters from civil society.



*Influencing network
engages directly with
member states*

Successfully shaping the agenda of the OECD depends, in part, on maintaining constructive working relationships with the OECD secretariat staff and with the union and business stakeholders. The OECD comprises of member states and ultimately acts on their will. Therefore, OECD Watch seeks direct engagement with states who share complementary goals on certain issues, for example, protection of land rights in the potential revision of the Guidelines in 2021–22, or mainstreaming of gender due diligence. This engagement means that if these states become allies and champions for such issues in the Working Party on Responsible Business Conduct, issues are won more easily. Here, OECD Watch relies heavily on updates from member organizations and on their direct advocacy to other states. In this sense, a circle of advocacy and impact is created: OECD Watch supports its NGO members (for example, by providing research, advocacy strategies, training and resources) in advocating that national governments adopt favourable positions on key responsible business conduct issues. These states then become allies of the network in advancing those causes at the OECD and help to give the OECD the direction to proceed with a progressive agenda. This influences other OECD states to adopt the same positive reforms, thereby enabling civil society to push for further progress at the OECD and beyond. A few key national leaders can help to grow a tide of attention to a topic at the OECD, and that rising tide then floats all (national) boats.

Yet amidst these frameworks and models for advancing change at the OECD, challenges arise over what agenda OECD Watch should be advocating. These challenges centre around the overall objectives of the network and the evolution of these objectives over time.

Within the OECD Watch network, some members see great value in using the National Contact Points complaint mechanism for communities, especially those from countries that lack access to judicial remedy. These members seek training and guidance and are sometimes keen to see more countries invited in joining the OECD to diversify the OECD itself. This also ensures more countries establish National Contact Points and implement the norms. Other members have lost faith that the Guidelines can secure meaningful remedy and view the OECD as a sluggish barrier to more meaningful corporate accountability. Some argue that, although the Guidelines are binding for states, they allow far too much flexibility to governments in setting up National Contact Points. This flexibility permits enormous variation in the actual effectiveness of this grievance mechanism. Many members warn against expanding the OECD too quickly to countries whose standards and capacity to implement a National Contact Points system are inadequate. This links to a recurring dilemma in the network –

can OECD Watch be an inside official stakeholder and an outside expert raising the voices of communities at the same time?

The challenge for OECD Watch is not so much to align disparate goals and missions but to synthesize from them a coherent work plan for the network that allows it to serve each of its members. This requires the members to guide the top priorities for the network, but also requires the network to take several approaches simultaneously. These approaches include 1) strengthening the National Contact Points grievance mechanism for communities who need it, 2) improving standards on corporate due diligence and popularizing them (not only with OECD states but other non-Western states), and 3) linking the Guidelines to other national and global initiatives on mandatory corporate accountability. Linking the Guidelines in this way should involve showing the need for mandatory due diligence, where the Guidelines fall short, or using the Guidelines as justification for aligning national laws. The network's goal remains the same: making the Guidelines serve the intended communities. As time passes, how the Guidelines can serve this purpose has become more nuanced and varied in terms of national options and community-level needs. These diverse needs and views are challenging to navigate, but they give the network its credibility and strength in representing the voice of civil society.

Successes and dilemmas

Over nearly two decades, the network has achieved a range of successes on very different scales. Some of its proudest achievements have a very personal face. Some examples where communities have been successful against corporate impact are: a commitment by a bank to pay compensation to Cambodian communities whose lands were forcefully grabbed by the bank's sugar plantation client; a promise by an oil company to clean up its flooding of a village in Nigeria; retroactive payment of over a million euros in severance benefits by a beer company to Congolese workers wrongfully severed from employment; or consent by an oil company to protect gorilla habitat by dropping plans for oil exploration in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)-protected Virunga National Park. These are successful cases that have shown the potential and power of the Guidelines and the OECD Watch network in achieving real remedy. In each of these cases, and the case of Aurelio Chino and the Peruvian Amazon indigenous community mentioned at the beginning of this Part, a community impacted by negative corporate behaviour sought OECD Watch's assistance in using the Guidelines and the National Contact Points system to file a complaint against the company in search of justice and remedy for the harms committed. Other critical successes have been at the policy level: an extension of the Guidelines themselves in 2011 to cover human rights and supply chain due diligence, admission by the OECD that financial institutions can contribute to the harms by clients and recognition of the need to apply a gender lens to corporate human rights due diligence. These, too, have been major wins for communities adversely impacted by business activity.

However on the downside, progress has been slow, and remedy and accountability for corporate harms are still extremely



rare. After nearly twenty years, the OECD's Responsible Business Conduct system may be showing its limitations. As the field of business and human rights has grown in the OECD, gaps in topic coverage in the Guidelines and severe underperformance of individual National Contact Points stand out more and more starkly. Business influence at the OECD and within member governments stymies meaningful change, even as the need for remedy has grown.

Understanding mutual partnership

The OECD Watch network relies on mutually beneficial partnerships at many levels to achieve its multi-segmented agenda. At the most basic level, the power of the network lies in its ability to bring members (and non-member NGOs) together to share skills, experience, and resources. The goal is often strengthening support for communities filing complaints. As often as possible, the network pairs a community seeking support together with another community already experienced with complaint filing, or an NGO knowledgeable about a certain National Contact Point, or an organization with expertise on a particular economic sector. The community receives the knowledge or skills it seeks, the partner develops its capacity in supporting the community and its ability to raise the case at a policy level or with companies, and both gain increased access to decision-makers.

In other cases, the outcome of partnerships between members has been to advance a broader goal within the OECD system. For example, members from the same country will come together, with the network secretariat's support, to write a letter demanding reform at a particular National Contact Point. Strength comes in numbers, and the credibility of such broad-based sub-coalitions increases their impact in achieving reform of the National Contact Points.

The network supports mutually beneficial partnerships not only among members but between the network and the OECD itself. The very existence of the network, bringing the perspective of civil society to the OECD members and adherent states, raises the credibility and relevance of the OECD's work. The network gains from being an insider to the OECD process by leveraging influence over the agenda of a major intergovernmental organization. Meanwhile, the OECD benefits from having the network's outsider input and, where warranted, its endorsement by civil society.

Similarly, OECD Watch engages in mutually beneficial partnerships with individual states to advance common policy items, or with the official business and union stakeholder advisors. For example, OECD Watch and the trade union representative to the OECD joined together in 2017 to begin the development of an assessment of every National Contact Point according to a set of key performance indicators. OECD Watch has taken the project to completion, raising awareness of the problem that the strong divergence in the performances of National Contact Points poses to both communities and workers. OECD Watch also cultivates mutually beneficial engagement with other intergovernmental organizations, such as the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights, contributing submissions to their initiatives and welcoming their in-person participation in the gatherings and discussions of members.

Capacity development

Given the diverse goals of the OECD members in utilizing the OECD's responsible conduct system, OECD Watch provides various capacity building tools to help members at an individual level. To support members filing complaints, OECD Watch has held numerous case development workshops and webinars. It has published useful step-by-step instructions on How to File a Complaint, and a handy Case Check tool to ensure compliance with the system. OECD Watch has also published guides to recent OECD due diligence guidance. Moreover, the network's assessment of all National Contact Points according to key indicators will be useful to both would-be complainants and others, such as academics and institutional investors. OECD Watch is developing new tools and guidance to develop the capacity of its members interested in using the Guidelines to advocate mandatory legal accountability for companies. OECD Watch also benefits from the existing individual capacity of members. Those with grassroots knowledge, such as business impacts on indigenous landowners, or women supply-chain workers, play a vital role in helping the network develop policy stances at the OECD, such as for the pending revision of the Guidelines. Similarly, members with expertise in particular sectors, such as the garment and textile sector or the financial sector, have helped to advise the network and the OECD on securing stronger due diligence guidance in these specific areas.

The network is not itself an organization and uses few formal organizational level capacities such as frameworks and policies. It does implement various procedures to guide internal action, from internal voting to elect its steering board and approve new member applicants, to internal discussion to achieve feedback on reports and initiatives. Perhaps its strongest organizational capacity centres around communication: how effectively it communicates internally with members about developments in the OECD sphere, and how it communicates with the OECD and its member states about civil society's needs and priorities. The network communicates through both a members-only email list and a broader interest-group list, which is open to the public to sign-up to and currently includes over 1,600 subscribers from civil society, government, business, academia, and other stakeholder groups. The network also communicates through publications shared in print

and on its website, direct advocacy with the OECD and governments, and its complaint database. To ensure communication is not overly one-directional, OECD Watch keeps abreast of the most vital developments in the business and human rights space and fosters debate among members and governments about the best role for OECD Watch in supporting those developments.

A range of factors affects OECD Watch's work. On a practical level, a shortage of government or donor funding for business and human rights makes it difficult for the network to operate. The overarching power imbalance between business and civil society, causing businesses to have much greater sway over national policy-setting, is also a disabling factor. In contrast, several factors support OECD Watch's work. For example, greater public awareness of the responsibility of corporations (and poor regulation of them) for global problems like economic inequality and climate change helps to popularize the issues and push OECD governments to pursue meaningful accountability. Another positive factor is the growing global focus on mandatory rules for corporate accountability, which underscores the value of strengthening the Guidelines to support these parallel initiatives.

Conclusion

Over the nearly 20 years of its existence, the OECD Watch network has achieved much in advancing its mission to influence the OECD in improving its promotion of responsible business conduct through the OECD Guidelines, related grievance mechanisms and due diligence guidance. The network has helped to win several key successes, including securing an important revision of the Guidelines themselves in 2011, the publication of widely known and respected due diligence guidance, and, especially in the last decade, increasingly greater access to remedy for complainants – indeed, growing acknowledgement that remedy is the basis for the whole OECD Responsible Business Conduct system.

OECD Watch has also faced challenges and failures. Despite improvements in the Guidelines, it still contains many substantive gaps. Although National Contact Points have improved, many remain weak and politically confined to government offices lacking the authority and ability to condemn and penalize companies for breaching the Guidelines. As a result of these gaps and shortcomings, the OECD system has still largely failed to ensure remedy for communities and workers impacted by harmful corporate conduct. The tools and methods OECD Watch has used to advocate change have been successful, to a degree, but have fallen short of making the Guidelines truly serve the communities they were meant to serve.

This reality has led OECD Watch members to diverge in the ways they think the Guidelines can help them – some still believe in the complaint mechanism, others are seeking more practical guidance for companies, and others are seeking

greater or less focus on the Guidelines to support or clear the way for initiatives on binding due diligence. This divergence creates dilemmas for OECD Watch. How to keep the OECD Responsible Business Conduct system impactful in changing circumstances? How to better use the OECD, as an intergovernmental organization that hosts a group of wealthier countries, to influence norms and practice among governments in the rest of the world? And how to optimize the network's status as both an inside official stakeholder, with institutionalized access to decision-making at the OECD, and an outside expert that is outspoken and very critical of the whole system and is focused on raising the voices of communities? These are the dilemmas shaping the network's planning as it enters the next decade.



Photo credit: Adrian Mulya



A POSITIVE LIST FOR PETS IN THE EU

Key objective: A European network of animal welfare charities, including Animal Advocacy Protection (AAP) and Eurogroup for Animals (Efa), influences the European Union and its member states to adopt a positive list of pet animals.

Keeping a pet should enhance both the welfare of the animal and the keeper and should not be problematic for or represent a threat to the wider community or the environment. However, scientific evidence has shown that the exotic pet industry is detrimental not only to animal welfare (Warwick et al., 2018) but also to public health (Chomel et al., 2007) and biodiversity (IPBES, 2019). Between 1990 and 2010, most European Union (EU) Member States introduced legislation to control the booming exotic pet trade and to minimize its negative impacts. Most countries chose a so-called ‘negative list’ approach, banning certain species of animals, for instance, because the animal was dangerous. To AAP Animal Advocacy and Protection (AAP), involved in legislative processes in the Netherlands since the late 80s, it was clear that this approach would sooner or later fail. A negative list is reactive by nature, it cannot anticipate new market trends, and it needs constant updating. These drawbacks make a negative list very difficult and expensive to enforce properly. Instead, AAP advocated for a so-called positive list model, which had already been established by the Dutch legislator in 1992 and in Belgium in 2002. The concept of a positive list is straightforward – it is a concise list of animal species allowed to be kept by everyone and automatically bans all the rest. This approach has gained broad support among animal welfare organizations.

Targeting the intergovernmental organization

In the late 2000s, AAP, itself member of the Dutch Animal Coalition, and the Eurogroup for Animals (Efa), an umbrella organization for animal welfare charities within the EU, agreed to work together in an informal way towards an EU-Positive List. It was clear that the positive list needed to be EU-wide as it needed to address the pan-European nature of the exotic pet trade and anticipate the freedom of movement of goods allowed within the EU. Therefore, the EU legislators (Commission, Council and Parliament) were, from the beginning, the logical influencing target. Unfortunately, EU-legislative processes tend to be very long. In the meantime, the problems related to keeping exotic pets were far from disappearing as the exotic pet trade was booming. Achieving the national positive lists was therefore desirable from an animal welfare perspective and had the added value of providing an extra argument for regulation at the EU-level. If a critical mass of Member States would introduce a positive list at the national level, it should eventually lead to necessary harmonization measures at the EU-level. Alternatively, Member States become strong advocates for immediate EU regulation, without first introducing national legislation.

By Raquel García-van der Walle (Head of Public Policy, AAP Animal Advocacy and Protection)



Member States can become a strong advocate for immediate EU regulation, without first introducing national legislation

The network

EfA is the main umbrella organization for animal welfare charities within the EU. It is a network that represents the interests of 70 member organizations from across the EU and beyond, speaking for millions of citizens with a single voice. EfA is also the secretariat of the European Parliament's Intergroup for the Welfare and Conservation of Animals, one of the largest Intergroups in the European Parliament. These roles make EfA the preferred interlocutor of the EU institutions, particularly the European Commission. EfA mostly functions as a formal network, with its own secretariat in Brussels, but it also formalizes memberships through agreements, which include a financial contribution. AAP is a member of the Dutch Animal Coalition, which consists of 17 Dutch organizations. Several of these Dutch organizations also joined a new network founded by AAP and EfA to focus on working towards an EU-wide positive list. Unlike EfA, this new network operates in a very informal way to attract and emphasize the inclusion of other, smaller national parties as this spread helps to build a critical mass and prepare for the rollout. This network encourages organizations to join and does not require formal agreements or financial contributions. Several members of EfA, and non-members, work actively together to bring about a positive list under the leadership of AAP and EfA. Some non-EfA members are taking a leading role in some countries. At the same time, numerous organizations support the campaign while not being actively engaged in it. Currently, the network has at least 35 organizations working at the national level in 17 EU Member States and at the pan-European level.



Credibility to influence governments is perceived lower for 'radical' organizations

Together, the organizations that make up the network are able to access and influence different decision-makers. Some organizations focus on influencing their Member States, and others focus on allies at the EU level. Most of the organizations that actively advocate for a positive list (either at national or EU level) are organizations that have an ongoing constructive dialogue with the national governments through established relationships. However, not all of them have sufficient resources or knowledge to embark on costly lobbying activities. The network analysed the credibility and resources of member organizations and found that those with large financial resources and high levels of credibility (when it comes to having access to decision-makers and influencing power) are mainly found in high-income countries with a well-established animal welfare community. This category of organizations includes both organizations that take a pragmatic approach to influencing policies, and also organizations that take a more 'activist' tone in their communication with the general public. The network has observed that once an organization is perceived by governments as more 'radical', the credibility in terms of being influential is reduced. Further analysis of the members and their roles found that organizations with higher credibility and lower financial resources are more dispersed geographically across the EU and often linked to national decision-making. Indeed, national organizations in the network often have more direct access to their own governments and better knowledge of current issues within that country.

A pre-existing trust relationship with officials facilitates the influencing process, especially when it comes to new

concepts such as the positive list. Most of the organizations in the network have a considerable degree of credibility and influence in their own countries or at the EU level. They are also astute in reaching out to and mobilizing their national public. However, to date, the network has chosen not to focus too much on the European public as a whole. This is because the influencing network on the positive list for pets has, up until now, found the EU institutions, particularly the Council and the Commission, to be rather unresponsive to public opinion.

Between 2008 and 2013, most of the influencing network's efforts to protect animals were dedicated to researching the situation in the EU Member States and identifying opportunities to initiate advocacy targeting the EU. The research was highly dependent on existing contacts. As one member recalls, in early 2014, four women sat around a table in a small meeting room at AAP's headquarters. The research in the EU Member States had been completed, and it was then time to select countries that would go into the first phase of advocacy. These four women decided to do the selection 'Eurovision-style' with each of them giving points to countries and jointly identifying suitable candidates. The selected countries were then divided among the four women, and each started to approach the network members in order to establish single-goal partnerships for the introduction of a positive list for pets at the national level. Those partnerships could be informal, simply agreeing to coordinate work on the subject, or have a formal character by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) detailing roles and responsibilities and, in a few cases, also financial obligations. Simultaneously, AAP and Efa set up a structured plan for outreach to the European institutions, which could feed off the processes and lessons at the Member State-level.

Between 2014 and 2019, country plans were drafted in close collaboration with the staff at AAP, Efa and the national organizations. A strategy was chosen for each country, starting with an analysis of the exotic pet ownership situation in the country and the legislation around it. General communications and lobby resources, which could be translated and adapted to the specific national needs, were created and made available to the network partners. The national partners organized meetings with civil servants and politicians, conferences and lectures, and invited staff from AAP and Efa to participate as expert guests. Media stories about the problems attached to exotic pets and the positive list as a solution began to pop up in the media throughout Europe (and beyond).

By 2019, the network had achieved successes at the national level, with Luxembourg introducing a positive list, Lithuania, Finland and Cyprus seriously considering introducing a positive list, and the positive list being a regular subject of debate in the German Bundestag. In addition, ahead of the EU elections, partners approached political parties from across the political spectrum and their candidates, who were running to be Members of the European Parliament. This resulted in one in seven of the newly elected Members of the European Parliament pledging to support the adoption of an EU positive

list. As with all good advocacy plans, possible champions were identified and targeted in the outreach activities, with the national organizations playing an important role in establishing these contacts. In the words of one Member of the European Parliament: ‘This is such a no-brainer; I don’t understand why it hasn’t happened yet.’ The positive list has a high chance of becoming the subject of either an Own Initiative Report or a Resolution of the European Parliament, both powerful agenda-setting tools in the context of the EU. This is the direct result of the intense campaigning by network partners during the run-up to the European Elections of 2019.

To ensure that the advocacy message remains consistent and coherent throughout the network, national organizations are regularly fed with information and advocacy resources by AAP and EfA. The national organizations then adapt the material to the national context and process needs. Since most network partners are also members of EfA, this facilitates contact and makes it possible to use the existing communications and alignment channels, such as email groups and regular gatherings. As one of EfA’s main policy priorities, the positive list is a recurrent agenda point in the regular meetings of EfA, and the general advocacy strategy towards the EU institutions has been written and approved according to the established governance processes within EfA.

Network-specific tools have also been set up. The so-called ‘Knights of the Positive List’ is an informal contact group created with the sole purpose of sharing information between representatives of animal welfare charities and public officials following the subject from all around Europe. The Knights email group is administered by the policy officers at AAP and EfA, and its members also have access to a shared Google Drive for the sharing of advocacy documents. All group members have the possibility of sharing information or posing a question within the group. However, the network has noticed that group members tend to prefer email communications both for questions and to share documents.

So far, these advocacy alignment tools and channels have succeeded in ensuring a coherent story from the network at all levels. Different strategic arguments are put forward depending on the specific worries and fields of competence of the public officials being targeted, and the national sensitivities from the perspective of gaining public support. Keeping a balance between being principled and being pragmatic is a recurrent dilemma, especially within a network of diverse partners ranging from a dogmatic animal rights approach to moderate animal welfare approaches and everything in between. If disagreements arise, the network resolves differences between the partners through dialogue and consensus, and it has been successful in doing this, often through compromises.

Reciprocal and open sharing of information between AAP, EfA and the organizations in the network is crucial. For instance, sharing information on particular dynamics and contexts helps to avoid applying strategies that work in one country but



*Advocacy alignment
tools and channels
succeeded in ensuring
coherent story*

would be counterproductive in another. The network is mindful of benefiting from each others' knowledge and experience in an intercultural working environment. When the positive list network started working in Lithuania, it was thought it would be a badge of honour for the authorities of one of the newer EU Member States to implement a positive list and therefore join a group of very reputable frontrunners in the field of animal welfare. That turned out to be as mistaken an assumption as that of one of our Mediterranean project leaders thinking that it was appropriate to openly smile and greet other people in an elevator at the Ministry in Vilnius. He was subsequently informed by the local partner that is 'this is not done'.

Understanding mutual partnership

Although the network began informally and is driven by the members' shared ambition and a strong belief in the positive list as a legislative solution, the members also needed formal arrangements to get the work done. When these formal arrangements were being considered, it quickly became apparent that several strategic member organizations did not have either the knowledge or the financial or human resources, to actively engage in advocacy on this subject. To help realize the common ambitions, AAP provides financial support where needed. In the case of the smaller organizations, the funds are used to cover the costs of staff dedicated to the positive list lobby activities and related project costs. These projects reflected a broad array of knowledge resources to be used in lobbying, from reports about the negative consequences of keeping exotic pets to tips for the creation of online surveys to assess the national situation. As the two leading organizations, AAP and EfA also deployed their own staff as experts who would attend consultation meetings at ministries and national parliaments. AAP and EfA would probably not have been present at these meetings, were it not for the existing contacts and the trust relationship developed by the local partners.

Despite this mutual support, there was growing recognition of the need for a formal MoU that would articulate what could be expected from one another in a truly mutually beneficial partnership. An MoU has always been mandatory in cases where financial support was provided, but it also proved to be useful in cases where there was no money changing hands. Partnerships covered by an MoU that detailed the roles and responsibilities of both parties have not only been more



Photo credit: AAP

successful, but daily interactions and communications have also been more effective. In other cases, where there has been no MoU (for example, because the national partner did not feel the need to enter an agreement with legal validity or the fear of an extra bureaucratic burden in an organization with already overstretched resources) it has been more difficult to retain the attention of the partner. This has led to an important dilemma, which is still partly unresolved: what to do when network partners do not adequately engage (due to a lack of commitment to the goal or insufficient means) but do not accept assistance (for instance, financing for extra staff hours). ‘Foreign’ organizations are sometimes regarded as a threat when starting advocacy activities in a different country, and strategic relationships between organizations can become strained, especially when competition for funding or publicity also plays a role.



*Clear agreements
on conflicting issues
prevent internal
conflicts*

Another advantage of formal MoUs is that they allow both organizations to establish clear boundaries to the scope of the collaboration and acceptable actions. This is particularly important when partners have different stances on other matters related to animal welfare or campaigning methods. A recurring dilemma presents itself when national partners oppose zoos as a matter of principle, as AAP regularly works with zoos to provide a home to rehabilitated animals. Establishing a dialogue around these potentially conflicting issues avoids the risk of the network being confusing in its messaging and reduces the danger that any differences will become a reputational issue, either now or in the future.

Capacity development

The network does not have a purposeful strategy on capacity development, but capacity is developed when working together. A first example to illustrate how this happens in practice is the importance given to cultural and environmental awareness, as someone cannot know all the social and cultural mores in any given country. The network partners are mutually reliant on each other to guide the members through the European maze. While Spaniards might find it appropriate to kiss professional contacts on the cheek after having met each other just a couple times, a Dane might look horrified were that to happen. Or, what if a Dutch person, raised in a very horizontal society, where it is often difficult to distinguish the Minister from the junior civil servant in a meeting, paid no attention to due protocol in the German Bundestag?

A second example of capacity development is the ability to work strategically. Since achieving an EU positive list will take years, if not decades, the network benefits from organizations that embrace a long-term commitment. Generally speaking, the bigger the organization, and the more secure its long-term financial prospects, the easier it is to work on long-term strategic commitments. Smaller national organizations with less financial security often focus more on short-term goals. These smaller organizations work on a very wide range of issues, often driven by the personal ‘motivators’ of the people behind the organization, frequently the founders themselves. However, working together with the leading organizations on the positive list campaign has helped these smaller organizations to develop their strategic capabilities, for example, by

working together on strategy documents, multi-annual budgets and annual plans. Conversely, the leading organizations also benefit and learn from the more opportunistic, action-oriented nature of the smaller partners.

Conclusion

The network has been extremely successful in getting the positive list for pets on the agenda in a significant number of EU Member States and also within the European Institutions. It has also been successful in getting partner organizations within the network to embrace the concept and has even prompted organizations outside the field of animal welfare to support it, if not actively advocate for it. In addition, the network has increased the capacity of several partner organizations. This has allowed them to engage in structured lobbying activities, with positive effects, and to become involved with other important topics related to animal wellbeing. These successes clearly show a network approach can be effective when it comes to influencing intergovernmental organizations.

However, the network has also encountered dilemmas and even some failures. Most important were the difficulties encountered in setting up formal collaboration agreements with and between key partners in the key Member States. These problems led to significant delays in the process, inefficient or ineffective advocacy and several incidences of miscommunication. The network experienced some misunderstandings when working and lobbying with ‘foreign organizations’ in another country. To avoid these misunderstandings, the network looks for ways to deepen the partnership so that all members, large and small, can be pro-active when it comes to agenda-setting for the network. There is a balance to strike between formalized commitment and inclusiveness.

Lastly, it is important to recognize that a major weakness of this network is its dependence on a sustained stream of funding and human and technical resources from the two primary partners AAP and EfA. Embedding the EU positive list in the strategic goals of at least two or three other financially strong international organizations would be highly desirable for securing the continuity of the network.



Group picture meeting EU Commissioner Vella. Photo credit: European Commission

COLLECTIVE ACTION FOR CHANGE

The three cases in this Part cover a variety of topics and provide us with compelling stories of three very different influencing networks that target intergovernmental organizations. The stories help us to understand the implications of the structures and processes within these networks and the choices they make. The experiences tell us more about how the networks have developed their governance structures, partnerships and capacity development activities, but they also reflect on themes related to inclusiveness and internal and external communication. The choices made by the networks have consequences. For instance, when we consider the sources of funds that finance the activities, the choice of project funds affects the agility of the networks. The ability to pursue opportunities can be limited by a third-party project agreement, while voluntary contributions also create challenges, in particular the predictability of funds. This difficulty is further compounded because having only few organizations financing the network also appeared to generate questions around sustainability.

In this Part, we have seen remarkable outcomes from goal-oriented networks that embraced diversity and sought ways to adapt to evolving needs. Examples include, for seeking further commitment, diversifying leadership and doing more for the communities in need. However, even the successful outcomes introduced challenges, such as how to further the implementation and ensure the adopted laws and policies – whether an agreement on the prohibition of nuclear weapons or a guideline for responsible business conduct – are turned into actual positive effects in the lives of the affected people. These three cases show how important it is to address resource differentials between members of the network as these inequalities play a role between civil society and, in relation to the private sector and different government lobbying groups, some have much more resources or knowledge to apply. A regular power and capacity analysis of lobbying partners and their adversaries can be highly informative for mitigating imbalances.

The story of OECD Watch is one that illustrates the influence of targeting the normative role of intergovernmental organizations and, in particular, the setting of standards. In this case, the standards in the OECD Guidelines support local communities by equipping them with the ability to hold the companies to account. The work of OECD Watch also involves coordination, as the objectives include levelling the playing field so that all authorities and private sector entities are asked to promote and adhere to the same responsible standards of business conduct. In this way, an imbalance between or within countries can be avoided. In the other two stories, challenges required strong collective and collaborative action. The stories about AAP's work to bring about a positive list of pets and about ICAN's work to abolish nuclear weapons show that one country cannot achieve results alone, and collaboration is needed to address problems.

Lastly, are the insights around the role of local communities. One can also ask whether influencing intergovernmental organizations requires the networks to be relevant at the local level? The stories seem to identify an important, permanent challenge. The network needs to work with an agenda that accommodates the perspectives and interests of its members and their constituencies, while at the same time, focusing on issues that are of interest to the intergovernmental platform they address. All three cases seem to bring in different arguments for why this is necessary, with two main factors standing out. The first is making the problem concrete so that the human story functions as a strong, convincing argument in an otherwise abstract and political discourse. A second factor is linked to the member states being activated to bring about collective action at the intergovernmental level. The stories tell of the networks' ambitions to be inclusive and their members being empowered and equipped to take action on the topic at hand in the largest number of the member states. In this way, they establish a good basis for generating collective action at the intergovernmental level. At the same time, we also read that the networks highlight the importance of going beyond changing guidelines and regulations, to ensure that the impact of these guidelines and regulations are also felt by the local communities who asked for them in the first place. For that, local presence and follow up is necessary. In the next Part, we will read more stories, this time about those who are targeting national-level authorities.

INFLUENCING NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS

CONNECTING NATIONAL VOICES

The Oostvaardersplassen is a nature reserve in the Netherlands covering about 56 square kilometres, which is managed by the State Forestry Service. It has been recognized as an experiment in rewilding since the 1980s and has seen the introduction of large grazing animals (Heck cattle, Konik horses and red deer). As these animals do not have natural enemies in the Netherlands, and the nature research is surrounded by urban areas and agricultural sites, the Oostvaardersplassen soon became overpopulated with large grazing animals. In a particularly harsh winter in 2005, many animals died of starvation, prompting protests from the public, Dutch celebrities, and animal rights organizations and debates in the Dutch parliament over whether this constituted animal cruelty. Individuals, CSOs and allies in government came together in an informal, ad-hoc influencing network grounded in a shared vision that the animal cruelty at the Oostvaardersplassen needed to be halted. In the winter of 2017–18, almost 3,300 deer, horses and cattle starved to death, dividing the Dutch public and leading to further demonstrations and individuals feeding hay to the animals despite police arrests. Ultimately, the Province asked an external Commission to develop a policy to address the situation, which was approved on 11 July 2018. This report advised that the terrain should be managed instead of rewilded. The consequence of implementing these recommendations was a reduction in the number of remaining animals, either by not replacing or shooting them. The CSOs and individual animal rights activists were not at all happy with this solution, which, from their perspective, led to more animal cruelty. Clearly, this case shows that coordinating a national influencing network around a clear policy action is not easy to achieve.

This example shows how networks of CSOs, citizens, and allies in parliaments can come together around important local issues to hold national governments accountable for their policies and practices. Building linkages between civil society actors through influencing networks provides opportunities to pool resources and capacities (Cullerton et al. 2018). But, we also see that influencing policymaking and implementation is not a simple linear process, so national influencing networks include a range of stakeholders, including politicians, interest groups, advisors, bureaucrats and other actors (Cullerton et al., 2018). These actors are not always naturally aligned in their visions and objectives. Although working in a network at the national level helps CSOs to be heard and protected (Claessen & de Lange, 2016), there is also a reputational risk when policy demands are not aligned. What the example of the Oostvaardersplassen shows is that gaining the support of the public is an important factor in policy change, as well as creating political will among allies (Cullerton et al., 2018). Working in national influencing networks requires a careful balance between insider and outsider strategies of influencing. In the case of the Oostvaardersplassen, this meant that animal rights organizations and allies in politics lobbied the province to reassess their conservation methods (insiders approach), while at the same time individual activists fed the animals in a

process supported by celebrities speaking out against animal cruelty and mobilizing the public (outsiders approach). The fact that an insider and outsider approach was not well aligned, and the actors were not explicit about their policy demand, led to disappointing results.

The interactions in national influencing networks are often driven by mixed memberships in political communities, wherein actors may have multiple interests, motivations, or roles that drive their behaviours (Heaney, 2004). Understanding how networks can organize the relationships between actors engaged in collective activity to influence national governments is important in ensuring the coherence of the network. In Part 2, we focus on how influencing networks work in their quest for influencing national decision-makers. We present three case studies of influencing networks. We explore the type of actors involved in influencing national decision-makers and how these actors build mutually beneficial partnerships. Furthermore, as some CSOs have a service delivery function as well as an advocacy demand, we will see how using best practices in service delivery can be an exemplar for change.

But we will also see how the reputation of CSOs can be put at risk when the advocacy message of an alliance is politicized. We will see the dilemmas CSO networks face when the constituencies they represent have conflicting needs. We will show how capacity building can help influencing networks to overcome these challenges. These lessons can help influencing networks at the national level to reflect on their power to ensure that governments follow up on the agreements and commitments made.

The three cases presented in the following sections all tell their own unique story of a network that influences national decision-makers. The first case is the National Alliance of Humanitarian Actors (NAHAB) from Bangladesh – a group of CSOs that aims to localize humanitarian action. They combine national advocacy towards the Bangladeshi Government, with the aim of holding the government accountable for disaster preparedness. They also experiment with localized, sustainable humanitarian aid towards at-risk communities. Secondly, the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) alliance of Malawi presents their journey towards becoming an effective and resilient SRHR alliance that is accepted in dialogues on access to SRHR at the national and local levels. CSOs formed this network as an inclusive alliance, which includes representation of sexual minorities and youth. Working in the Malawian SRHR alliance has helped the CSO members to align their interests and goals, to complement each other, and to avoid competing for the same attention while maintaining their autonomy as an organization. The Get Up Speak Out (GUSO) governance model has helped the alliance to become sustainable and independent. Lastly, Aliansi Satu Visi (One Vision alliance, ASV) is an Indonesian alliance for SRHR that consists of CSOs working at the local and national levels in Indonesia. They have been very successful in mobilizing public support around the fight against gender-based violence – but the angle this case takes is not about this success. Through

their success, they were attacked and politicized by their opponents, which led to a crisis within their influencing network. The story shows the resilience of influencing networks and how mutually beneficial partnerships become even stronger when under attack.



Photo credit: Gideon Mendat/Oxfam

LOCALIZED HUMANITARIAN AID IN BANGLADESH

Key objective: The National Alliance of Humanitarian Actors (NAHAB), represented by local civil society organizations, aims to localize humanitarian action in Bangladesh.

The national alliance of humanitarian actors, Bangladesh (NAHAB) is an alliance of CSOs that advocate and facilitate localized (and thereby balanced), faster, needs-based humanitarian actions in Bangladesh. The influencing network facilitates local and national CSOs, giving them a stronger voice and representation in humanitarian platforms, networks and national disaster management structures and also creating access to financial and non-financial resources. This is in line with the global trend for promoting the localization process in humanitarian response programmes, and which was a feature of the Grand Bargain agreement.

By Abdul Latif Khan (Technical Advisor of NAHAB), Md. Jahangir Alam (Head, CC & DRR and Rights & Governance Sector, Dhaka Ahsania Mission) and Mahedi Imran (Influencing Officer of NAHAB)

The grand bargain agreement

The Grand Bargain agreement is the result of the World Humanitarian Summit of 2016, where donors and (international) humanitarian organizations committed to the importance of supporting local and national responders. NAHAB, as an influencing network, was formed in response to the Grand Bargain to unite the

voices of local and national responders in Bangladesh. 'As the Grand Bargain commitments showed, the time has proven that the local actors are the first and best responders.' Dr Ehsan of NAHAB (virtual press conference held on 21 April 2020, titled 'Local and National NGOs in Bangladesh to Fight COVID-19').



Advantages for Civil Society Organizations to being member of influencing networks

Bangladesh is a disaster-affected country and prone to floods, cyclones, tidal waves, riverbank erosion, earthquakes, droughts, salinity intrusion, lightning and fires. Disasters cause the sufferings of millions of people. Cyclones and floods frequently cause severe damage. People commonly rely on their own initiatives to face the challenges of disasters as the structural support from government and international actors has not always been timely and needs-based. The influencing network NAHAB builds on these local initiatives and unites them in a platform at the national level. The vision of the network is building a disaster resilient community in Bangladesh, and its mission is harnessing collaboration among national and local actors to carry out effective humanitarian actions in Bangladesh. To reach their vision, the network influences national and sub-national governments to ensure disaster preparedness is a shared responsibility, led by local

actors and accountable to the needs of affected people.

Over the years, the disaster management response by the Government of Bangladesh has professionalized. Also, international donors and organizations have been focusing on the localization of humanitarian aid. Tactical decisions regarding humanitarian actions and responses lie with the central government or at the headquarter level of international NGOs, leaving little space and power for the local governments and local humanitarian actors to make real-time decisions and operate collectively at local levels. NAHAB tries to counter this power balance – supported by the Grand Bargain arrangements and several international organizations. As a result, the Department of Disaster Management of the Bangladesh Government officially acknowledges the role of members of NAHAB in local-level management of humanitarian actions to ensure effective and real-time services to the affected communities. Furthermore, international humanitarian actors support the influencing network leadership in creating a platform of local and national actors that can respond well in case of disasters. This acknowledgment provides fertile ground for the influencing network to thrive and influence localized humanitarian action in Bangladesh.

Shared ambition and narrative building

The issue of localizing humanitarian aid brought the CSOs in NAHAB together. The network includes 56 member organizations that collaborate in humanitarian actions, to build disaster-resilient communities in Bangladesh. Strong leadership of the leading CSOs led to them convening a wide range of CSOs to discuss localization of humanitarian aid. The 56 member organizations represent different regions (divisions) in Bangladesh, as well as different marginalized groups, such as people with disabilities, youth, older people and women. They started by brainstorming answers to the question, ‘what can be done to realize the Grand Bargain agreement in Bangladesh?’. This was facilitated as an open and inclusive discussion leaving space for all CSOs, large and small, to share their point of view. A united voice to form an alliance emerged from the brainstorming. A suitable name was explored, and collectively the name ‘NAHAB’ was chosen. By calling it an ‘Alliance’, rather than ‘Association’, the name emphasizes the spirit of working together.



*Safeguarding
collaboration of equals
in influencing networks*

From the start, the alliance formulated partnership principles to safeguard a collaboration of equals. These principles are carefully practiced and embraced by a strong group of executive directors from national CSOs. These are the same leaders who had such a pivotal role in convening the influencing network. The first principle they agreed to was a collective commitment by humanitarian actors towards disaster-affected communities. This collective commitment is realized through inclusiveness in decision-making by supporting every member in raising their voice. Inclusiveness is further practiced by allowing members to engage in meetings at different levels and through the publication of all the minutes on the website. Finally, attention is given to geographical representation and representation of marginalized groups. The

second principle they acknowledged was that true collaboration is a shared responsibility. The network tries to reduce competition between local actors by increasing collaboration among them. The third and fourth principles refer to ways of working. They stress the importance of mutual trust and respect in creating a culture of cooperation and collaboration. Furthermore, they stress the importance of open and regular communication among the humanitarian actors.

For example, when humanitarian funding calls are announced, NAHAB circulates the call among the members and provides technical support in building a consortium to submit proposals. In the recent Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) response, NAHAB, together with other national CSOs, organized a virtual press conference to inform the media together about the implications of COVID-19 for Bangladesh. Together these principles ensure that the alliance remains an open network of local and national humanitarian actors that combine their expertise to address the needs of affected communities.

The ways of working were further operationalized in discussion groups and formulated in a full collaborative agreement on how to work together. The discussions operationalized 'localization of aid' into six domains of actions on which the CSOs in NAHAB work together: (1) Information and knowledge management for disaster management, (2) Fostering coordination of humanitarian actions, (3) Networking among humanitarian actors, (4) Advocacy for the active engagement of humanitarian actors, (5) Strengthening the capacity of humanitarian actors, (6) Resource mobilization. These discussions helped the influencing network to expand the vision of localization around local-level decision-making in humanitarian assistance – response through rehabilitation. NAHAB is a strong convener of debates on the operationalization of a localized humanitarian response. Their regular dialogues are well visited by CSO members as well as international CSOs and relevant government actors.

As well as a collaborative agreement on how the members of NAHAB work together, the network also emphasizes the importance of working together with other, non-affiliated actors that can play a role in humanitarian actions. This is phrased in the collaborative agreement as 'collaboration beyond membership', as the next three points explain.

Firstly, the network stresses the importance of working together with the government of Bangladesh – especially the departments at national, regional and local levels that are involved in disaster management. As most CSO members of the network are also implementers of development projects, the network also strengthens the links between humanitarian actions and development.

Secondly, NAHAB actively engages with the private sector on disaster management. The influencing network lobbies private-sector actors to support the national CSOs in humanitarian programmes – they receive funding from Rahim steel

and others for humanitarian response. Local private actors can support humanitarian action through a local funding pool. In this way, NAHAB aims to unlock the potential of the private sector in Bangladesh to provide substantial support to affected communities.

Thirdly, NAHAB actively engages with the media. The media is a vibrant sector, which has the potential to sensitize the community and concerned public and private actors when a disaster occurs. The other role of the media is providing real-time information during an emergency and helping to mobilize opinion for decision-making. The Press Institute of Bangladesh is the designated authority for building the capacity of media personnel. NAHAB is working with the Press Institute by organizing different training sessions for media personnel and by developing several guidebooks on how to report on humanitarian disasters. This will help the media to raise the voices of affected communities. Recently, NAHAB has been highly visible in the media supporting the Bangladeshi COVID-19 response.



The power of inclusive leadership in influencing networks

Mutually beneficial partnerships

In general, the influencing network of NAHAB recognizes the capacities of all individual members and supports strengthening these capacities to access funding for humanitarian actions. Strong, inclusive leadership has facilitated open dialogues from the start, for example, by supporting the translation of the Grand Bargain concept documents for an understandable and open discussion in which local CSOs could participate. Also, the needs of marginalized groups have been explicated in these dialogues. For example, NAHAB tries to support the voices of women in their network. Although there are very few women-led or women's organizations among the CSOs that appear to be at the forefront of discussions on localization, the NAHAB influencing network advances women's representation. NAHAB also supports authorities and international donors in moving decision-making to the local level in the event of a disaster. This means that local CSO members can interpret alerts of early warnings and respond in a coordinated manner to emergency needs within 24–72 hours in a way that is accountable to the local communities.

In 2018, NAHAB became a member of the Humanitarian Coordination Task Team of Bangladesh. The Task Team is a national-level body governed by the Local Consultative Group on Disaster Emergency Response, which is part of the government of Bangladesh. It has the mandate to ensure the effective coordination of the national and international stakeholders in the broader scope of disaster management. With its role in the Task Team, NAHAB can push for their agenda of localized humanitarian aid. The Task Team acts as a centre of excellence for the creation of a culture of cross-learning by identifying appropriate innovative knowledge and skills for disaster management from across Bangladesh, as well as leveraging opportunities for effective and timely humanitarian response and preparedness.

For implementation at the sub-national level, NAHAB developed an implementation model for localized humanitarian aid. In this model, humanitarian actors at the district level, representing different constituencies, collaborate and coordinate with each other to establish a division of funds and appropriate responses that are accountable to the affected communities. This way of working is accepted by the local CSOs working in the district and recognized by the government official of the district. This initiative is enhanced by the understanding of local, national and international humanitarian actors in the localization process and practices for building resilient communities and developing a sustainable architecture of humanitarian actions.

It may be noted here that all the members of NAHAB, at all levels, have equal decision-making rights. In the localization model, several CSOs with very low levels of funding and geographical reach make decisions and set priorities together. Some innovations in aid localization in Bangladesh are becoming apparent. It is noticeable that the mindset of donors is changing. Multiple partnerships have arisen, and it is becoming easier for smaller organizations to get access to funding. These initiatives pave the way for district-level reserve funds and other funding pools, which support increased local access to funding.

More recently, NAHAB, along with other networks of humanitarian actors, developed a position paper stressing some of the urgent issues in the COVID-19-response. The purpose of the position paper was to urge the government, international donors, international NGOs and other agencies to act. This was done in an organized virtual press conference titled ‘Local and national NGOs in COVID-19 response’. Most of the reputable newspapers published the news, and it was a good example of CSOs raising their voice for a localized response.

The relationships that have been described form the foundation of the NAHAB influencing network. These relationships are carefully built upon years of engagement and the experience of strong leadership. Conversations and ways forward are carefully facilitated, drawing in the right people, advocating for collective working, and facilitating dialogues between local, national, and international CSOs, government and the media. NAHAB is seen as a positive actor, and an ally people want to work with. They take a subtle insiders approach with respect to the context and culture of Bangladesh. From this position, they can make bold statements and discuss sensitive issues that NAHAB considers are important to address.

Capacity strengthening

Capacity strengthening is an important part of NAHAB’s work as an influencing network. Through the implementation model for localized humanitarian aid, CSO members at the local level are supported in developing technical skills that are necessary for humanitarian responses. They follow a step-wise approach to working together to understand the situation, identify



What an insiders approach can do for an influencing network



Photo credit: Gideon Mendel/Oxfam

the risks, and strengthen the capacities of local actors to respond. Using this step-wise approach, NAHAB mobilizes human and financial resources at the local level for use during emergencies. In this way, NAHAB works together with local government bodies to prepare and update contingency plans for humanitarian responses.

In 2018, NAHAB piloted this approach in three districts, and in 2019 five other districts followed. Through this stepwise approach, NAHAB learned how to balance influencing for localized humanitarian action with the implementation of that action. Members of the network are now able to deliver real-time services to the affected communities.

The COVID-19 response also tests the NAHAB model in a real-life situation. So far, only local and national CSOs are involved in the COVID-19 response, providing a litmus test of the localized emergency response. The NAHAB members are actively engaged in influencing the national government to take responsibility for the economic loss resulting from the government's social distancing policies. This has resulted in success, with the government declaring a specific micro-finance loan for affected people living in poverty.

As part of the COVID-19 response, NAHAB organized a two-day online training programme for the health personnel of their member organizations to equip

them with the right information and to enable them to cascade this information to the communities they are serving. In this way, members working at the local level to combat COVID-19 are taking various initiatives to work closely with the government. One example is the CSO Dhaka Ahsania Mission, which reached 145,000 individuals with clear guidelines on hygiene and social distancing by using mobile phones and electronic, print and social media. They distributed 55,000 leaflets containing precautionary messages for community members.

Focus on youth for the future

Historically, in the context of disasters, young people (children and youth) have more often been framed one-dimensionally as a population at high risk of experiencing negative impacts during disasters and, therefore, a population in need of protection. However, youth (aged 15–24) have more recently been recognized as having potential as change agents in

their communities and stakeholders in the development and implementation of humanitarian action. As the first digitally native generation, youth today are equipped with unprecedented technological understanding, an entrepreneurial orientation, and confidence in their ability to change the world. From this perspective, youth could be a significant capacity multiplier in any emergency response to reduce the risks and impacts associated with disasters and climate change.

NAHAB includes CSOs that are youth-led and pays specific attention to youth involvement by supporting a working group of 20 young, energetic, future leaders called Agragami 54. This group aims to capacitate youth in a way that they can lead the way in building a disaster-resilient community around themselves. Agragami 54 became an independent social movement of youth that increases awareness of hazardous situations in their neighbourhood and teaches youth how to respond in various types of emergencies. The localization model of NAHAB is central in the capacity building process for the youth of Agragami 54.

Conclusion

The advocacy and campaign work of NAHAB towards increasing the voice and influence of local and national CSOs in humanitarian coordination mechanisms and decision-making bodies have produced positive results. For example, their representation in the Humanitarian Coordination Task Team, the funding they acquired for localized humanitarian responses, and the acknowledgement of their alliance by the government of Bangladesh. However, their work as an influencing network is far from complete.

Coordination meetings on implementing the Grand Bargain remain intimidating for many network members due to the complexity of documents, the use of English as the main communication language, and the absence of a translation in a local language that is understandable and jargon-free. This results in a predominant role for the influencing network in translating and explaining the documents to their members and supporting their members in taking action. Representation of women is challenging in Bangladesh, especially in leadership positions. This is also the case for the NAHAB network, but the open and transparent atmosphere created in its dialogues opens opportunities for women to influence decision-



Photo credit: Gideon Mendel/Oxfam



making. Furthermore, most funding is not accessible for local and national CSOs, and there is often no humanitarian funding available for the small emergencies that are often the effect of climate change. The government of Bangladesh provides most funding for disaster management for dealing with the effects of climate change. Therefore, the recognition of NAHAB as an important actor in humanitarian response by the Bangladeshi government has been an important achievement for the influencing network.

In conclusion, we can see NAHAB as an exemplary influencing network for local and national CSOs to liaise effectively with government actors. It is expected that the long-term effects of NAHAB's localization initiatives will bring changes to national and international humanitarian responses. All humanitarian actors need to own the spirit of the Grand Bargain and the Charter for Change commitments and make every effort to ensure that people affected by disasters receive timely and appropriate services. They also need to leave space for local organizations, who are usually the first responders, to play active and appropriate roles in decision-making at different stages of humanitarian actions.



Photo credit: Zinyange Auntony

INFLUENCING SEXUAL HEALTH AND RIGHTS IN MALAWI

Key objective: Dutch development cooperation supports country alliances, like the SRHR alliance of Malawi, to take leadership for advancing improved sexual and reproductive health and rights for and by young people.

The alliance on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in Malawi consists of six local organizations, each representing different constituencies. It was established in 2010 to promote young people's access to high-quality SRHR, especially in rural and hard to reach areas. The alliance members are Youth Net and Counselling, Centre for Youth Empowerment and Civic Education, Centre for Alternatives for Victimized Women, Centre for Human Rights Rehabilitation, Coalition of Women Living with HIV/AIDS and Family Planning Association of Malawi. The alliance has a governance board comprising six executive directors, a national coordinator and a youth coordinator.

By Precious Netsai Njerere (Rutgers), Hastings Chilembwe Saka (Malawi SRHR Alliance), and Marijke Priester (Rutgers)

The alliance model came about in 2010 as a result of the funding framework of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which encouraged CSOs to form strategic partnerships in order to access five-year grants. In 2011, a consortium of SRHR organizations, led by Rutgers (later developing into the Netherlands/United Kingdom (NL/UK) consortium, including Rutgers, Aidsfonds, CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality, Dance4Life, Simavi and IPPF-UK), introduced the alliance model of working to their partners in programme countries. At that time, partner organizations in Malawi laid the foundation for the Malawi SRHR alliance. What started as a partnership initiated from the Netherlands evolved into independent country alliances in Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Malawi, Pakistan and Uganda.

In 2016, the Get Up Speak Out (GUSO) programme was introduced to continue the collaboration between the Rutgers-led consortium and the country alliances. In each country, there is an SRHR alliance comprising members who work together on different aspects of SRHR for greater impact. The programme also focuses on supporting country alliances to be independent, with strong, sustainable structures. The SRHR alliance in Malawi, which is central in this story, is supported by a wider network of alliances for capacity building and learning.

Working together towards a shared ambition

The shared ambition – to improve SRHR for young people – is what bonds the alliances under the GUSO programme. From

this general ambition, country-specific SRHR alliances develop their own ambitions, which are specific in their focus and relevant to the context in the country. Coming to a shared ambition is not always easy for SRHR alliances as it is linked to trust, getting to know each other and working jointly. SRHR includes a comprehensive, sensitive, rights-based agenda that is contested in many contexts. Sexuality is a delicate subject, related to intimacy, belonging and reproduction but also to morality, taboo and stigma. Many of the religious and ‘traditional’ cultural values related to gender and sexuality are at odds with the idea of sexual rights. CSOs often differ in how they balance the traditional and religious values with respect to SRHR. In light of these complexities, it takes time for an alliance to be able to define and articulate their shared ambition. Working as an alliance requires that those who participate are fully engaged and committed and have a feeling of ownership. Working together helps to foster a strong civil society. In Malawi, this process began with members meeting regularly to reflect on the collaboration, their ambitions and visions.

Initially, the alliance focused on just implementing the programme and working alongside each other. Over time, members began to see the benefits of working together and the complementarities between the members (known as the Multi-Component Approach). In GUSO, the approach consists of three interlinked components: strengthening sexuality information and education, strengthening youth-friendly services, and amplifying community and government support for young people’s SRHR. Each alliance searches for its own balance of these components, the composition of the partnership and the complementarities of the actors that fit the context and influencing aims. Alliance members started to implement activities jointly as an alliance beyond the GUSO programme, and in 2018, they signed a MoU to regulate their mode of operation. The alliance later developed a five-year strategic plan (2019–23), articulating the vision, mission and programme focus areas.

The diversity of SRHR alliances within the GUSO programme is enormous. Some country alliances are relatively young, while others have been around for several years. Size varies; for example, the Pakistan alliance has three members, and the Kenya alliance has 17 members. Some members are youth-led, some focus on human rights, others on women and gender, but all are working on different areas of SRHR. Of course, country contexts differ as well. The NL/UK consortium acknowledges this diversity and developed a theoretical framework to guide the support offered to the national alliances. The framework applies to any alliance or network, regardless of its current status, focus or size. Using the framework, alliance members maintain their organizational identity and collaborate based on a shared SRHR ambition.

The framework is the core tool used by the Malawi SRHR alliance. This alliance uses the framework to strengthen its work by focusing on four of the nine clusters: shared ambition, financial sustainability, visibility and favourable reputation, and capable organization. Alliances do not have to be successful in all nine clusters simultaneously to have impact or



*Importance of balancing
coordination and
autonomy among
member CSOs*

influence. In the Malawi alliance, members align their interests and goals, complement each other, and avoid competing for the same attention and funding, while maintaining their autonomy as an organization. The secretariat coordinates the work of the alliance to avoid competition and to promote equity.

The SRHR Alliance Framework



Working as country alliances presents a viable framework for sustainability. By working in alliances, in which different kinds of organizations (with different expertise and reach) are represented, SRHR issues are tackled more effectively and reach more young people and more diverse young people. Furthermore, working together gives organizations the leverage to work on multiple components of the SRHR agenda. By taking a Multi-Component Approach, complementarities between the alliances allow them to realize a shared ambition by embracing their diversity.

Mutually beneficial partnerships

There are several demonstrable mutual benefits arising from the alliance members. By working together, SRHR alliances are more attractive to donors than individual organizations. For example, the Malawi SRHR alliance managed to secure funding from outside the GUSO programme, bringing more opportunities for members to expand their work and impact. In 2017, the alliance signed an 18-month contract with Amplify Change to implement a Gender-Based Violence Prevention project targeting young people in rural areas of the Mangochi and Chikwawa districts in Southern Malawi. The alliance also received SRHR funding from the Canadian Government under the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives. Currently, the alliance is partnering with AMREF Health Africa Malawi office to implement the Health Systems Advocacy Programme in Ntchisi, Chitipa and Mangochi districts.

A key component of mutually beneficial partnerships is the equity approach. We see diversity in the alliances, but members recognize their different capacities, experience and expertise and the value they bring to the alliance. Most country alliances now have a strategic document to guide partnerships and which recognizes the benefits of working together. This strategic document outlines areas of focus, decision-making processes, roles and communication. Mutually beneficial partnerships work best when there is an open culture, a shared vision and trust.

In Malawi, an equity approach has helped to build a strong functional alliance amid some systemic and programmatic dilemmas. Equity means that the allocation of resources and the roles in the alliance should be transparent, fair, and consider the nature of the activity and the experience needed. A good example of a dilemma was the new allocation of project funds from Amplify Change and the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives. Bigger organizations wanted higher percentages, and smaller organizations could not agree but proposed that they receive a bigger chunk for capacity building in managing bigger budgets. The dilemma took time to resolve, but finally, the committee, guided by the Multi-Component Approach to programming, mutually agreed to allocate activities based on the programme focus and the expertise of the organizations.

Deciding whether to register the alliance was another dilemma. The board was not sure of the direction to take due to fears that the alliance secretariat would later dump them and start competing with them. However, they learned from the Uganda alliance during a learning visit that there are more visibility, recognition and partnership benefits if the alliance is registered. The board then agreed to register the alliance, but it ensured that the secretariat role is only to coordinate and not to implement, so that competition with the board members is avoided.

Finally, there has been a dilemma over taking new members on board. There was increasing interest from other SRHR organizations in joining the alliance, but the board cautiously delayed taking onboard new members to avoid losing



*The equity principle
operationalized in ways
of working*

direction before the alliance matures. It should be noted that the board is an overall decision-making body of the alliance, and the secretariat is the technical and collaboration hub of the alliance.

In other alliances of the GUSO programme, the network sees similar dilemmas occurring in building a mutually beneficial alliance. Decision-making takes time, balancing individual organization's interests with those of the alliance is not an easy task, and where agreements on budget allocation are concerned, there are challenges. Sometimes, the external environment can have a negative impact on the alliance resulting in a lack of coordination and stagnation. A lot of time is invested in building a mutually beneficial alliance.

Capacity strengthening

Capacity strengthening is at the core of the support the NL/UK consortium provides to the country alliances that are part of the GUSO programme. This is realized through working towards improved skills in countries via the sharing of technical expertise between the NL/UK consortium and GUSO countries. At the beginning of the programme, Malawi and other countries identified the capacity areas where they needed technical support and asked the consortium to provide this support. In the case of Malawi, for example, the result has been that members now have shared knowledge and speak the same language on SRHR issues, such as meaningful youth participation, social accountability, advocacy and gender transformative approaches. Ultimately, there is now an appreciation of the value that individual institutions add to other members.

Another activity facilitated by the consortium was learning visits between alliances in different countries. These visits allow alliances to share skills, experiences and opportunities. For example, the Malawi SRHR alliance visited the Uganda alliance secretariat, and the member organizations in each alliance learned from each other. The Malawi alliance learned more about alliance branding, visibility and the benefits of registration, which was later replicated. At the same time, the Uganda alliance learned tips on resource mobilization and advocacy on sensitive SRHR issues, and the Uganda SRHR alliance is now actively mobilizing resources.

With time, there has been a lot of innovation on how capacity strengthening can be done. The Trainers' Lab is a platform for learning, which serves to provide expertise in SRHR locally and make it more accessible and affordable. This platform provides a directory of rated experts who can provide the services near the alliances. For example, with this platform, members could look for experts on particular approaches to capacity strengthening, or a trainer on meaningful youth participation.



*Dilemma of including
new members in
influencing networks*



The GUSO programme also recognizes the need to support the leadership of the alliance. Alliance coordinators come together each year for a learning week to learn and share promising practices, and the topics covered include areas of leadership, coordination and collaboration skills for alliances. Since 2017, learning sessions in all countries have been organized by the alliance secretariat. These learning sessions bring together the leadership of the member CSOs to reflect on their vision and ambition through what is called alliance reflection week. The Malawi alliance has focused learning on board leadership and alliance hosting transitions. In these learning sessions, the alliance leadership learned more about alliance visibility and the need for enhancing partnerships with the government stakeholders, at both community and national levels, for policy direction and technical assistance.

Influencing in practice

The SRHR alliances share the ambition of young people to realize their own sexual health and rights. Influencing towards an enabling environment is a key strategy for fulfilling this ambition. Other key strategies are gaining information on sexuality and access to youth-friendly health services. In several countries, the alliances target their advocacy at comprehensive sexuality education. Sexuality education is not always common in schools, and the comprehensiveness of sexual rights and freedom, in particular,

remains a big barrier in many countries, for example, in Uganda. In the case of Indonesia, the ban on providing contraceptives to unmarried young people is another advocacy issue. Access to youth-friendly services is a common problem, and these examples show how the divide between religious and cultural values can conflict with rights, especially the rights involved in some aspects of SRHR.

Until 2023, the Malawi SRHR alliance is focusing its influencing strategy on three issues:

1. Advocacy for youth-friendly health services.
2. Law reform on abortion.
3. Combatting sexual and gender-based violence.

In advancing these topics, the Malawi alliance stipulates the need to work with allies and stakeholders on a broader scale, combined with broad public support. The Malawi alliance consistently receives public support because it grounds its influencing work on evidence from the communities and districts, where the alliance members are involved on a daily basis in providing sexuality information, youth-friendly services and amplifying community support for young people's SRHR. Here public support and evidence-based advocacy strengthen each other.

One example of the power of evidence-based advocacy and public support comes from 2017 when a baseline survey showed evidence of a shortage of SRHR commodities in the supply chain to district hospitals. The key to the alliance's approach was first to raise awareness of and commitment to the advocacy issue among key stakeholders, such as young clients of health services, service providers and district officers and the general population. Then the alliance, together with AMREF Health Africa, embarked on advocacy work calling for the Malawian Ministry of Health, through district health offices, to increase the budget allocation to youth-friendly SRHR services.

Public support is obtained, when young people and other concerned stakeholders, who live in the communities, are extensively involved before embarking on advocacy. Young people are the key to effective influencing. At the same time, they should also be supported in taking up leading positions. One example is the mentoring support that alliance members give to young people to take up seats in, for example, Area Development Committees, and to represent all Village Development Committees in certain areas that are under a Traditional Authority.

The advocacy around sensitive matters such as safe abortion, and youth and sexuality questions in general, shows how the Malawi alliance effectively shapes its influencing strategy, depending on the issue at stake. Generally, the context and environment in Malawi enable SRHR programmes to be implemented, and the alliance works closely with the government, districts and community leaders. However, Malawi is also a religious, conservative, and predominantly patriarchal society. Consequently, society is resistant to change in some cases, and culture and social norms can have a large influence on decisions.

The alliance takes a two-fold approach in dealing with sensitive issues. On the one hand, alliance members participate in national technical working groups, instigated by the national government, and engage with Members of Parliament. On the other hand, community and religious leaders are included in the strategy. In fact, in previous years major opponents of the SRHR alliance in Malawi have been present among all actors mentioned above. The alliance's engagement with these leaders is done through training and takes place indirectly through empowered young people. This approach has turned these leaders from opponents into allies working hand in hand with young people to push the SRHR agenda.



CSO members that are grounded in communities through implementation have an added value



Photo credit: Zinyange Auntony



*Influencing networks
can protect and amplify
the voices of activists*

The Malawi SRHR influencing network has learned that youth-led advocacy in religious institutions is vital. Considering that all religious institutions have youth groups that will form a future religious leadership, this is an important entry for influencing so that in the future, doctrines can be revised.

The experiences of the Malawi alliance show that collaboration works well when sensitive issues are at stake. It provides protection through numbers, a louder voice, and more visibility as more organizations speak out on the issue. Advocacy by one organization can be risky, but when it is a common effort of diverse organizations, there is less risk and a better chance for success.

Conclusion

The model of the current GUSO programme to support national SRHR alliances in influencing the SRHR of young people has yielded interesting results. During a period of ten years or more, the SRHR alliances grew together and gradually shaped a shared ambition to effectively join forces in tackling the complexity of young people's SRHR issues.

The case of the Malawi SRHR alliance shows that the shared ambition flourished because the mutual benefits became clear. Together, the six organizations in the alliance were more effective because they could cover

all aspects of SRHR. Through this alliance, they became a respected and attractive force in civil society. The collaboration enabled individual organizations to obtain funding for broader programmes, and they enhanced their individual capacities by sharing and learning from each other.

Capacity strengthening took place at different levels. It started with a flow of technical know-how information from the NL/UK coordination office to the national SRHR alliances in Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Malawi, Pakistan and Uganda in their start-up phases. This was soon extended with a learning flow between the national alliances, focusing on sharing good practices and inspiring each other to take the next steps in strengthening the alliances. The Malawi alliance learned from the Uganda SRHR alliance, during a learning visit. It became apparent when meeting the Uganda alliance that there are more benefits if the alliance is registered, after which the board agreed to register the alliance. Another development

was the Trainers' Lab platform (a common effort of all members of the GUSO programme), which provides expertise locally. In capacity development, the mentoring of youth to speak up to their leaders on SRHR issues was well identified by the Malawi alliance and worked successfully.

As influencing networks, the SRHR alliances developed effective approaches through their comprehensive range of activities: advocacy, education and information sharing, services, and operational research. Their shared ambition puts young people at the forefront and shows the shared commitment of a collective of different organizations to, often sensitive, SRHR issues. The Malawi alliance, like all the SRHR alliances, engages with policymakers and parliamentarians at the national level. At the same time, they successfully include vital gatekeepers, such as community leaders and religious leaders, in their influencing strategies.

Furthermore, the influencing strategy is always underpinned by evidence. The evidence comes from what the SRHR alliances encounter in their work on the ground in education and services. Including gatekeepers and the public in the strategy, and informing them of the evidence, is the next step, and this allows CSO effective influencing to take place, often together with other CSOs.





Photo credit: Nadine K Azura

OPPOSITION TO SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RIGHTS NETWORKS IN INDONESIA

Key objective: Aliansi Satu Visi, consisting of civil society organizations at local and national levels, aims to mobilize public support around the fulfillment of sexual and reproductive health and rights and the elimination of gender-based violence in Indonesia.

The sensitivity, complexity and magnitude of SRHR in a culturally and religiously diverse country like Indonesia is emphasized by the case of the Aliansi Satu Visi (One Vision alliance, ASV). ASV is an influencing network of 20 CSOs working in ten provinces in Indonesia that got together to advocate for SRHR justice. They focus specifically on the most vulnerable and marginalized groups of the society (children, young people, women, sexual minorities and people with disabilities) so that they can exercise their SRHR without impediment and free from violence.

To address SRHR in specific legislation at the national level, ASV has been collaborating in two larger influencing networks – the Gerak Bersema movement that pushes for the ratification of the Draft Law on the Elimination of Sexual Violence and the Aliansi Reformasi KUHP that targets the Draft of the Penal Code (KUHP). Both networks are targeting specific legislation (explained further below) through informal networks that have progressive standpoints on SRHR. The advocacy of the Gerak Bersema movement and the Aliansi Reformasi KUHP faces opposition from an influencing network with a conservative membership named AILA. This network aspires to make the country more ‘civilized’ by ‘strengthening family values’. They are at the forefront of the conservative movement in Indonesia.

On 28 January 2019, ASV was targeted directly in a hoax set up by the conservative AILA network, which aimed to indirectly stop the larger influencing networks of the Gerak Bersema movement and the Aliansi Reformasi KUHP. The conservative AILA network started a petition on social media against both informal networks by targeting ASV’s progressive messaging on SRHR. They presented ASV as an organization promoting homosexuality and premarital sex among young people. There is huge pressure in Indonesia from the opposition and the majority of the public to make homosexuality and premarital sex among young people illegal. The AILA network highlighted and distorted the progressive aspects of ASV’s work on its website and social media. These posts were shared more than 7,912 times in just one day. The conservative AILA network also used religious leaders, academics, and celebrities to spread the hoax news, targeting ASV directly and the Gerak

By Fita Rizki Utami (Coordinator for Alliance Strengthening, Aliansi Satu Visi) and Nur Hidayati Handayani (Independent Consultant/ Researcher)

Bersema movement and the Aliansi Reformasi KUHP indirectly. In this way, the conservative network managed to mobilize people to campaign against the Draft of the Penal Code (KUHP) bill. At the same time, they endangered the existence of ASV (as the government could decide to close down the organization), the safety and security of its members (several staff members experienced digital and physical threats and arrests), and triggered a suspension of the movement because of fears of the consequences. The implementation of SRHR services by network members in ten provinces of Indonesia was at risk. This case study will describe how ASV, the Gerak Bersema movement and the Aliansi Reformasi KUHP dealt with this hoax and became stronger through collaborative efforts and their strong shared commitment to their vision of SRHR in Indonesia.

The landscape of influencing networks working on SRHR in Indonesia

The 20 CSOs that form the ASV influencing network have different focuses in their work, different geographic spreads and differences in balance between implementation and influencing. Their network is based on paid membership and external funding to support the alliance as well as the member organizations. Most members have a component of sexual and reproductive health service provision (9 CSOs) and service provision to support survivors of gender-based violence (3 women's crisis centres). Others have other areas of focus, such as SRHR education (4 organizations), research (1 organization), advocacy and capacity-strengthening (2 organizations) and youth participation (1 youth-led organization). These organizations' combined voice is strong in bringing the voice of their constituencies to public attention. ASV's strength lies in its provincial representation and its capacity to mobilize public support around these sensitive issues. Furthermore, ASV is backed by years of experience in working with the vulnerable groups it represents. In this way, ASV has been strong and fearless in supporting their cause.



Value of joining larger movements as an influencing network

Advocacy skills at the national level are not so strongly represented in ASV's membership. That is why ASV joined forces with two large, informal influencing networks that share progressive standpoints on SRHR with regards to specific legislations. The Gerak Bersema movement pushes for the ratification of the Draft Law on the Elimination of Sexual Violence or RUU Penghapusan Kekerasan Seksual. This Draft Law is designed to protect women and marginalized groups (for example, children, people with disabilities, and sexual minorities) from sexual violence and exploitation. Since 2017, ASV has been working with other CSOs and the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) in the Gerak Bersema movement. In 2018, ASV also joined another advocacy network called Aliansi Reformasi KUHP, which campaigns on the Draft of the Penal Code (KUHP). This Penal Code poses a great threat to SRHR, especially consensual sex, sexual minorities, abortion, access to comprehensive sexuality education and sexual and reproductive health services.

Both the Gerak Bersema movement and the Aliansi Reformasi KUHP are open, influencing networks without formal

structures. Both influencing networks focus on a specific policy demand. They combine an insider's approach when working together with the National Commission on Violence Against Women with an outsider's approach when mobilizing the public for their cause through signing petitions and joining rallies. This approach brought the influencing network of ASV more visibility, and its members built their capacity for national influencing of government actors. But this courageous influencing network also proved to be a target for an opposition that could take advantage of its limited experience and thereby tried to raise conflict within the Gerak Bersema movement and the Aliansi Reformasi KUHP.

Mutually beneficial partnerships

The strong collaborative spirit and commitment of ASV members to the network's vision proved to be very important for staying together during the hoax crisis. Most influencing work related to national SRHR laws was conducted by the few members of ASV that work at the national level. However, when the hoax happened, all members came together with a cool head to agree on solutions for actions that needed to be taken to protect the influencing network and the member organizations. In this discussion, the national members were first apologetic for being targeted. However, they realized quickly that they were victims of a hoax. The rights-based foundation of their work was helpful in this realization and in formulating a counter-attack. All members agreed to this approach, and there have been no incidences of blaming each other, which could have happened in such a situation as all members were at risk of being closed down and were threatened both digitally and physically. The leadership of the chair of ASV has been very important in turning this narrative around and protecting the network's members.

The Gerak Bersama movement showed a similar collaborative effort and commitment to the cause. The members of this informal influencing network appreciated the important work of the ASV alliance in their provincial representation, which is based on long-term collaboration, while the Gerak Bersama was only recently set up. The members of the Gerak Bersema movement felt that the attack was not only on the ASV influencing network as a scapegoat but on all Indonesian actors working towards SRHR. The Gerak Bersema movement brought powerful actors together to act against 'the common enemy' of the conservative influencing network and protect their common vision on SRHR. There was no feeling that 'it is about you and them', rather the feeling was of 'us and them'. An example of Gerak Bersema's power is their collaboration with Komnas Perempuan. Komnas Perempuan – a government human-rights body – has strong credibility and influence with policymakers, political parties, governmental organizations, journalists, NGOs, and the public. They supported ASV by successfully coordinating joint efforts to respond to the situation. The collaborative spirit within ASV and the broader informal influencing networks on SRHR in Indonesia shows how partnerships are not only beneficial in terms of increasing



*Countering a hoax
attack together*



Women's march Jakarta. Photo credit: Pemin

influencing reach, but also in helping to protect and react to potential hoaxes.

Responding to the hoax in practice

As a first reaction to the hoax, ASV temporarily deleted its digital footprint, suspended its website and deactivated social media accounts because the network realized it is needed to adapt its language, as there was such a huge public pressure to criminalize some of the practices for which the alliance was advocating. The Gerak Bersama movement took the courage to react on behalf of the alliance and protected the rights-based vision that both influencing networks emphasize. The movement protected the vision by introducing a medical, social and physiological impact narrative rather than vocalizing on human rights, which can be seen as international standards that are alienated from national politics. The narrative the Gerak Bersama movement took was, therefore, more acceptable to the public. Komnas Perempuan agreed to work with the alliance and other members to navigate this situation.

Komnas Perempuan and other Gerak Bersama members countered the hoax news by conducting a press release, which was broadcast on television and published by newspapers, and producing a series of infographics and videos. Komnas Perempuan also worked with the Ministry of Communication

and Technology to identify the news as a hoax on the ministry's website. ASV members also shared these infographics and videos on their social media platforms.

Komnas Perempuan also used its network of religious leaders to influence religious leaders who were in agreement with AILA, the conservative network that started the hoax, to read the draft of the Penal Code bill carefully. As a result, some religious leaders apologised and clarified that there were none of the accusations in the bill.

Capacity building for responding to a hoax

After the attack, the ASV influencing network realized that member organizations were not equipped with the capacity to prevent and respond to such situations. Therefore, with recommendations from HIVOS Southeast Asia, ASV received support

from the Digital Defender Partnership to conduct training on digital security for its members. The 20 participants, who were communication officers or website and social media administrators of the member organizations, produced a shared Standard Operational Procedure for Digital Safety, which acts as a reference for all alliance members on how to prevent and respond to digital attacks. Furthermore, technical assistance was also provided to member organizations through an online meeting and visits to several organizations on request.

ASV realized that there is a need to have a communication strategy, which conveys clear and focused messages that are well understood and adapted to the public's interest. Rights-based thinking may be the underlying objective of the network, but a direct formulation of rights is not appropriate in the Indonesian context. Instead the network uses a human story of how sexual violence has an unbearable impact on women and a young girl's life, not just physically but also socially and physiologically. In this way, the rights-based principles are translated into a narrative that speaks to the Indonesian public and cannot be considered as controversial.

The alliance has developed a communication strategy that guides members on how to communicate about the alliance. In this document, a new slogan and logo are introduced as well as the communication channels (such as websites, social media, YouTube and Twitter), publications or materials to be used for the specific audience. The communication strategy provides clear guidance to ASV members on external communication. The plan is to use the strategy over the next five years, with annual reviews to adapt to specific contexts at certain times.

Conclusion

As an influencing network of 20 SRHR organizations in Indonesia, ASV is on the front line when it comes to advocacy, programme development and programme implementation at the provincial level. This position also brings larger influencing networks, like Gerak Bersema, greater public support and provincial evidence. The collaborative spirit between network members and their shared commitment to a vision gives member organizations the courage and protection necessary to work on sensitive issues like SRHR. Through its collective efforts, the influencing network of ASV gained credibility and



Press Conference by ASV and partners about RKUHP and RUU PKS 15 Sept 2019. Photo credit: ASV

trust from stakeholders in the national government. This success of the relatively inexperienced ASV influencing network introduced some risk, especially from the opposition groups. By exploiting the work and bold (rather naïve) statements of ASV, the influencing network became an easy target to gain public support for a political agenda that strengthens religious conservatism.

A burning passion to fight for issues also carries risks. However, many organizations do not feel that they are at risk of physical or digital attacks. As a result, when something does happen, the reaction usually involves panic and confusion, which is likely to make matters worse. Fortunately, this did not happen to ASV because the network had the agility to respond quickly to these adverse events, preventing more structural damage to its members' reputation. The systematic attack by the opposition network towards ASV, when it was advocating for national SRHR legislation, constituted a litmus test for the shared commitment and collaborative spirit of the ASV influencing network and the related Gerak Bersema movement and Aliansi Reformasi KUHP, and they passed. As a result, the ASV influencing network learned to establish safety and security mechanisms as well as a risk mitigation plan to prevent and respond to future situations. This will also ensure that future threats will not affect the mission and activities of the alliance and its members or the activities conducted by partners and beneficiaries.



*Roles of allies outside
an influencing network*

The particular circumstances in which the ASV influencing network found itself shows that creating a social movement requires a commitment to a shared vision and a collaborative spirit among members. It also requires support from various parties to carry out strategic roles that cannot be carried out by an alliance. In this case, these parties were the members of the Gerak Bersema movement, and especially Komnas Perempuan and its network throughout Indonesia.

THE NEXUS BETWEEN INFLUENCING AND SERVICE DELIVERY

Influencing networks that target national governments are often multi-party alliances. We saw in the cases of NAHAB and ASV how geographical spread can be a strong lever for national influencing networks to increase their reach. This geographical spread increases both the breadth of the support base and their credibility in influencing. Furthermore, the representation of different constituencies around a theme, like we saw in the Malawian SRHR alliance, is also important in building public support. In the ASV case, we saw that having a variety of actors can also provide access to different decision-makers at the national level, provincial level or the level of local leadership.

However, managing multi-party networks is not easy, as all the parties have their own vision and mission, and do's and don'ts. When dealing with contested issues, like SRHR, finding a shared ambition is especially important in becoming an effective influencing network. In the case of the Malawian SRHR alliance, we saw how members balanced their rights-based thinking with religious and traditional values. In this way, although they did not always agree, they carefully formulated the aspects on which they have a shared ambition. The Malawian SRHR alliance chooses to work as a small group of members with strong relationships to deal with the sensitive nature of their work. In contrast, NAHAB chooses transparent communication, an open culture of interactions and a large membership to ensure the inclusivity of all the local actors that may contribute to humanitarian action. In the case of ASV, we saw how a shared ambition prevented fragmentation in the influencing network when under a hoax attack. We also learned from this case that sometimes the external communication should be adapted to the context to ensure that rights-based statements are not misunderstood but connected to human stories.

Capacity development in national influencing networks takes place at different levels and has different forms. First, there is a big difference in the technical know-how of CSOs, so within a network, CSOs can support each other and build technical capacities and standards. For example, in the NAHAB network, we saw that some members of the network supported others in understanding the complicated and technical language of policy documents. In the case of ASV, members quickly received capacity building on better digital security, because of an imminent threat, after they were subject to a hoax attack. Lastly, we saw that capacity building can link people together with similar experiences to learn from each other. For example, the Malawian SRHR alliance was linked up for learning with the SRHR alliance in Uganda, which set up a similar

network and had more experience of alliance branding and visibility.

The strength of national influencing networks is that they can bring service delivery and influencing together. In all the cases discussed, we saw how the implementing function of the CSOs in the network strengthens the nexus between policy influencing and implementation. On the one hand, CSOs that also deliver services to their constituencies can speak with more legitimacy on behalf of the people they represent, and they are better able to support people in raising their voices. On the other hand, when the national government is responsive to changing policies, CSOs with a service delivery function can immediately translate the policy into practice and can hold local decision-makers accountable.

INFLUENCING AT MULTIPLE LEVELS

INFLUENCING ACROSS BORDERS

In August 2018, a Swedish school girl named Greta Thunberg started to spend her school days outside the Swedish parliament demanding urgent action on the climate crisis. Her action marked the beginning of a revolutionary international school strike movement for climate change action. This local-level climate action became a media phenomenon, sparking an international awakening (Fridays for Future, 2020) with climate strikes and marches all over the world. Simultaneously, several groups and movements, including networks at the international level, called for stronger climate change action. One of these networks is Extinction Rebellion. Extinction Rebellion began in May 2018 in the United Kingdom, and a Dutch affiliate started up in December 2018. Extinction Rebellion has a network of national and regional working groups. As an individual, one can join Extinction Rebellion and participate in activities at the national level, as well as engage with local climate action groups closer to your home (Extinct Rebellion, 2020). Fridays for Future and Extinct Rebellion are just two examples of the many informal networks connecting multiple geographical and administrative levels on climate action.

More formally, the multilateral UN system also convenes joint action on climate action, of which the fiercely negotiated Paris Agreement is one of the biggest achievements. This global climate change agreement encourages the nations who sign it to comply with the collective agreements made on avoiding dangerous climate change. Global consensus on the agreement is thus set as a hybrid of legally-binding and non-binding provisions for countries to adopt at the national level (United Nations, 2016). Climate Action Network is another example of networked climate change action at multiple levels. The network brings together over 1,300 NGOs in more than 120 countries within its network, promoting both governments and individuals to limit human-induced climate change to ecologically sustainable levels (Climate Action Network, 2020). At national, regional, and international levels, Climate Action Network exchanges information and coordinates the development strategies of NGOs.

These examples show that influencing policy on complex global problems such as climate change can be facilitated through either subsequently or simultaneously addressing multiple policy levels at local, sub-national, national and international levels. The possibility of raising a salient issue with policymakers seems to increase when targeting more than one level at a time. As the audience is broadened, the probability of finding a window of opportunity or a potential ally increases (Oxfam, 2018). Operating at multiple levels simultaneously might also enhance the implementation of a policy demand, as a study of multi-level advocacy for nutrition indicates (te Lintelo et al., 2016). It is argued that a multi-level approach may be particularly important in contexts where the policy process at a given level is not well established or is less accessible for domestic civil society (Oxfam, 2018). The importance of the strategic targeting of multiple levels to expand change policies

is further highlighted by current geopolitical trends (Oxfam, 2018).

The objective of Part 3 of this publication is to use concrete cases to shed light on the key factors that determine how the links between organizations engaged in multi-level advocacy work effectively. The three cases presented tell unique stories of how their networks combine influencing efforts across multiple levels. The first case comes from the national Civil Society Organization (CSO) Working Group on Land Rights in Liberia, which joined forces with the global campaign Land Rights Now to pressure the Government of Liberia to pass a Pro-Community Land Rights Act that affects the lives of 3 million Liberians. The network was convened in January 2018, and the Act was passed in September that same year. This network provides an example in favour of strengthened advocacy potential at the local and national levels through collaboration at the global level. In the second case study, in Afghanistan, an informal network of allies in international organizations, intergovernmental organizations, civil society, and the government advocates for the implementation of the Female Integration Strategy for women in the Afghan police force. This is a network that combines influencing and programming efforts, across multiple levels, in a fragile country. This story is told by Oxfam. The final case study tells the story of an influencing network that engages with the Global Financing Facility (GFF). The GFF supports low- and lower-middle-income countries to accelerate progress on reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health and nutrition, and to strengthen financing and health systems for universal health coverage. Across several levels, including national and international, CSOs and networks are engaged with and seek to influence the activities of the GFF. The story of this last case is told by Wemos, a Netherlands-based lobby and advocacy organization that is critically engaging with the GFF, and other members of the global GFF Civil Society Coordinating Group.

**FS SIGNED FOR
COMMUNITY LAND
S BILL**

**WOMEN SHOULD HAVE THE
RIGHT TO OWN LAND
INDIVIDUALLY OR COLLECTIVELY**

**WOMEN SHOULD HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS
TO LAND AND EQUAL PARTICIPATION
IN GOVERNANCE**



Photo credit: CSO Working Group on Land Rights Reform in Liberia

FOOTBALL AND LAND RIGHTS FOR 3 MILLION PEOPLE IN LIBERIA

Key objective: The Civil Society Organization Working Group on Land Rights Reform in Liberia in collaboration with the global campaign Land Rights Now successfully called on the Government of Liberia to pass a Pro-Community Land Rights Act that would ultimately improve the lives of 3 million Liberians.

Over 3 million women and men in Liberia – roughly seventy percent of the population – live in rural areas (Land Rights Now, 2018). The land that they own, live on, and depend on is primarily managed under customary rights through community-based ownership (Global Witness, 2017). The insecurity of community land rights has been driving conflicts over land and resources in West Africa for decades (Rights and Resources Initiative, 2017). In Liberia, insecure land rights and lack of access to resources even contributed to the outbreak of the 14-year civil war that scourged the country between 1989 and 2003.

During the war, logging companies destroyed forests and abused communities, fuelling corruption and conflict (Global Witness, 2002). Even after the civil war, government policies on land and investment have continued to displace and divest rural communities of their customary land and natural resources, leading to cases of human rights abuse and environmental issues such as deforestation. In addition, instead of addressing rural poverty, this model of land use has seemingly contributed to displacements, tensions, and inter- and intra-communal conflicts (Ford, 2012). The Land Rights Act has, therefore, become a fundamental and necessary component of Liberia's efforts to ensure stability, development and inclusive economic growth (Land Rights Now, 2018).

In 2018, Liberia was among the top-ten target countries for large-scale land acquisitions: at least 1,883,871 hectares (an area equivalent to more than 2.6 million football fields) have been contracted out to international investors, mainly to extract timber or grow palm oil and rubber (Land Rights Now, 2018). These acquisitions often happen with little or no consultation with those directly affected (Siakor, 2012) and often violate both domestic and international laws (Land Rights Now, 2018).

By 2000, the country had made efforts to address its poor land tenure, particularly the protection of rural communities

By Fionuala Cregan (Land Rights Now), James Yarsiah (Rights and Rice Foundation and Co-convener of the Civil Society Organization Working Group on Land Rights Reform in Liberia), and Ali Kaba (Sustainable Development Institute and Co-convener of the Civil Society Organization Working Group on Land Rights Reform in Liberia)



Photo credit: CSO Working Group on Land Rights Reform in Liberia

(the government passed the New National Forestry Law in 2000). In 2009, Liberia made some meaningful progress in the land and forest sectors. By August of that year, a National Land Commission was established to advise the government on land reforms and policies, including addressing issues related to customary land tenure, and the use and management of public land. In September of the same year, a landmark Community Rights Law recognized ‘customary lands’ (section 1.3) and provided that ‘Any decision, agreement, or activity affecting the status or use of community forest resources shall not proceed without the prior, free, informed consent of the said community’ (section 2.2[c]). The law gives communities the right to manage their communal forest land and related resources, but not necessarily the land itself – making the law a use right.

The government published a promising Land Rights Policy in 2013, which recognized the customary land rights of local communities and set in motion the process of drafting a Land Rights Act. In 2014, the former President, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf (2006–18), introduced the draft Land Rights Bill to the National Legislature. In August 2017, the House of Representatives passed a diluted version of the bill.

The government’s recognition of the centrality of land issues in the development of Liberia was a major step. However, national and international CSOs believed that the 2017 draft ‘Land Rights Act’ severely undermined the rights of local communities and compromised Liberia’s ability to achieve sustainable peace, development and inclusive economic growth. The version of the bill passed by the House of Representatives would have opened up land to further large-scale acquisitions without any scrutiny or significant protection for local communities (Land Rights Now, 2018). Therefore, a group of national organizations acting under the banner Civil Society Organization Working Group on Land Rights Reform (or the CSO Working Group on Land Rights), and supported by international organizations, pressed the Government of Liberia to pass instead a Pro-Community Land Rights Act that would ultimately improve the lives of 3 million Liberians.

Pro-community land rights act

By recognizing community land rights without requiring a formal deed and title, the Pro-Community Land Rights Act sets the stage for widespread recognition of community land rights in the country. It also recognizes women's rights to customary land, and explicitly defines women as members of their community, requiring their equal representation and full participation in customary land governance structures. The law allows women to own land privately, jointly, and collectively regardless of their marital status. This demonstrates that recognition

of community land rights can go hand in hand with strong recognition for the rights of women. In fact, such legislation is stronger and may have buy-ins from the broader society. Indeed, several groups and stakeholders championed provisions in the Pro-Community Land Rights Act to recognize and protect women land rights, including women's and youth's organizations, community members, and key government officials like the Vice President. The Act is a significant step toward creating a more just power balance in the country.

Joining forces

By 2013, a group of national and international CSOs (there were three core institutions: The Sustainable Development Institute, Search for Common Ground and Rights and Rice Foundation) and the National Civil Society Council of Liberia started collaborating on a national advocacy strategy to push for a Pro-Community Land Rights Act in Liberia. In late 2014, these efforts led to the CSO Working Group on Land Rights in Liberia, a loose network of over 30 national and international CSOs convened by the Sustainable Development Institute and Rights and Rice Foundation. The CSO Working Group on Land Rights is dedicated to an effective, collaborative advocacy strategy to push for land reforms while advocating for the protection of customary land rights in Liberia. The group's key efforts have included: policy review and legal analysis, policy dialogue, public forums, education and awareness activities, mobilizing rural communities, and strengthening civil society and community engagements with policymakers. In terms of governance, the Working Group has a coordinator who is responsible for day-to-day operations, and a technical committee providing technical support to the group. The group also works through newly set up special committees to deal with issues as they arise.

As well as these developments taking place in Liberia, the international alliance campaign Land Rights Now has been working at the global level since 2016 to secure indigenous and community land rights. It focuses on mobilizing and engaging the public nationally and globally to call on governments and others in power to take action to secure the land

rights of Indigenous People and local communities. It is an open unbranded initiative – any organization that endorses it can use the Land Rights Now logo and materials and participate in global collective campaign moments, or lead and co-brand their own national campaign. Since its launch, over 800 organizations across the world have endorsed it alongside 80,000 individuals. Land Rights Now is co-convened by the International Land Coalition, Oxfam and the Rights and Resources Initiative. It has an advisory board that reviews plans for new campaigns and provides guidance.

Each year, Land Rights Now provides global campaign support to at least two national campaigns, based on requests from participating organizations who want to use the campaign to advance their demands at a specific point in their ongoing influencing work. It also organizes one global mobilization each year to raise awareness of community land rights – a different topic is chosen each year (for example, climate change, food, and ending the criminalization of land rights defenders). Any organization that agrees with the goal of Land Rights Now to secure indigenous and community land rights can sign up to join, but not all organizations are actively engaged. Organizations participate based on the relevance of the initiative to their national-level work and capacity. Of the 800 organizations that have signed up, at least 100 have actively engaged. During the Global Mobilization, all participating organizations are invited to come together over one week to organize events in their countries that link to this global mobilization moment. Each year, there are events in, on average, 30 countries, which are self-funded by participating organizations. Land Rights Now does not provide financial support, apart from funding some specific campaign activities. Other organizations engage through the dissemination of content on social media and signing letters of solidarity, for example. In terms of decision-making on what Land Rights Now focuses on, participants submit requests, and co-conveners have the largest influence on work plans. However, any participant can use the logo and campaign materials for their own campaigns. Co-conveners jointly fund the campaign at the global level, including a full-time coordinator, and reach out to the advisory board for guidance when needed. Co-conveners sign off on communications to signatories of the campaign and any actions that are planned together. While there are no face-to-face meetings for signatories of the campaign, there are regular newsletters and urgent action alerts at irregular intervals. Furthermore, co-conveners take advantage of their own meetings and events to give visibility to the campaign and organize training sessions around advocacy and campaigning.



*Influencing networks
can start on the
basis of coincidental
encounters*

In October 2017, representatives of the CSO Working Group on Land Rights and the international alliance Land Rights Now met informally at a conference in Stockholm on Scaling-up Global Efforts to Secure Community Land and Resource Rights. For more than five years, the CSO Working Group on Land Rights had been working on land rights reforms in Liberia and saw an opportunity to join forces with Land Rights Now, which is global in nature. The opportunity was George Weah, a world-famous football player, who became President of Liberia in January 2018. Given his global personality, it was assumed that by applying skills and knowledge strategically within the influencing network at the local, national and global levels, Weah

and the Senate would feel pressured by the global community to pass the Pro-Community Land Rights Act – which they did in September 2018.

A group came together in January 2018, convened by Land Rights Now, consisting of the CSO Working Group on Land Rights (who was in the lead), Friends of the Earth, Rights and Resources Initiative, the International Land Coalition, Oxfam and Burness (supporting). They worked together on the campaign for four months, with calls twice a week, during which key decisions were made, and ongoing email exchanges. It was an ad hoc network with a very informal working relationship based on a common purpose. No formal agreements or commitments were made, no MoUs or joint codes of conduct were signed, and no funds were exchanged.

Operating at multiple levels

The collaboration between the CSO Working Group on Land Rights and Land Rights Now complemented awareness efforts in local communities and policy advocacy at the national level (President and lawmakers). At the national level, the CSO Working Group on Land Rights engaged national stakeholders like the then newly elected president (George M. Weah), influential lawmakers (the House and Senate leadership), the Liberia Land Authority, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, national media institutions, national CSOs, community-based organizations, religious organizations, and the general public. This engagement, led to a growing interest from these stakeholders in the land rights campaigns. For example, a technical team from the Working Group worked closely with the Liberia Land Authority and the Senate and House of Representatives Committees on Land and Natural Resources to review multiple versions of the draft land rights law. Similarly, the group organized national sit-ins, public forums, social media outreach campaigns, and solidarity marches at the national legislature and presidential palace to support the passage of a pro-community land rights law. The Working Group also participated in a public hearing on the draft land rights law at the legislature.

At the same time, the Working Group supported women’s organizations (the Women Land Rights Task Force) through the Women’s NGO Secretariat of Liberia, in holding public educational forums and a peaceful march at the president’s office and the legislature. As a result of these efforts, the Women Land Rights Task Force was able to meet with the head (Pro-temp)



Photo credit: CSO Working Group on Land Rights Reform in Liberia

of the Senate, the First Lady and Vice President of the country and female lawmakers to discuss the 2014 version of the draft law.

At the local level, the CSO Working Group on Land Rights conducted awareness forums in all fifteen political subdivisions (counties) of Liberia. It mobilized over 500 people for a national march and sit-in at the national legislature to demand the passage of the Pro-Community Land Rights Act.

At the same time, the Working Group held awareness forums in rural markets, reaching an estimated 8,000 people directly and establishing sub-groups in ten of the fifteen counties. Overall, at the local and national levels, more than 70,000 people participated in the different advocacy efforts and awareness campaigns (Worzi, 2018), including a petition that gathered over 45,000 signatures in support of the Pro-Community Land Rights Act.

At the global level, the campaign was built on the international persona of the recently elected President, an international footballer who played for AC Milan, Paris Saint-Germain and Chelsea, and who now had the chance to improve the lives of 3 million people. The campaign consisted of a petition, human interest stories and a 30-second video to highlight the need to pass the Pro-community Land Rights Law. The coordinator of Land Rights Now and a campaigner led the drafting process based on the advice and political vision of the CSO Working Group on Land Rights. The global campaign targeted audiences in Europe, Latin America and other African countries. The petition collected over 30,000 signatures, and the social media campaign (video and human-interest stories) reached over 3.5 million people. Over 270,000 people actively engaged with the campaign by sharing or commenting on content.



Supportive citizens can amplify the message of an influencing network at community level

The global social media campaign was very effective in reaching urban Liberians as well as Liberians who lived overseas, especially in the United States and Europe. The information was clear and accessible, and it allowed diaspora Liberians to learn about land tenure in general and the land rights campaign in particular. This greatly expanded the reach of the campaign. For example, over one month, the Working Group's Facebook page increased in viewership from 233 before the campaign to well over 2,000 friends requests and over 25,000 visits. Many of those Liberians who learned about the campaign via the Land Rights Now Facebook page had strong ties at the community level and so could feed the information back to rural areas (from global to local). The benefit of this was huge, as it allowed rural people to know what was going on from sources they trusted. The social media campaign also enabled student groups to get involved, leading to University students in Monrovia connecting back to their home villages. This multi-level process of local, national and global pressure is viewed as a key success factor of the campaign.

Another key success of the campaign was that it was clearly a nationally driven initiative. For over a decade, national CSOs have been preparing and mobilizing communities around their land and forest rights, and it became a clear demand for these communities. This not only strengthened national ownership of the process, but it also reduced the risk that the campaign could be labelled as foreigners meddling in Liberian affairs.

Mutually beneficial partnerships and capacity development

The CSO Working Group on Land Rights comprises over 30 CSOs working on several community rights issues, including gender, youth, forestry, mining, agribusiness (large plantations), environment, human rights, development and governance. The diversity of the CSO Working Group on Land Rights increases its capacity to address multiple issues around land reform in Liberia. Furthermore, having a broad representation of actors adds to the reach of the influencing efforts.

However, diversity also means dealing with different opinions and perspectives. The CSO Working Group on Land Rights has managed to work through differences by building relationships based on mutual respect and trust, allowing for knowledge-based advocacy. Some of the working group members, like the Sustainable Development Initiative, have a strong background in community land rights, forestry, and corporate governance related to mining and agricultural plantation activities on community land. To this end, there were educational and awareness workshops to enhance the knowledge and capacity of the Working Group members.

Other organizations, like the Rights and Rice Foundation, also use their expertise in networking with national stakeholders and coordinating multi-stakeholder forums to build a common advocacy and outreach strategy. Furthermore, international partners with legal and technical expertise provide a periodic review of the Working Group's position papers. Together, these factors provide a framework for a coordinated advocacy and communication strategy.

The collaboration between the CSO Working Group on Land Rights and Land Rights Now has been beneficial for both actors. The CSO Working Group on Land Rights saw its advocacy potential increase because of global pressure following from the



Photo credit: CSO Working Group on Land Rights Reform in Liberia



Diversity in membership increases capacity and reach of an influencing network

campaign. On the other hand, Land Rights Now was strengthened through this campaign as it led to greater recognition of the added-value of the campaign. Since then, there has been increasing interest from members of Land Rights Now to collaborate around national campaigns.

Legal expertise and implementation

The campaign had a very clear and concise focus at all levels, and this ensured the passing of the Pro-Community Land Rights Act. During reviews of the draft land rights law, the CSO Working Group on Land Rights, which had no legal expertise, had to negotiate with influential national stakeholders and legal experts, including the Senate legal representatives and policymaking institutions (the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the Forestry Development Agency). These negotiations dealt with important provisions in the law, especially provisions on the transfer of customary land rights to public, private, and government lands. During these negotiations, the key objective of the Working Group was to 1) protect the integrity and principles of customary land claims, and 2) ensure the passage of the Pro-Community Land Rights Act. Although the working group successfully introduced several important pro-community provisions

in the law, the group's exclusive focus on the passage of the land law led to critical gaps and weak provisions in other parts of the law. For example, the Pro-Community Land Rights Act has serious gaps in the transfer of customary claimed land into other categories of land, including Tribal Certificates, public land, and land contracted out to foreign concessions (Sustainable Development Initiative, 2019). This oversight has left customary land vulnerable to private (elite) land grabs and commercial interests from both inside and outside Liberia. Furthermore, there are lingering questions about implementation, including the availability of resources and technical expertise in relevant institutions and the necessary political will to formalize customary land. This situation raises an important question for the national CSOs and the Land Rights Now campaign: is the passage of a pro-community land law a sufficient condition to claim victory?

Conclusion

The Land Rights Now campaign joined forces with the CSO Working Group on Land Rights Reform in Liberia to jointly pressure the Government of Liberia to pass a Pro-Community Land Rights Act that would improve the lives of 3 million Liberians. The network was convened in January 2018, and the Act was passed in September that same year. Although ad hoc and informal, the network successfully linked different audiences by linking multiple levels of influence. The network is illustrative of

strengthened advocacy potential at the local and national levels through collaboration at the global level.

A clear, focused and defined policy demand helped ensure a coherent story at the various levels at which the network was operating. Advocating at the global level put direct pressure on the President of Liberia, George Weah, who was sensitive to his international image. Global level campaign messages, shared through social media, also reached urban Liberians and Liberians living abroad, who fed the information back to their local communities, thereby creating a global to local feedback mechanism.

The members of the CSO Working Group on Land Rights had already been mobilizing local communities for over ten years. They ensured mass mobilizations of citizens by organizing demonstrations, marches, and advocacy actions. These local and national mobilization efforts enhanced the campaign and ultimately contributed to the successful passing of the Pro-Community Land Rights Act.

While the campaign met its core objectives, over time, the network has realized the importance of investing in legal knowledge when drafting regulations. Legal expertise would have enhanced the advocacy meetings with policymakers. Having legal expertise would have helped to strengthen the law further and closed gaps and loopholes.

After this success, the question that now arises is, what is next? Passing a legislative act does not necessarily mean the lives of 3 million Liberians will improve. It is the enforcement of a regulation that makes a difference. The collaboration on influencing was designed to offer one-off support, but will this be enough? Land Rights Now is a public campaign that can amplify an influencing strategy for a limited period, but a pressing question for all participants now is how to work on the implementation phase. So far, it has been up to the CSO Working Group on Land Rights Reform in Liberia to continue pressuring the Government of Liberia to enforce the law.



Photo credit: CSO Working Group on Land Rights Reform in Liberia



WOMEN IN THE AFGHAN POLICE

Key objective: An informal network of allies in the Afghan government, civil society and international organizations advocates for the successful integration and meaningful participation of women in the Afghan police force.

As an experienced Afghan policewoman stated: ‘In the past few decades, women’s marginalization was so structural that it is not an easy job to integrate them now in the police’. Structural fragility and conflict make it even more difficult: the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has been in conflict in one form or another since 1978, as its stability and security have been affected by regional power struggles and internal divisions. After the 9/11 attacks in 2001, an initial counter-terrorism response quickly turned into an international state-building mission. From the beginning, this mission focused on a broad programme of Security Sector Reform, including reform of the police. As the so-called ‘lead nation’ following the Bonn Agreement of December 2001, Germany took responsibility for police reform. In May 2002, 40 donor countries committed to support the Security Sector Reform programme financially.

Police reform was a major challenge. Traditionally, Afghanistan has not had a professional civilian police force (Suroush, 2018). The Taliban’s defeat had left the country with practically no police at all, and there was a complete lack of equipment and supplies. There had been no systematic police training for around two decades (Feilke, 2010), so the international community had to build up a national police force essentially from scratch.

Although perhaps not the biggest priority, the inclusion of women was part of the police reforms from the start and constituted a major challenge. Oxfam has been stressing the importance of female integration in the police since 2010. Since 2005, Oxfam has worked in an informal network with allies in international organizations, intergovernmental organizations, civil society, and the government of Afghanistan. This case analyses how this informal network maneuvered in a fragile context into a mutually beneficial partnership that supports women’s integration in the Afghan police.

The influencing network as a fluid organism

The allies in the informal influencing network on women’s integration in the Afghan police found each other in different ways, and the network grew organically over time (from 2005 to the present). Most allies involved in the influencing network joined the initiative out of a commitment to the issue. Allies are seated in international organizations, including intergovernmental organizations, as well as in Afghan ministries, regional police departments, and NGOs and CSOs. Several countries are represented in the network, including Canada, the Netherlands, Germany, Japan and, of course, Afghanistan.

By Jorrit Kamminga (Oxfam Novib), Nynke Kuperus (Oxfam Novib), and Saskia van Veen (Oxfam Novib)



Informal influencing networks grow organically

Oxfam's work in the influencing network focuses on working towards a just world without poverty and sees its mission driven by human rights, including gender equality. Women, peace and security is an important part of Oxfam's ambitions in conflict and fragile contexts. Under this agenda, Oxfam has been supporting women's participation in the Security Sector Reform from a gender equality perspective. Oxfam met current partner The Women and Peace Studies Organization (WPSO) when Oxfam staff interviewed its founding director, Wazhma Frogh, for a research project on women and the police. WPSO and Oxfam decided to work together, starting with a one-year pilot during which they launched the research report *Women and the Afghan Police: Why a law enforcement agency that respects and protects females is crucial for progress in 2013* (Hancock, 2013). The WPSO later became involved in other activities such as advocacy and training women in the police.

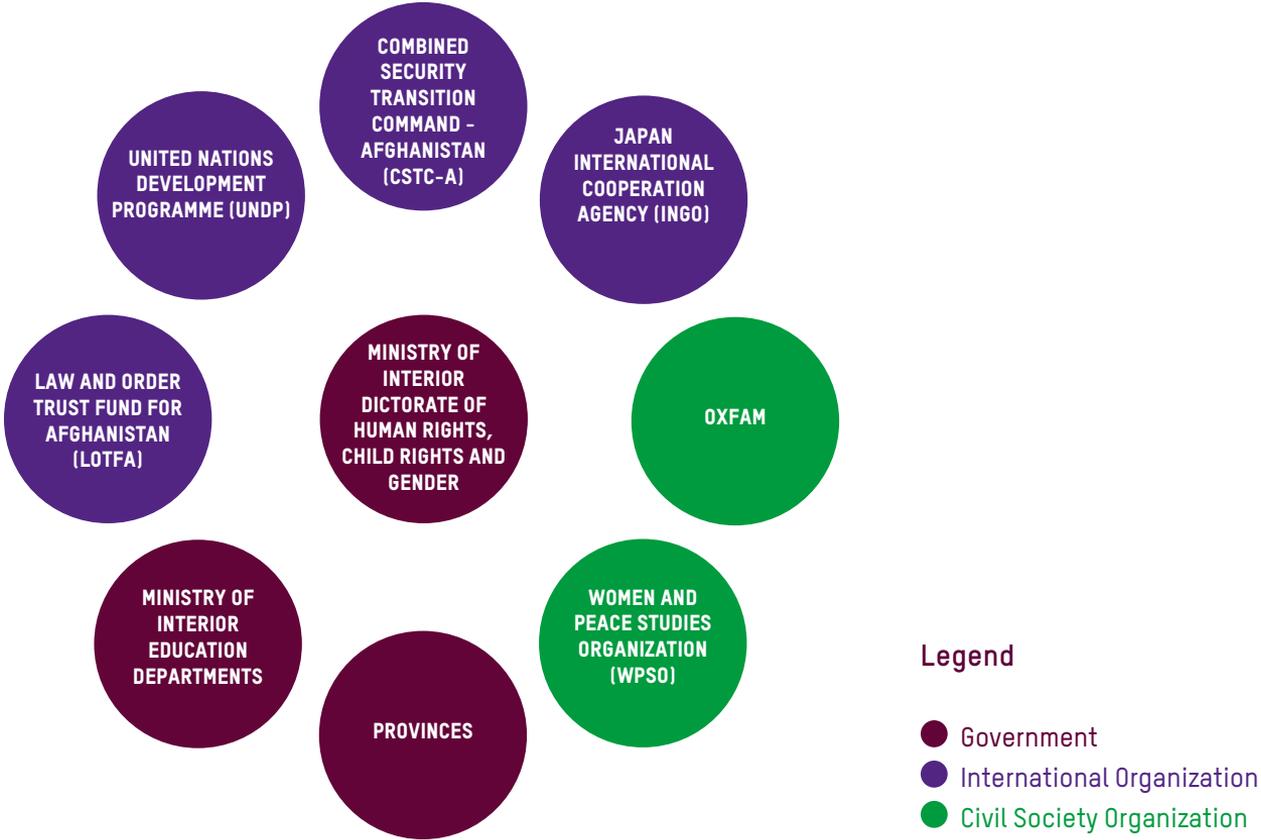
WPSO extended the allies of the informal influencing network, as they were, at the time, one of the few CSOs working with the Ministry of Interior of Afghanistan. The Ministry of Interior is important as they are responsible for the Afghan National Police, and they host the Directorate of Human Rights, Child Rights and Gender, established in 2007. Engagement with the Directorate by WPSO intensified after 2014 when they signed a MoU with the Ministry. Soon afterward, the Minister invited WPSO's founding director to join a new team of senior experts. This allowed her to identify internal allies to grow the network. Some of these allies still support the training of policewomen that Oxfam and WPSO are working on now.

Connections with allies in international organizations were built through the international network of Oxfam, the personal relations of expats with the Dutch police mission and other intergovernmental organizations. The international community valued Oxfam's and WPSO's research efforts and used these to inform their agenda-setting. Oxfam developed an informal relationship with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, the NATO Training Mission Afghanistan and other international actors that supported inclusive security. Elizabeth Cameron, Oxfam's policy advisor between 2013 and 2014, says: 'The launch of the 2013 Oxfam report really made a difference in terms of our access. We suddenly were invited by the US Embassy to present our findings, and also became the first external persons to be invited to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Gender Coordination Group. We also had regular but informal contact with the ISAF gender advisors to exchange information for mutual benefit: to contribute to situational awareness but, for example, also to hear about funding opportunities. Personal connections really mattered to establish relations with international allies.' (Personal communication, 4 October 2019).

As this quote makes clear, personal connections matter in a fragile context like Afghanistan. Because of these internal connections, the protection needs of policewomen can be better highlighted and influencing of the Ministry of Interior – in favour of the implementation of complaint mechanisms and other protection policies for policewomen – can be more effective. WPSO's connections with police headquarters at the local level supported the implementation of policies on the

ground. Personal connections are also important with intergovernmental organizations and other international forces. As the international community is funding the full Security Sector Reform, they have a lot of power in decision-making. The importance of internal allies, however, sometimes creates tension between independence and partnership.

Organizations that represent allies involved in the influencing network



Legend

- Government
- International Organization
- Civil Society Organization

The figure shows the organizations that represent allies involved in the influencing network. As this informal network is fluid and continuously changing, this is only a snapshot of the influencing network around capacity building for female police. Other themes related to female integration in the Afghan police may involve different organizations.

Influencing and programming going hand in hand

Although the work had already started in 2005, it was in 2013 that Oxfam and its allies intensified their campaign work on women in the police. Increasingly, Oxfam and its partners realized that influencing would be effective only if it went hand in hand with programming. Adopting this approach meant that the allies, working through local implementing partners and the government agencies responsible for inclusive security, started experimenting with supporting recruitment through training new female recruits and, at the same time, improving the working conditions for women in the police to protect their safety.

In the first years, there was an emphasis on recruiting and training policewomen and placing them in jobs. The allies worked together, and from within the ministry, the Directorate of Human Rights, Child Rights and Gender supported women into training and placements. WPSO provided practical support with their local connections in recruitment and training, and empirical support by conducting research (both experience-based as well as document reviews) to support the Female Integration Strategy. Oxfam supported these research initiatives and brought in the human rights perspective and international connections. The allies in intergovernmental organizations and international organizations supported the agenda setting and policy formulation.

These efforts led to good results in terms of the numbers of policewomen trained and placed in the Afghan National Police (4,070 policewomen were in place by January 2020, compared with only 164 in 2005). However, the allies concluded from their research that the working conditions experienced by policewomen continued to be harsh, and many women dropped out. Therefore, more emphasis was placed on safety and protection in both influencing and implementation. The network aims to ensure that protection and participation go hand in hand, but this is not easy to achieve. Hence, the implementation activities range from recruitment and training to securing proper complaint mechanisms for policewomen.

Given the lack of public acceptance and societal protection for policewomen, the influencing priorities of the network increasingly include the importance of the enabling environment – social norms that steer public support for women in the police during working hours on the street and within their families and social environments. This agenda requires the network to reach out to the public and intensify liaison with community-based organizations at the district level. The latter is still challenging as there are not many CSOs in Afghanistan interested in working on Security Sector Reform.

Furthermore, the international community is restricted in its movement, which makes it difficult to liaise with the general public, resulting in a big gap between policies and practice. Oxfam and WPSO try to bridge this gap by connecting national, international and local actors to strengthen the meaningful participation of women in the Afghan police.

Operating at multiple levels

The allies within the Ministry of Interior, the international community and Afghan civil society worked extensively together to secure a place for women in the Security Sector Reform. Together, they managed to develop and influence the ministry's leadership to adopt a Female Integration Strategy as part of the police reforms. WPSO and Oxfam supported the development of the Female Integration Strategy, intergovernmental organizations ensured that this issue was brought up on the agenda for Security Sector Reform, and allies within the ministry secured the commitment of the leadership in the Afghan government. Currently, the final responsibility for implementing the Female Integration Strategy lies with the Ministry of Interior. Therefore, the ministry is the primary influencing target of the network when it comes to the implementation of this strategy.

The Female Integration Strategy can be seen as the main instrument for the protection and meaningful participation of women in the Afghan National Police. This strategy is the common denominator in all influencing activities, at multiple levels, by the informal influencing network. In the beginning, through the lobby of strong allies, all the different departments which form the Ministry of Interior were involved, informed and committed. However, after a year or so, this togetherness fragmented as frequent ministerial changes weakened political will and allies in strategic places moved and lost their influence. Also, at the international level, it became more challenging to keep attention once the policy was in place, and implementation lagged behind. These attempts to maintain the focus of attention were especially difficult in a fragile context like Afghanistan, where many security issues compete for the attention of intergovernmental organizations.

Implementation is also hampered by unclear and overlapping responsibilities of departments within the Ministry of Interior. The effectiveness of the leadership's oversight role can depend on personal relationships, as informal networks coexist with formal structures. The international community has significant scope to influence decisions – even though organizations in the international community generally lack any direct connection to the Afghan people and communities. The confusing overlap of mandates makes it critical to have intimate knowledge of the system. The complexity of the ministerial power dynamic helps to explain why informal networks are so important for getting things done. However, despite the importance of these informal networks, they have a more problematic characteristic. Once its members lose access to important leadership positions, the networks are easily sidelined and see their influence decline rapidly.



Fragile contexts require agility; an informal network wherein allies can switch can provide this



Implementing a strategy also requires the network to be agile and switch their allies, which is possible in these types of informal networks. As described above, in the current phase of implementation, the direct connection with Afghan citizens becomes more and more crucial to allow work on more enabling social norms that support the position and work of Afghan policewomen. WPSO's linkage to local police departments and its MoU with the Ministry of Interior helps them to influence the culture of the Afghan National Police from within. The Directorate of Human Rights, Child Rights and Gender performs this influencing from within function as well.

Linkages between the national and provincial levels are mostly through the top-down, hierarchical structure of the ministry, reinforced by CSOs, such as WPSO, that coordinate projects in Kabul with implementing partners in the provinces. The weakest linkages are between the provincial and district levels. Beyond the chain of command within the police force, there seems to be no comprehensive network, civil society or ministerial capacity to reflect the needs of citizens. This is an important gap, as conservative traditions and harmful social norms are strongest in the districts farthest from provincial centres. Critical and constructive engagement with the Ministry of Interior in Kabul needs to be complemented by mechanisms for citizens, civil society groups and women's organizations to connect with the police and justice providers at the grassroots level, to make sure citizens' needs and voices

are heard. To complement the influencing network, active allies are discussing how to reach out to these groups to engage them in the implementation of the Female Integration Strategy.

Capacity development

Much of the capacity development related to the influencing network involves training for policewomen but also for government organizations such as the Ministry of Interior. Providing access to specific insights and learning on the job is also part of developing capacities in the network. The Directorate of Human Rights, Child Rights and Gender plays a coordinating role in police training for women. International organizations, police missions, and embassies, linked together by the informal network, offer specific training sessions for policewomen.

Women have different training opportunities when joining the police. On paper, individual capacity building should lead to organizational development, but this is difficult to achieve due to high staff turnover, the changing environment and different understandings of gender. In practice, the impact of training on building operational knowledge may be quite limited. However, even though the effects of training women police officers are difficult to quantify, the number of female police officers trained is an important motivation for the ministerial leadership and intergovernmental organizations in their evaluation of progress on the Female Integration Strategy.

WPSO offers technical assistance to the Ministry of Interior and supports the implementation of the Female Integration Strategy at the district level. It is not only the ministry that benefits from this arrangement, WPSO has become more professional through its constant engagement with the Ministry of Interior, and has learned from Oxfam about strategic advocacy work. Oxfam, in turn, depends on WPSO for local knowledge about how the government and security sector works, to inform its campaigning and programming.

As an informal network, a lot depends on the individual capacities and commitment of the allies involved. Results are often driven by motivation, passion and determination. Within the police, the personal drive and perseverance of women working in the police are important. Mentors – often allies in the informal network – play a powerful role in supporting women in the Ministry of Interior and the police through their direct engagement with selected female focal points. Even though this way of developing capacity is vulnerable to turnover and is not structural in its approach, the mentor-focal-point model, as a more practical on-the-job type of capacity building, may be more effective than training. The few higher-positioned female police officers also appreciate the mental support and back up of mentors as the most important factor in their success.

The main focus of the internal approach of WPSO and the Directorate of Human Rights, Child Rights and Gender seems to be on changing organizational culture through more gender training and awareness-raising. There is progress – the Directorate is headed by a woman and since 2018 there is a Deputy Minister of Interior for Policy and Strategy – but it is slow. Gender units in provinces are still often run by men and not necessarily by the male champions that are crucial for progress. Organizational capacity on gender is often locked into such gender units, which can be marginalized and far away from decision-making on inclusive security. Finally, knowledge about the Female Integration Strategy and broader agendas such as Women, Peace and Security is still very low, even among senior officials.



Success of an informal network depends on the individual capacity and commitment of involved allies



Conclusion

Since 2001, Security Sector Reform processes have taken place in Afghanistan and include a focus on the inclusion and meaningful participation of women in the police force. Traditionally, Afghanistan has never had a professional civilian police force. There was a complete lack of equipment and supplies, and there had been no systematic police training for around two decades. The international community had to build up a national police force essentially from scratch.

To complement formal relationships, an informal network was formed to join efforts for female integration in the Afghan police, with allies in international organizations, intergovernmental organizations, civil society, and the government of Afghanistan. The influencing network combines influencing with programming, as it realized the two depend on each other to be effective. While influencing efforts mainly relate to the implementation of the Female Integration Strategy, implementation activities primarily focus on recruitment, training and protection mechanisms such as complaint procedures.

Due to its informal nature, the success of the influencing network is highly dependent on personal relations, drive and commitment. This is both a strength and a weakness, but probably necessary in a fragile and conflict-

affected context like Afghanistan, where civil society does not easily get the space to influence decision-making. The examples presented in this case are illustrative of the importance of identifying internal allies within the influencing targets.

Much of the capacity development related to the influencing network involves training. However, the impact of training on building operational knowledge may be quite limited due to high staff turnover, lack of follow-ups, the changing environment and different understandings of gender. The network combines training efforts with professionalization and mentoring support for female police officers. The latter is perceived as key for success, especially in a context where the influencing effort is sensitive and goes against patriarchal social norms.

The meaningful participation of women in the police force will only be successful when there is public support for policewomen in their role. This requires a broader engagement of the network with civil society and communities, as far as the fragile context allows. Without a structural system in which grassroots concerns and the security and protection needs of women are effectively taken up by the Kabul-centred system, it will continue to be difficult to make advances on inclusive security. This is the main challenge the influencing network is facing.



Photo credit: Wemos

CIVIL SOCIETY AND MULTI-LEVEL HEALTH ADVOCACY IN THE GLOBAL FINANCING FACILITY

Key objective: At national and global levels, civil society organizations engage with each other through networks to enable mutual learning, undertake joint advocacy that reflects local experiences, and ensure space for civil society in the multi-level processes of the Global Financing Facility.

Every year, 5 million women, adolescents, and children worldwide die from preventable causes. The bulk of them live in low- and middle-income countries. Strong health systems with a solid health workforce are required to tackle this challenge. Governments, donors, and CSOs in these countries are working to build stronger health systems, while global initiatives also contribute. One of these initiatives is the Global Financing Facility (GFF) for Women, Children and Adolescents. The GFF supports low- and lower-middle-income countries in accelerating progress on reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health and nutrition (RMNCAH-N), and strengthening financing and health systems for universal health coverage (Wemos, 2019).

The GFF, supported by the World Bank, was launched in 2015 to financially support the UN Secretary General's Every Woman Every Child Global Strategy (2016–2030) to 'end preventable maternal and child deaths and improve the health and quality of life of women, children and adolescents by 2030'. The GFF aims to close the global financing gap (of more than \$33 billion per year) by increasing the available domestic, external, and private sector financial resources allocated to RMNCAH-N. It is an initiative intended to bring together stakeholders in RMNCAH-N from multiple levels (national and international) and different parts of society (Wemos, 2020). Currently, the GFF supports 36 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America (Global Financing Facility, 2020).

*By Mariska Meurs (Wemos),
Myria Koutsoumpa (Wemos),
Rosana Lescauwaet (Wemos),
Maty Dia (civil society
representative to the GFF
Investors Group), Kadi Toure
(Partnership for Maternal,
Newborn and Child Health) and
Aminu Magashi Garba (Africa
Health Budget Network)*

Governance of the Global Financing Facility

There are multiple levels of decision-making at the GFF, with the most strategic ones being at the global level, namely the Trust Fund Committee and the Investors Group, supported by the GFF Secretariat. The Trust Fund Committee consists of donor representatives who contribute more than \$30 million annually to the GFF Trust Fund, as well as World Bank representatives. The Investors Group is a 32-seat multi-stakeholder group (including financially and technically contributing donors, civil society, the private sector, and recipient country representatives) that advises the Trust Fund Committee. The GFF Secretariat supports the Trust Fund Committee and the Investors Group and carries out GFF operations and daily management.

The GFF aims to be country-driven with ownership at the national level. An Investment Case is developed by a Multi-stakeholder Country Platform, which is led by the Ministry of Health and whose members can be local, national and international CSOs, (professional) associations and unions, academia, the private sector, United Nations agencies and other development partners. The Investment Case is based on the country's national health strategies and plans. It forms the guiding

document for RMNCAH-N high-impact interventions and funding decisions, and it is the basis for the related World Bank financing and contributions for RMNCAH-N from other donors.

Civil society engagement is coordinated at the global level through the Civil Society Coordinating Group, hosted by the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, whose main objective is to promote meaningful civil society engagement, from sub-national to national and global levels. Importantly, the Civil Society Coordinating Group's steering committee selects the civil society and youth representatives to the Investors Group, in consultation with its group members. Membership of the Civil Society Coordinating Group is open to individual members of civil society working on the GFF at the national, regional and international levels. The steering committee is supported by a coordination unit and has four working groups to solicit input from members. Communication with members runs through a Google group and listserv, connecting over 370 people and sharing information on the GFF, country updates, webinars and annual workshops.

Civil society engagement in the Global Financing Facility

CSOs and networks are engaged in the GFF at various levels. Most of them, if not all, are members of the Civil Society Coordinating Group. In GFF recipient countries, civil society groups were not always well-informed of the objectives and ways of working of the GFF, and many are limited in terms of financial and human resources, as well as technical and

advocacy skills. The coordinating group has played an important role in informing, guiding and supporting the meaningful engagement of national civil society networks in the GFF process. The CSO coalitions in GFF countries include members of networks at local, national and sub-national levels. They mainly represent the health and nutrition sectors but can also include education, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), environment, child protection, or other social determinants of health sectors.

The lack of information available to civil society in GFF recipient countries has been the motive for Wemos and other CSOs in the Netherlands, and in other Northern countries, to engage with the GFF. Moreover, in 2018, the Dutch government announced it would invest \$68 million in the GFF, giving the Netherlands seats on the Trust Fund Committee and the Investors Group. Critical reflections and questions were raised by Dutch CSOs, leading to a first round table between CSOs, GFF staff and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It became clear that there was a need for further information and evidence sharing, as well as a need to strengthen the capacity of local partners so they can fulfil their role as watchdogs for the GFF implementation in their countries. With this objective, a community of practice on the GFF was created in the Netherlands in January 2019, under the umbrella of Share-Net.

The various networks that engage with the GFF are interlinked, with members of the Dutch community of practice being linked to other national networks in the Netherlands, civil society networks in different GFF recipient countries and the global Civil Society Coordinating Group. These interlinkages effectively support advocacy at multiple levels, although challenges from working in a network of networks arise as well.

Operating at multiple levels

Policy demands are not identical across all levels and countries. Although several shared goals exist (for example, promoting meaningful civil society engagement, increasing resources for SRHR, and enhancing the governance of RMNCAH-N expenditures), organizations and networks highlight issues in line with their specific areas of expertise or the country in which they work. They also highlight issues that are under-prioritized by their government but need to be higher on the policy agenda. The diversity in policy demands across the network is due to the GFF being multi-faceted. Emphasis can be put on issues of governance, procedural and structural issues, choices in financing, civil society engagement, and so on. For example, the introduction of a principal and alternate youth representative at the Investors Group was a joint governance demand of civil society, but which was realized after the combined advocacy efforts of the global civil society community. On the other hand, the inclusion of family planning activities in the Ugandan Investment Case was a demand made by national civil society, which was realized after the efforts of a national CSO task force.



*Overlapping networks
— where members
exchange information
effectively — boost
influencing at multiple
levels*



Coherence is built through the operationalization of the vision in several types of documents

Coherence between partners' interventions is ensured through a great deal of exchange and collaboration on policy briefs, factsheets, reports and other knowledge-sharing material (for example, via joint work planning, network meetings, Google groups, WhatsApp groups, webinars, and an Airtable database). South-South learning through workshops and experience-sharing across countries also helps to ensure coherence between partners' interventions. For example, Senegal has hosted learning visits from Côte d'Ivoire and Haiti, CSOs from Senegal travelled to support GFF orientation and coalition building in Niger, and Kenyan civil society undertook training workshops for Tanzanian counterparts and an orientation for Ugandan civil society. Apart from joint advocacy messages, individual organizations, 'sub-networks' or groups of members may also choose to emphasize certain aspects of the GFF that others do not. This loose network allows for this diversity.

Dilemmas and achievements

This diversity sometimes also results in dilemmas. Concerns identified as a priority at the global level are not always visible at the national level but may have an impact in the countries, and vice versa. The reasons for this are not always clear, and assumptions should be carefully checked. One underlying reason for diversity in priority identification may be different contexts and realities, leading to different views on what is a priority, or it may be due to diversity in access to information. An example of an issue that some Northern organizations, including Wemos, have been flagging is that of global-level governance and the lack of inclusivity and transparency of the Trust Fund Committee. To test the water on this topic and to gauge to what extent it is perceived by others in the network to be an important advocacy issue, Wemos is currently initiating multi-level conversations about this. These conversations with global and country partners are meant to decide on joint advocacy messages that have broad support within the network. Taking everything into consideration, GFF advocacy should be guided by the GFF countries themselves, given that that GFF is a country-led mechanism.



Trade-offs between exploiting an advocacy opportunity and ensuring ownership in influencing networks

Another dilemma is that collaboration, especially at a distance, takes time. It sometimes results in a trade-off between exploiting an advocacy opportunity and ensuring ownership and a message that properly reflects diverse perspectives. When planning for the preparation of country case studies, Wemos had underestimated the time required for all the partners to analyse all the relevant policy documents (including keeping track of updated versions), to collect and cross-check additional information, and to consult with national and local networks. Rather than publish all cases well before the 9th Investors Group in November 2019, Wemos chose to adjust the planning and publish some later. Generally, the level of support determines whether to pursue an advocacy opportunity.

Some achievements of the different networks are:

- At the global level, the Civil Society Coordinating Group has successfully advocated for the adoption and funding of a civil society engagement strategy, which resulted in the formation of a Small Grants Mechanism to Support Civil

Society Engagement, Alignment, and Coordinated Action for Improved Women's, Children's, and Adolescents' Health, particularly in relation to the GFF. In 2019, nearly \$600,000 in grants to civil society in nine countries were issued. Civil society is also increasingly referenced in GFF guidance and included in events and efforts. Furthermore, the Civil Society Coordinating Group has successfully advocated for a youth seat on the GFF Investors' Group, and it has developed an adolescent and youth addendum to the civil society engagement strategy and the related action plan.

- In the Netherlands, the Community of Practice prepared a joint input to the Dutch delegation ahead of the Investors Group and Trust Fund Committee meetings in November 2019. Our recommendations on improving inclusivity, SRHR and governance have been incorporated into the Dutch position. This position was based on the cases Wemos developed with counterparts in Malawi (for which financial support was provided through Share-Net), Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, and information from the wider Community of Practice and their counterparts in GFF recipient countries. This rich information base helped to bring out lessons and concerns that Wemos – as a member of the Dutch Community of Practice – could raise with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other bilateral donors to the GFF.
- At country level, several successes have been achieved. In Senegal, the Investment Case has integrated the GFF CSO action plan. In Uganda, after pressure from civil society, family planning was included in the Investment Case. The Investment Case in Côte d'Ivoire now includes a component on citizen monitoring at the community level. Several GFF coalitions (Cameroon, Kenya, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Mali and Madagascar) include CSOs from various global health initiatives and across sectors. Most of these coalitions develop action plans aligned with Investment Case priorities, with a focus on strengthening health systems, health financing, and accountability at the community level.

Mutually beneficial partnerships

The added value of operating in partnerships arises from sharing access to information and resources (both financial and technical) and from diversity. Diversity ensures the representation of various constituencies and brings in different perspectives, which adds to the legitimacy of the network. For example, in the Netherlands, the GFF Community of Practice would have far less legitimacy in raising issues of concern with the Dutch government, if it could not refer to the country cases that are built by working together with civil society in Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda. These examples are also shared by other members of the Civil Society Coordinating Group. Similarly, the GFF country networks benefit from the coordinating group and the civil society representatives to the Investors Group through increased access to information, as well as technical and financial support by some of its members.

Being based in Europe, the Dutch GFF Community of Practice has easier access to the Dutch and other European donor representatives to the Investors Group and Trust Fund Committee, including Germany, Norway and the European Commission.



*Sharing access to
information, resources
and capacities*



Photo credit: Wemos

The same goes for other members of the Civil Society Coordinating Group, who have easier access to those decision-makers close to them, either physically or in terms of relationships. By using this asset to (1) ensure that voices and concerns of Southern network members are heard and (2) share the information received through these contacts with the wider network, Northern-based members can add value to the network. On the other hand, access to information and what is happening ‘on the ground’ where the GFF is implemented is easier for those based in GFF recipient countries. In this respect, partners in the networks are often mutually dependent: national CSOs are closer to national-level decision-makers and can more easily monitor implementation. They are often very active in regional and global advocacy as well, and at times use their own resources to facilitate regional learning and capacity strengthening. Sometimes though, certain doors open more easily for them when they can demonstrate a working relationship with international networks or staff from multilateral organizations. The value of partnerships and collaboration between Northern and Southern organizations is demonstrated through the strategic sharing of information and addressing different decision-makers with coordinated messages.

The partnership brings together people and organizations from different countries and with different areas of expertise, and this is an important added value. For example, it shows that certain concerns go beyond a particular

country context and can be due to flaws in policy design or implementation. Of course, it also enables learning from each other for those things that go well. Northern-based partners increasingly embrace their role of facilitating South-South learning, which enables exchange across countries. The like-mindedness of organizations and networks leads to sharing of information openly within the network at multiple levels, and this is seen as an enabling factor for collaboration.

The various positions and capacities of partners in the network naturally lead to differences in power. These include access to information, decision-makers and resources (financial and technical). Funds are often disseminated through Northern-based or international organizations, and this further adds to the power imbalance.

One of Wemos’ efforts to deal with power asymmetries in access to information was to document four country experiences,

in collaboration with partners in the network. The objective of this effort was to ensure that the advocacy messages of both Wemos and the country networks were aligned. The result of this activity was four briefing papers. One take-away from this activity was that to make information access an inclusive process owned by all the partners in the network, decision-making processes should allow more time for all partners to do joint analysis. Because of differences in time and resources at different levels, CSOs in-country sometimes do not even have the time to work on the GFF, let alone analyse the various versions of an Investment Case and Project Appraisal Documents, as they are already overburdened with their existing portfolios. CSOs in all countries are struggling to find dedicated resources and time to do this parallel analysis, in addition to understanding their country's GFF Investment Case, advocating for priorities and for a seat in the multi-stakeholder country platform, monitoring implementation and doing budget tracking. The initial planning and deadlines of partners at the global level need to be set jointly with partners at the national level to ensure the inclusion of their perspectives. Global partners need to align with the country partners' needs and not vice-versa. This latter point directly relates to the trade-off between exploiting an advocacy opportunity and ensuring broad support of the message, which was touched upon in the previous section.

Capacity development

By operating in networks at multiple levels, like-minded organizations can share information openly and enable exchange and mutual learning across countries and regions. In this way, the capacities of individuals and organizations are strengthened and transferred across the network. The multi-faceted nature of the GFF results in the exchange of a variety of knowledge and expertise between members of the same network – health financing, SRHR, health systems, governance, human rights, and legal expertise are all present. The Nigeria-based African Health Budget Network has led the development of GFF country 'spotlights' with CSOs in Ethiopia, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Tanzania. Organizations with strong connections can support others in their fundraising efforts. In contrast, organizations with more available human and financial resources support others with gathering data and evidence and creating joint programmatic objectives and activities. In Senegal, the Réseau Siggil Jigeen leveraged its grant-making capacity for the benefit of the GFF CSO Coalition. At the same time, organizations such as Enda Santé and CICODEV provided their own resources to host governance meetings.



Photo credit: Wemos



Children In Tanga, Tanzania. Photo credit: Pixabay

Capacity building at the global level also takes place through webinars. Wemos has held webinars discussing GFF global governance issues and specific country experiences. The Civil Society Coordinating Group organizes informative and strategizing webinars before and after each Investors Group meeting, and webinars on key themes of its members' interests. For instance, in 2020, it worked with youth leaders to organize English and French webinars on strengthening youth engagement for better SRHR results, with lessons from GFF countries. It also worked with the CORE group, Africa Health Budget Network and Open Society Foundations to hold English and French webinars focusing on building civil society's advocacy on health financing, with lessons from the GFF.

Conclusion

The Global Financing Facility was launched in 2015 to support low- and lower-middle-income countries in accelerating progress on RMNCAH-N, and strengthening financing and health systems for universal health coverage. At various levels, including national, international, and global levels, CSOs and networks are engaged with the GFF.

Operating in a network of networks at multiple levels provides opportunities, among which are sharing access to information, resources, and diversity. The legitimacy of a network increases when it is represented by a broad

group of constituencies. Furthermore, diversity in the network provides ample opportunities for cross-country and cross-level learning and capacity development.

At times, the multi-level nature of a network also poses operational challenges. These challenges include priority alignment since realities, perceptions, levels of information and resources may differ at different levels. Although financial support for advocacy work is now more often channelled directly to Southern-based organizations than before, the distribution of resources remains skewed towards those based in the global North and more progress is needed in this respect. The multi-faceted nature of the GFF adds to this challenge. Collaboration at a distance, which is the default for a network operating at multiple levels, poses challenges, especially with regards to communication and decision-making. It is important to leverage regional and global meetings to mitigate some of these challenges, but also to better understand the needs

and priorities of country partners, and to ensure alignment for advocacy opportunities at global and local levels. This sometimes requires a trade-off between exploiting an advocacy opportunity and inclusivity in the advocacy message.

Regardless of the challenges mentioned above, the influencing network has been successful in promoting civil society engagement at the country level and in the Investors Group. In addition, the network has successfully influenced the increase in funding for civil society engagement with the GFF. This would not have been possible if it were not for collaboration across multiple levels.

POWERFUL PLAY

The three networks presented in this Part, although having completely different objectives and policy demands, showcase several ways of influencing at multiple levels. Where one network is organized rather loosely or informally, another has clear and defined collaboration platforms. All of the networks validate their way of working by their unique context.

Being part of a network provides ample opportunities for sharing expertise and building on each other's credibility. The network around the Global Financing Facility (GFF) presented by Wemos and other members of the global GFF Civil Society Coordinating Group demonstrated increased legitimacy and credibility through collaboration and partnership. For example, whereas Wemos, situated at national (Dutch) and international levels, has easier access to certain decision-makers and donors represented in the Investors Group and the Trust Fund Committee, its partners in GFF recipient countries are connected to local GFF and World Bank staff and their national decision-makers. Similarly, the CSOs that work internationally can offer comparisons between different contexts, whereas the CSOs that work nationally add local knowledge and relevance to the network and, subsequently, the policy demand itself. The partners in the informal influencing network in Afghanistan all have their unique contributions to make, whether it is technical expertise related to capacity building of police officers, connections with the international community, access to civil society, or personal relations within the influencing target.

Operating in a network at multiple levels, by definition, means diversity – diversity in contexts as well as actors and priorities. We have already learned that diversity in actors adds to complementarity (see also Wessel et al., 2020), but it also adds to the complexity in defining the policy demand. The collaboration on land rights reform between Land Rights Now and the CSO Working Group on Land Rights in Liberia was a one-off campaign. The campaign had a clear and defined policy demand, which helped to ensure a coherent story when operating at multiple levels with different audiences. In contrast, members of the global GFF Civil Society Coordinating Group, a longer-term network, continuously need to organize meetings in the network and test the waters for certain policy demands, before being sure of having broad support within the network. In this case, inclusivity in the advocacy message is more important than acting on every advocacy opportunity, which sometimes means prioritizing and forgoing opportunities.

This Part also stresses the importance of combining influencing and programming efforts. In Afghanistan, programming activities are a prerequisite for effective influencing for women in the police, as these shape the enabling environment, but in Liberia, a lack of attention on implementation in the influencing strategy hampered the long-term effectiveness of

the achievements of the policy demand. The policy implementation gap can at least partly be approached by operating at multiple levels, especially when influencing is targeted at the national level. In contrast, implementation happens at the sub-national or local level (te Lintelo et al., 2016).

The hand in hand approach of influencing and programming points to the importance of having allies within the influencing target. The influencing network in Afghanistan relies on internal allies for expanding advocacy opportunities. This is especially important given the context in Afghanistan, where there is generally little room for civil society engagement with the bureaucratic system of the police. Of course, the hand in hand approach sometimes creates tension between independence and partnership. The case on land rights in Liberia showed that working together with allies in the influencing target can be an alternative and constructive way to achieve policy demands.

Lastly, the importance of having local back-up was demonstrated by the case on land rights in Liberia. The CSO Working Group on Land Rights showed that it was only because communities had been mobilized for over a decade, that the global campaign was well received locally. Together, these examples show that amplified voices can reach multiple levels. Being people-led adds to the credibility of policy demands.

CONCLUSION

FINDING YOUR ENSEMBLE

The preceding parts of this publication told the stories of nine influencing networks that operate in a variety of contexts and on a variety of themes. These networks seek to influence solutions to complex problems across multiple levels of government. Guided by the three overarching learning questions articulated at the start of this publication, the compelling and engaging stories lead to a series of observations. The cases reveal factors that bring about mutually beneficial partnerships and how such partnerships work in practice. We also saw examples of capacity development, and how this is taken on in deliberate and less deliberate forms. Lastly, these cases gave us a series of insights into the role of the general public in setting the agenda for national and international decision-making arenas. Cases highlighted the importance of grounding an abstract political discourse with a human story and the importance of ensuring public support from affected communities for policy asks and subsequent implementation. Thereby it emerged particularly relevant to confirm that the policy ask is actually perceived to be a remedy for identified problems.

In this conclusion, we reflect on each of these matters, starting with a look at the role of diversity in networks and how this affects their effectiveness. Next, we move on to the question of what do mutually beneficial partnerships look like in practice? Subsequently, there is a reflection on the insights gained around the development of shared narrative and objectives of a network, as well as the role of capacity development in networks. Following that, we consider network links to the general public and the role they play in a network's activities. These reflections provide an opportunity to learn from the experience and actual practice of influencing networks.

Diversity and effectiveness

Mutually beneficial partnerships imply balance within the network and growth for all the individual member organizations. These partnerships facilitate synergies and complementarity, so the strength of one group offsets possible weaknesses in others. Such partnerships seek to make the best use of all the qualities brought to the network by participants, whether this is human resources with skills and knowledge, access to stakeholders (including communities or decision-makers), or financial resources. Each network seems to have developed its own unique way of making partnerships mutually beneficial.

The influencing networks draw members from various sectors and backgrounds. Depending on the theme or issue, members include the private sector, development-oriented and humanitarian-oriented CSOs, allies in government, research institutes, and the media. This diversity offers a rich palette of strengths that can be shared with the larger network, including access to different levels of decision-making and a public support base. The diversity also brings a wider range

of expertise into the network and enhances the credibility and leverage of the network itself in the eyes of target decision-makers (for example, *Influencing Sexual Health and Rights in Malawi*, Part 2).

Diverse networks seem to consciously search for a balance of actors working at national, regional and local levels. Ideally, this mix achieves a broad geographical spread (for example, *Localized Humanitarian Aid in Bangladesh*, Part 2). This broad spread helps to create public support for the network and its shared objectives. When we look at the types of member organizations we find that research institutes support evidence-based advocacy (for example, *Banning Nuclear Weapons*, Part 1), while political allies can help to obtain support for the policy demand in the decision-making arena (for example, *A Positive List for Pets in the EU*, Part 1). Cases targeting intergovernmental actors showed how international arenas could adopt domestic policy issues that prompt change at national and sub-national levels (for example, *Corporate Accountability for Human Rights and Environment*, Part 1). In conclusion, diversity within a network ensures complementarity in access, capacities and resources and even protects vulnerable members.

In our nine case studies, we saw that collaborations between different actors, such as policymakers, the private sector and civil society, are often loosely structured. This arrangement may be desirable and intentional. Despite these loose structures, choices made by the network affect all the network members. The case studies show that the degree of formalization and the governance structures do have implications. For instance, we saw networks that have experienced the readiness to formalize membership as a sign of commitment (for example, *A Positive List for Pets in the EU*, Part 1), while others emphasized the great strategic value of informal networks (*Women in the Afghan Police*, Part 3). Influencing networks embracing formal collaboration, emphasize the strong ties that make their partnership more focused and seemingly more effective. At the same time, in other networks informal collaborations are found important as they tend to offer weaker ties that can open up unexpected doors, provide inside information and inform strategic planning.

Most of the networks shared experiences of the importance of communication, both internal and external. Helping each other to communicate in ways that are sensitive to the cultural or organizational environment targeted by the communication can foster a mutually beneficial partnership. In summary, stakeholders have much to offer to each other, and influencing efforts are seemingly more effective when there is diversity within the network, especially when targeting national decision-makers. Each network operationalized the concept of mutually beneficial partnerships in their own way.

A shared narrative and related resources

As we have seen, diversity in the network adds to complementarity (see also Wessel et al., 2020), but it also adds to the complexity in defining the policy demand. Across all nine cases, there is a common thread that having a shared ambition

is the glue that binds influencing networks together, aids success and facilitates the commitment of members to support each other in good and bad times. Yet, defining and maintaining a common set of objectives is not a one-time exercise. It requires a continuous process of discussions, debates and consensus-building among the network members. Furthermore, carefully substantiated objectives must be represented by a concrete policy demand if they are to have an impact.

Several cases illustrate how the unique knowledge possessed by a network brings that network together and helps to shape a joint narrative and objectives. Examples of this include the perspectives that community members gained through outreach activities (Opposition to Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights Networks in Indonesia, Part 2) and the dedicated research commissioned as a network (Banning Nuclear Weapons, Part 1). Public support can draw in critical voices and increase the leverage of a network if the public debate is carefully nurtured and managed. However, as these cases show, it is not easy for a network to define a solid policy demand that is grounded in a carefully crafted, shared narrative that resonates with all members of the network and the targeted decision-makers. Whereas a shared narrative and objectives appeared pivotal for the success of the network, in several cases, it also proved to be important that network members accept each other's differences. For instance, in the case of animal protection submitted by AAP, several members opposed the existence of zoos, while others, including AAP, work with zoos in their programmes (Part 1). This difference in approach was openly discussed between members and thus did not become a barrier preventing these organizations from working together to achieve a positive list for animals in Europe. OECD Watch shared a similar experience. Not all members agreed on the role of the National Contact Points (Corporate Accountability for Human Rights and Environment, Part 1). In conclusion, strong, inclusive leadership that represents the diversity of the network is essential. Focused internal and external communication, as well as careful negotiations and independent branding, can help an influencing network to overcome challenges related to coherence in its narrative.

In the end, the process of defining a network's firm policy demand is often linked to the existence of windows of opportunity in the policy-making arena. These windows of opportunity can raise or lower the salience of a specific issue – for example, focusing attention on a policy dilemma, a piece of legislation or a political issue.

Having a position paper is not an end, but a beginning (Labovic, 2017). When a network sees its policy demand materialize, there is a need to shift the focus towards policy implementation. Some influencing networks indicated the difficulty in making the shift from an agenda-setting phase to a policy implementation phase, once the policy had been adopted (for example, Football and Land Rights for 3 Million People in Liberia, Part 3). This phase often creates new dynamics that require new roles and responsibilities among the network members. For networks that are less embedded in local practice, such as networks that target intergovernmental organizations or that focus on multiple levels, it can be challenging to

make this transition. Integrating influencing activities in programmes, for example, generally requires support for the roll-out of policies from institutions. One example of this is the implementation of the Female Integration Strategy in the Afghan police force (for example, *Women in the Afghan Police*, Part 3).

The strength of national influencing networks lies in their ability to integrate influencing into their development programmes, as this can boost the implementation of the policy. The cases targeting the intergovernmental level worked out arrangements to redistribute resources in favour of national-level actors so that they could reach out to local CSOs and strengthen the relationship with communities (for example, *Corporate Accountability for Human Rights and Environment*, Part 1). Another strategy adopted by networks to ensure the implementation of policies in practice is to use their links to political allies. Networks can often promote the implementation of a policy through their access to decision-makers, as described in *Localized Humanitarian Aid in Bangladesh* (Part 2). However, this approach can lead to tension between the network's independence and the strength of the partnership with 'inside' actors. This confusion of roles was a challenge for some influencing networks (for example, *Women in the Afghan Police*, Part 3). In some cases, a 'step-by-step' approach to implementation, in collaboration with officials, seemed to collide with the ambitions behind the influencing campaign. Sometimes, this may be unavoidable, but if networks fail to make this transition, achievements may come to nothing as a policy implementation gap occurs.

Developing capacity within the network

Capacity development within influencing networks can take different forms and can happen in a very deliberate manner as well as in a more ad hoc way. In some networks, capacity development is an integral part of the functioning of the network. For instance, networks build the capacity of small CSOs to amplify their combined voices, which builds up to the critical mass needed to create space for influencing. In other networks, the emphasis lies on the policy demand, and capacity development takes place through learning on the job in a relatively ad hoc manner. In cases like this, capacity development is a byproduct of the collaboration process. The influencing networks in this publication that target national governments tend to fall into the first category, while the networks targeting decision making arenas that (also) surpass the national level tend to fall into the latter category.

Having capacity development as a deliberate strategy integrated in a network's processes leads to increasing capacities among the network members. Several cases report a significant variation in the professional standards of CSOs. Thus, networks encourage and enable CSOs to support each other and build capacities. For example, larger CSOs in the NAHAB alliance built the capacity of local CSOs to deliver a localized humanitarian response (Part 2). The preceding parts also provide examples of how capacity development can be very technical in nature. ASV received technical training on data

security and the usage of social media after being the victim of a hoax (Part 2). And, for instance, we saw how the influencing network calling for the Global Financing Facility to be more inclusive, arranged for their Civil Society Coordination Group to organize informative and strategic webinars before and after each Investors Group meeting (Part 3). This group also presented webinars on key themes linked to the network members' interests. Such activities equip and align all members for the deliberations to come. In networks where capacity development is of a more ad hoc nature, value continues to be generated through the exchange of knowledge and expertise among members. For instance, members learn about operating in different cultural and organizational environments, or about longer term strategic planning (for example, A Positive List for Pets in the EU, Part 1).

In this context and linked to earlier reflection of the role of diversity in membership, is the added value that diversity brings in terms of learning through complementarity. This added value also goes beyond single influencing networks. Multiple networks around the same theme also learn from each other. For example, the GUSO programme facilitates South-South learning between influencing networks working on SRHR in Africa, organizing learning visits between SRHR Alliance Malawi and SRHR Alliance Uganda (Part 2). A second example is the ASV alliance, which joined up with other Indonesian alliances working on SRHR (Part 2).

Capacity development appears strongly connected to the dilemma of power. Mutually beneficial partnerships do not require a membership of entirely equal members measured in terms of know-how, access to decision-makers, credibility to influence and resources. Instead, mutually beneficial partnerships require all members to experience an increase of their capacity from being part of the network and, at the same time, contribute to the capacity development of others. Through a careful balancing act, networks can become self-sufficient and self-sustaining. The balance needs to be continuously adjusted, adapting to changing contexts, leadership changes and membership changes. To ensure an effective network that balances inequalities in power with capacity development, it helps to have clear governance structures in place for the network that are representative of the diversity present in the network. Several networks have indicated struggles with diversifying their leadership (for example, Banning Nuclear Weapons, Part 1) or creating a genuinely equal power balance when in fact the financial resources seem to come from one larger organization in the network (for example, Women in the Afghan Police, Part 3).

Engaging the public

Engagement of the general public is important in a variety of ways. Although the citizens' voice has varying levels of impact across national governments, strong public support amplifies the policy demand and strengthens its place on the political agenda (for example, Football and Land Rights for 3 Million People in Liberia, Part 3). With the digital revolution, social media

is playing an increasingly important role in influencing networks by mobilizing citizens and communicating the citizens' voices. Some of the case studies demonstrated that sometimes the voice of citizens has a greater weight than the voice of CSOs. One example is when CSOs are accused of being under international (external) influences through their funding mechanisms (for example, Opposition to Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights Networks in Indonesia, Part 2).

This means that it is vital for influencing networks to be rooted in their constituency. The constituency provides them with credibility and protection. Being people-led or having local back-up brings leverage and credibility to the network's work. Our cases acknowledge that there are many ways to engage the public. One approach is integrating influencing with service delivery as it creates legitimacy for influencing practices at the national level. This is illustrated by the two cases of sexual and reproductive health and rights in Indonesia and Malawi. Influencing networks targeting national decision-makers pay significant attention to ensuring that the voices of different constituencies are represented in their campaign. They pay attention to geographical coverage, demographic spread, and the involvement of community-based organizations, women's rights organizations, and youth-led organizations. Networks that have not yet engaged their constituency to its full extent if have plans to intensify efforts in this area (for example, Women in the Afghan Police, Part 3). Strategies around the citizens' voice in influencing networks that target the intergovernmental level or multiple levels range from efforts to bring the human story into an otherwise abstract or technical debate to strategies to bringing in public support as a political weight (for example, Banning Nuclear Weapons, Part 1).

At all levels of influencing, it appears important to combine a well-grounded evidence base drawn from research and practice, with a true human story. In this context, the media can also play an important role by providing a platform for the influencing network to share their thoughts with the wider public and create a positive boost to public support. Indeed, as we have seen, heterogeneous networks often collaborate on issues that are salient among the general public and which receive substantial media visibility.

Final remarks

This collection of cases was compiled to promote and facilitate reflection and learning within the fast-moving world of influencing. The inspiring stories contained within these cases are testimony to the diverse world in which influencing networks operate as well as the many dilemmas that these networks face. Several networks appear to have developed organically, or entire campaigns seem to have sprouted out of a coincidental meeting at a coffee bar somewhere far away. However, all of these networks made well thought through choices concerning their operating model, their governance structure, financial backing, how to work with diversity and inclusiveness principles, and how to ensure strong connections with the general public. Most importantly, a network must work around a common objective, a clear target for the network.

Several of the networks worked on their agility in order to move towards supporting an implementation phase once the policy demand is acquired.

As initiators of this publication, we are delighted by the enthusiasm shown for this publication by so many fellow practitioners and representatives of influencing networks from all over the world. We consider this enthusiasm a strong indicator of the hunger for learning about this field and, in particular, learning from practice. We are committed to dive deeper into several issues covered by this publication, also at the related learning events that will follow.

In conclusion, first, this collection of cases prompts further reflection and sharing of knowledge among practitioners and academics on factors to consider when determining which influencing strategy, or combination of strategies, is best employed in which situation, for which type of purpose and for which influencing target. One area that merits further investigation is the challenges arising from the effective use of the insider and outsider strategies. In addition, the role of digital platforms and social media in accelerating communication, broadening reach and reducing costs represents an increasingly important area. Technology, social media and artificial intelligence offer opportunities to gain leverage but come with their risks. There is also scope to learn more about mobilizing public support as it underpins influencing efforts across all levels of government and drives home the human story of every influencing topic. Finally, an area that also emerged as one requiring further research is that of governance models and in particular the question of how to equalize power differentials in networking practice when, for instance, imbalances persist within the network and between members in terms of access to finance, decision-makers, and knowledge. This context emphasizes the importance of exploring further how capacity development can be instrumental in creating mutually beneficial partnerships. The cases, and the conclusions drawn from them, demonstrate that there is energy and space to learn more. As authors of this publication, we are honoured and excited to have contributed, through this publication, to this learning milestone. Our eyes now turn to the horizon and the new lessons that will be part of that ongoing journey.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cao, X. (2009) Networks of Intergovernmental Organizations and Convergence in Domestic Economic Policies. *International Studies Quarterly*, 53, 1095–1130.

Chomel BB, Belotto A, Meslin F-X (2007). Wildlife, exotic pets, and emerging zoonoses. *Emerging Zoonotic Diseases*, 13(1), 6-11.

Claessen, A., de Lange, P. (2016). Lessons for supporting policy influencing in restrictive environments. *Development in Practice*, 26, 544-554.

Climate Action Network (2020). About CAN. Retrieved May 20, 2020, from <http://www.climatenetwork.org/about/about-can>

Cullerton, K., Donnet, T., Lee, A., Gallegos, D. (2018). Effective advocacy strategies for influencing government nutrition policy: a conceptual model. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 15(83). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12966-018-0716-y>

Don't Bank on the Bomb. (n.d.). About the report. Retrieved May 5, 2020, from <https://www.dontbankonthebomb.com/2018/about-the-report/>

Extinction Rebellion (2020). Join us. Retrieved May 20, 2020, from <https://rebellion.earth/join-us/>

Feilke M. (2010). German Experiences in Police Building in Afghanistan. GRIPS Policy Research Center Discussion Paper, 10(2), 3.

Ford, T. (2012). Liberia's Hasty Forest Sell-off Risks More Conflict. *The Guardian*. Retrieved May 28, 2020, from <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2012/jul/05/liberia-forest-sell-off-risks-conflict>

Fridays for Future (2020). Who we are. Retrieved May 20, 2020, from <https://fridaysforfuture.org/what-we-do/who-we-are/>

Global Financing Facility (2020). Where We Work. Retrieved May 14, 2020, from <https://www.globalfinancingfacility.org/>

where-we-work

Global Witness (2002). Logging Off: How the Liberian Timber Industry Fuels Liberia's Humanitarian Disaster and Threatens Sierra Leone.

Global Witness (2017). Liberian legislature must ensure Lands Rights Act protects rural landowners.

Green, D. (2016). How change happens., Oxfam University Press, New York, United States of America.

Guardian (2020). Peruvian leader appeals to watchdog over 'terrible harm' caused by oil firm. Retrieved May 18, from <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/mar/12/peruvian-leader-appeals-to-watchdog-over-terrible-harm-caused-by-oil-firm-aurelio-chino-oecd>

Hancock, L. (2013). Women and the Afghan Police: Why a law enforcement agency that respects and protects females is crucial for progress. Oxfam Briefing Paper, 173.

Heaney, M.T., Lorenz, G. M. (2013). Coalition portfolios and interest group influence over the policy process. Interest Groups & Advocacy, 2(3), 251-277.

Heaney, M.T. (2004). Outside the Issue Niche: The Multidimensionality of Interest Group Identity. American Politics Research, 32(6), 611-651.

Hojnacki, M. (1997). Interest groups' decisions to join alliances or work alone. American Journal of Political Science, 61-87.

ICAN. (n.d. a). ICAN's origins. Retrieved May 5, 2020, from https://www.icanw.org/ican_origins

ICAN. (n.d. b). People and Structure. Retrieved May 5, 2020, from https://www.icanw.org/people_and_structure

ICAN. (n.d. c). Become a partner. Retrieved May 5, 2020, from https://www.icanw.org/become_a_partner

IPBES (2019). Global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. IPBES secretariat, Bonn, Germany.

Junk, W. M. (2019). Co-operation as currency: how active coalitions affect lobbying success. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 1-20.

Labovic, M. (2017) 'EU Superlobby: winnen in Brussel', Vakmedianet, Deventer (The Netherlands).

Land Rights Now (2018). *Peace and Prosperity for Liberia: A People-Centred Land Rights Act*.

te Lintelo, D.J.H., Nisbett, N., Pittore, K. (2016). Multi-level Advocacy for Nutrition. *IDS Evidence Report*, 211.

Nobel Prize (n.d.). International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). Retrieved May 5, 2020, from <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2017/ican/facts/>

Obar, J. A., Zube, P., & Lampe, C. (2012). Advocacy 2.0: An analysis of how advocacy groups in the United States perceive and use social media as tools for facilitating civic engagement and collective action. *Journal of information policy*, 2, 1-25.

Oxfam Australia (2017). *How does networked civil society bring change? A meta analysis of Oxfam Australia projects and practices*. Evaluation report.

Oxfam (2018). *Influencing Policy and Civic Space: A meta-review of Oxfam's Policy Influence, Citizens Voice and Good Governance Effectiveness Reviews*. Evaluation report.

Oxfam (2019). *Influencing to tackle poverty and injustice: learning from the past, looking to the future*. Oxfam discussion papers.

Oxfam (2020). *Time to Care: Unpaid and underpaid care work and the global inequality crisis*. <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/worlds-billionaires-have-more-wealth-46-billion-people>

Perrault, T. (2003). Changing places: transnational networks, ethnic politics and community development in the Ecuadorian Amazon. *Political Geography*, 22, 61-68.

Pols, G. (2020). Lekkende pijpleidingen brengen Peruaanse Quechua-leider naar Nederland: "Er sterven mensen aan rare ziektes." *Trouw*. Retrieved 18 May, 2020, from <https://www.trouw.nl/economie/lekkende-pijpleidingen-brengen->

[peruaanse-quechua-leider-naar-nederland-er-sterven-mensen-aan-rare-ziektes-b5f4adb7/](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325111111-peruaanse-quechua-leider-naar-nederland-er-sterven-mensen-aan-rare-ziektes-b5f4adb7/)

Powless, B. (2012). An Indigenous Movement to Confront Climate Change. *Globalizations*, 9(3), 411-424.

Rights and Resources Initiative (2013). *Investments into the Agribusiness, Extractive and Infrastructure Sectors of Liberia: An Overview*. Washington, DC: Rights and Resources Initiative.

Rights and Resources Initiative (2017). *From risk and conflict to peace and security*.

Siakor, S. (2012). *Liberia: Uncertain futures: The impacts of Sime Darby on communities*.

Suroush, Q. (2018). *Assessing EUPOL Impact on Afghan Police Reform (2007-2016)*. AREU Research Paper, 5.

Sustainable Development Initiative (2019). *Implementing the Land Rights Law of Liberia: A Critical Test for Stakeholders*. Sustainable Development Initiative Briefing 08. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2007). *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP)*.

United Nations General Assembly (2016). *Resolution L.41: Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations*.

United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. (n.d.). *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons*. Retrieved May 5, 2020, from <https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/tpnw/>

United Nations (2016). *The Paris Agreement: Frequently Asked Questions*. Retrieved June 8, 2020, from United Nations: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2016/09/the-paris-agreement-faqs/>

United Nations. (n.d.). *Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations in 2016*. Retrieved May 5, 2020, from [https://www.unog.ch/80256EE600585943/\(httpPages\)/31F1B64B14E116B2C1257F63003F5453?OpenDocument](https://www.unog.ch/80256EE600585943/(httpPages)/31F1B64B14E116B2C1257F63003F5453?OpenDocument)

Volgy, T.J., E. Fausett, K.A., Grant, S. Rodgers (2008). *Identifying formal intergovernmental organizations*. *Journal of Peace Research*, 45(6), 849-862.

Warwick, C., Steedman, C., Jessop, M., Arena, P., Pilny, A., Nicholas, E. (2018). *Exotic pet suitability: Understanding some*

problems and using a labeling system to aid animal welfare, environment, and consumer protection. *Journal of Veterinary Behaviour*, 26, 17-26.

Wemos (2019). Connecting voices: Creating space for civil society engagement in the Global Financing Facility. Retrieved May 6, 2020, from <https://readymag.com/pirana/1391999/>

Wemos (2020). The Global Financing Facility: Fact Sheet February 2020. Retrieved May 6, 2020, from https://www.wemos.nl/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Wemos-Factsheet-Global-Financing-Facility_February-2020.pdf

Wessel, M., Naz, F., Sahoo, S. (2020). Complementarities in CSO Collaborations: How Working with Diversity Produces Advantages. *Voluntas*.

Worzi, A. (2018). CSOs Call for Passage of 2014 Land Rights Act. *The Daily Observer*. Retrieved June 10, 2020, from <https://www.liberianobserver.com/news/csos-call-for-passage-of-2014-land-rights-act/>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This publication is based on stories shared by nine influencing networks. First and foremost, we want to express our gratitude to all of these networks for sharing their stories with us – their willingness to share made this joint reflection possible. When we started with a call for proposals in the autumn of 2019, we received dozens of compelling stories of influencing networks operating on a variety of topics all over the world. We were struck by the encouraging messages indicating how interested people were in reflecting more on the work of influencing networks in order to learn from each other, facilitate informed choices and further good practice. This type of learning requires a certain degree of openness, and we are extremely grateful to all the case authors for their willingness to not only share stories about the journey and the wins but also to include their experiences with complex dilemmas and even failures.

A publication on networked approaches cannot be produced without working in a network ourselves. Many thanks for the extensive contributions and expertise of the following case authors: Md. Jahangir Alam, Maaïke Beenes, Fionuala Cregan, Maty Dia, Nur Hidavati Handavani, Mahedi Imran, Marian G. Ingrams, Aminu Magashi Garba, Ali Kaba, Jorrit Kamminga, Abdul Latif Khan, Myria Koutsoumpa, Nynke Kuperus, Rosana Lescrauwaet, Mariska Meurs, Precious Netsai Njerere, Marijke Priester, Joseph M. Wilde-Ramsing, Hastings Chilembwe Saka, Kadi Toure, Fita Rizki Utami, Saskia van Veen, Raquel García-van der Walle, and James Yarsiah. We much enjoyed our preparatory conversations and learned so much from your reflections and explanations. Thank you for sharing. Thank you Rik Linssen and Donné van Engelen for your insightful reviews. We also want to say a special thanks to the highly committed and knowledgeable members of our review committee: Erik Boonstoppel, Paul Engel, Sabine Herbrink, Velina Petrova, Gerhard Schuil, and Paul Shotton. We were first amazed by their enthusiasm and then taken aback by their dedication and commitment to the task. You have truly guided us throughout the process. We have been and still are extremely grateful for your support throughout the process.

This publication is part of the broader learning trajectory of the Strategic Partnership – Towards a Worldwide Influencing Network – between the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oxfam Novib and the Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations. We are grateful for the Ministry's financial support to this programme and sincerely hope that this publication will also be of use to the work of the Ministry.

Thanks to all the organizations supporting the development of case studies





Photo credit: Saikat Mojumder/Oxfam Novib

COLOPHON

© Oxfam Novib, July 2020

This publication was produced by Nynke Kuperus, Marieke Meeske and Saskia van Veen from the Impact Measurement and Knowledge team of Oxfam Novib – with the help of many others. For more information about our work, please visit <https://www.oxfamnovib.nl/kenniscentrum/impact-measurement-and-knowledge>.

Manuscript Editor: Chris St Pourçain

Communications Advisor: Hedwig de Coo

Communications Designer: Anouk Klinkers

Cover Photo: Valmedia, edited by Anouk Klinkers

Printed by: Drukkerij Vegron

This publication is printed with bio-ink on paper made from agricultural waste.

First edition, 400 copies

ISBN 978-90-6942-118-6

This publication is copyright protected, but the text may be used free of charge for advocacy, campaigning, education, and research, provided that the source is acknowledged in full. The copyright holder requests that all such use be registered with them for impact assessment purposes. For copying in any other circumstances, or for re-use in other publications, or for translation or adaptation, permission must be secured.

Disclaimer

Oxfam Novib has initiated this publication to contribute to public debate and to invite feedback on development and humanitarian policy and practice. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect Oxfam Novib's own viewpoint. The assumptions and reflections made are not reflective of the positions of any entity other than the authors of the case. Further, the reflections are valid at the time of writing and may change over time.

Published by Oxfam Novib in July 2020.

Oxfam Novib
P.O. Box 30919
2500 GX The Hague
The Netherlands
T +31 (0) 70 3421621
info@oxfamnovib.nl
www.oxfamnovib.nl

This book is a collection of stories about influencing networks working in a variety of thematic fields. It narrates the experiences of nine networks that work on issues such as land rights, the abolition of nuclear arms, animal rights and having more women in the police force, to name but a few. The publication captures practical and insightful experiences of influencing networks targeting decision-makers at the sub-national, national and international level or a combination thereof. The publication focuses on learning about partnerships and how these can be mutually beneficial within the context of a network. In addition, the stories reflect on the role of capacity development. Thereby illustrating how being part of a network can help organizations offset each other's weaknesses while also let organizations benefit from each other's strengths. Ultimately the collective capacity of the network is a determining factor in how impactful the network can be during the policy development and subsequent implementation phase. The nine cases presented in this publication reflect on their emerging network model, their evolving ways of working, their dilemmas, successes and indeed also their failures. This is a highly original publication with compelling stories from practice all over the world. It adds much value to the field of public affairs and international cooperation.

