

**Survey on NGOs and NGOs Networks working with Youth people within the European Project  
“Youth in the World” Action 3.2 n. 184824-3.2-IT-2010-R1 titled “Knocking on the doors of  
different cultures – New approach in Youth Exchange Methodology”**

This survey has been forwarded to many NGO, Public Body and Networks from 3 different Continents (Europe, Africa and South of America), and all institutions, organizations and institutions which collaborate with us are reported in the official website of the project (<http://www.knododic.tk>), and in the official website of Eurogems aps (<http://www.eurogems.eu>) as well as to our National Agency and to the European Commission in Brussels, in particular to:

***Youth in Action Programme***

Education, Audiovisual, Culture Executive Agency

YOUTH Unit (P6)

1, avenue du Bourget

B-1140 Bruxelles

Bureau: BOUR - 4/36

All information provided have been treated in compliance with national and international laws on privacy, and are used exclusively for statistical purposes in aggregate both analytical and by means of graphs.

Eurogems aps, applicant and coordinator of this above mentioned project, appreciates and thanks in advance all those help us in this survey for their cooperation and for their attention.

This is the questionnaire we submitted for this survey:

### Identification data of the organization or institution

NAME OF THE INSTITUTION .....

LEGAL STATUS

Private       Public

TYPE

Non-profit       NGO       National NGOs NETWORK

Public body at local or national level       International NGOs NETWORK

Public body at International level       Other (please specify).....

CITY .....

COUNTRY.....

YEAR OF FOUNDATION.....

OPERATIVE STAFF N° OF PEOPLE.....

E-mail.....

YOUTH TARGET GROUP (max 2 choices)

0 – 17

18 – 25

25 – 29

30 – 39

1) Are there any national Youth NGOs Networks in your region or in your country?

YES

NO

2) If yes, how many Youth NGOs Networks are there?

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

More than 7

3) If yes, what are the names of these Youth NGOs Networks?

- a..... f.....  
 b..... g.....  
 c..... h.....  
 d..... i.....  
 e..... l.....

4) How is financed your institution? And to what percentage of the total annual revenue?

- National government funds  Percentage (from 0 to 100) .....
  - Regional funds  Percentage (from 0 to 100) .....
  - Mercosur funds  Percentage (from 0 to 100) .....
  - European Union funds  Percentage (from 0 to 100) .....
  - Courses  Percentage (from 0 to 100) .....
  - Economies of scale  Percentage (from 0 to 100) .....
  - Self-financing, contributions of members  Percentage (from 0 to 100) .....
  - International government funds  Percentage (from 0 to 100) .....
  - Subsidies or bank loans  Percentage (from 0 to 100) .....
  - Public donors  Percentage (from 0 to 100) .....
  - Private donors  Percentage (from 0 to 100) .....
  - Micro credit  Percentage (from 0 to 100) .....
  - Other (please specify).....  Percentage (from 0 to 100) .....
- TOTAL 100

5) How is structured your institution?

Rigid hierarchical structure  Flexible hierarchical structure  Flexible not hierarchical structure

6) In which of these fields does it work (max 5 choices)?

- Social inclusion.....
- Poverty.....
- Support to people with fewer opportunities (i.e., children, disables, orphans)....
-

- Social integration.....
- Cultural development .....
- Active citizenship and participative democracy.....
- Equal opportunities (particularly for women).....
- Education.....
- Information and communication.....
- Sustainable development (social, environmental, economical).....
- Art and culture.....
- Support to marginalized people (i.e., unemployed, sick, poor).....
- Civil society empowerment and civil society dialogue promotion.....
- Human Rights.....
- Medical care and basic needs of youth and people in general.....
- Creating spaces for intercultural activities for and between young people.....
- Youth dialogue and intercultural dialogue.....
- Other (please specify).....

7) Is your institution affiliated with any national or international Network?

Yes  No

- If yes, what?

- |                              |                          |                                   |                          |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Anna Lindh Foundation        | <input type="checkbox"/> | Greek Youth Platform in Argentina | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Xuventude Galicia Net        | <input type="checkbox"/> | West African Youth Network        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Duke of Award                | <input type="checkbox"/> | Rede ANDI Brasil                  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (please specify) ..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |                                   |                          |
| Other (please specify).....  | <input type="checkbox"/> |                                   |                          |
| Other (please specify).....  | <input type="checkbox"/> |                                   |                          |
| Other (please specify).....  | <input type="checkbox"/> |                                   |                          |

8) What are the major youth problems to be tackled in your local area (max 5 choices)?

- Education.....
- Lack of dialogue.....
- Lack of food/water.....
- Boredom.....
- Insecurity.....
- False values.....

- Absence or lack of ethical and moral values.....
- Lack of affection and love.....
- Lack of hopes and ideals.....
- Lack of values and respect for the others.....
- Lack of a partner.....
- Lack of reference points.....
- Inability to have 'healthy' fun.....
- Drug.....
- Alcohol.....
- Lack of peace.....
- False myths.....
- Family disruption (i.e., divorced parents, lack of dialogue in the family).....
- Solitude.....
- Lack of work.....
- Trafficking and child abuse.....
- Absence or lack of hopes for the future.....
- Child labor.....
- Lack of money.....
- Lack of attention to spirituality.....
- Materialism.....
- Lack of infrastructures (i.e., roads, transports, schools, hospitals).....
- Lack or shortage of medicines and medical care.....
- Lack or poor housing.....
- Material poverty (lack of clothing, shoes, water, food, games, spaces).....
- Spiritual poverty.....
- Social disorientation.....
- Lack of creativity .....
- Other (please specify).....

9) What are the opportunities for young people that your institution is offering (max 5 choices)?

- |                                 |                                     |   |                                     |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Intercultural exchanges         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Education/training                                | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Training courses                | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Medical care                                      | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Seminars abroad                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Psychological and spiritual care                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Local volunteering or abroad    | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Practical help to overcome the daily difficulties | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Stages                          | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Youth forum                                       | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Use of Informative Technologies | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Creation of spaces for meetings and dialogue      | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Street work                     | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Intercultural events and party                    | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Other (please specify).....     | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Other (please specify).....                       | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

10) How are young people involved in decision-making processes & in your activities (max 5 choices)?

- Training and information meetings
- Presence on the Board of Directors
- Information through websites, e-mail, newsletter, mailing list
- Newspapers ads
- Radio, TV, mass media
- Word of mouth
- Seminars e conferences
- Involvement and dissemination in the schools (i.e., conferences)
- Involvement of local public institutions and dissemination (i.e., conferences)
- Involvement of local NGOs and dissemination (i.e., communications, conferences)
- Involvement of youth centers and dissemination (i.e., communications, conferences)
- Brochures
- Leaflets
- Video in internet – i.e., youtube
- Video - Projections – Video-conferences
- Newsletters
- Informative letters
- Interviews

- Social networks (i.e., Facebook, Orkut, Twitter)
- Chat (i.e., msn, yahoo messenger, icq, mirc, skype, gtalk)
- Internet blog, forum and mailing list (i.e., Yahoo groups)
- Mailing
- Meetings in public and private spaces (i.e., parishes, library, squares, meeting points of youth people)
- Sensitization to participatory democracy and active citizenship
- Other (please specify).....

11) Which are the strengths of the network to which you belong (max 5 choices)?

- Integration
- Communication and dialogue
- Cooperation
- Economies of scale
- Mutual assistance
- Flexible organization e strength of the network
- Information exchange
- Intercultural exchange
- Exchange and sharing of human resources
- Exchange and sharing of material resources
- Quick choices and speed decision-making
- Youth involvement in decision making
- Democratic choices
- Transparency of decisions and process information
- Funding and donation
- Mutual participation
- Cooperation
- Volunteering
- Solidarity
- Sense of belonging
-

Civic sense

Dialogue

Brotherhood

Free performance of voluntary activities

12) What are the weakness or where can they improve (max 5 choices)?

- |   |                          |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Lack of dialogue and communication            | <input type="checkbox"/> | Under-exploitation of economies of scale                  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Lack of transparency in decisions             | <input type="checkbox"/> | Limited exchange of information and resources             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Lack of involvement of youth people           | <input type="checkbox"/> | Decisions are taken undemocratic                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Inefficient and ineffective use of resources  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Centralization of decision-making powers                  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Lack of cooperation/coordination              | <input type="checkbox"/> | Limited cooperation                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Volunteering for consideration                | <input type="checkbox"/> | Little sharing of experiences                             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Little trust in others                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | Prevalence of personal interests over those of collective | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| High and rigid bureaucracy                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Rigid and slow decision-making processes                  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Too rigid and hierarchical structure          | <input type="checkbox"/> | Slow responses and relationships with third parties       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Slow internal feedbacks and relationships     | <input type="checkbox"/> | Limited human resources (quantitative sense)              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Limited material resources                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Limited human resources (qualitative sense)               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Lack of integration with other networks       | <input type="checkbox"/> | Lack of cooperation with public institutions              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Lack of cooperation with private institutions | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (please specify).....                               | <input type="checkbox"/> |

13) What is the impetus/motivation for network formation in your local and/or national area?

.....

.....

.....

.....

14) What benefits do members perceive to be associated with networking?

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.....

.....

15) What role can networks play in fragile environments?



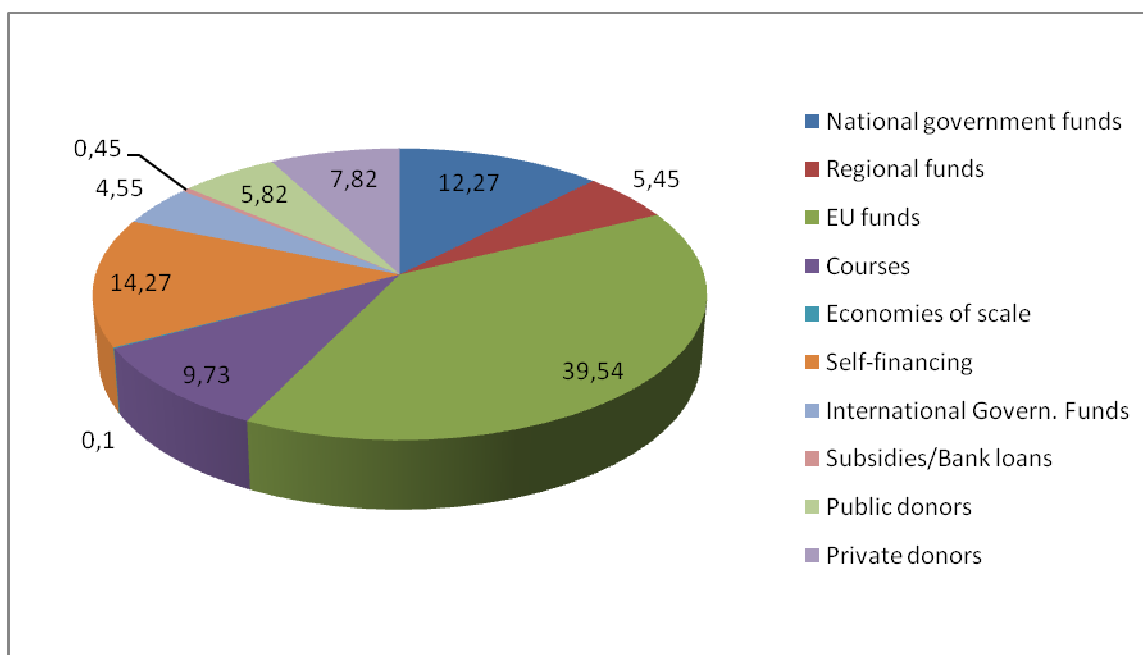


**Question n.3: If yes, what are the names of these Youth NGOs Networks?**

These are some of the names of Youth NGOs Networks we received:

REDU, ARCI, ARCI RAGAZZI, CESVOT, CEMEA, FILIGRANE, COESO, ROMANIAN YOUTH CORPS, ANOSR, BEST ROMANIA, Consiliul Tineretului in Romania, YMCA Romania, Cercetasii Romaniei, ASER - Asociatia Studentilor Economisti din Romania, ELSA Romania, SSE, ASS - Asociatia Studentilor Stomatologi din Romania, FASER - Federatia Asociatiilor Studentilor Economisti din Romania, Euro<26 Romania, AEJEEE, Millenium Center, Youth Action for Peace, TANZANIA YOUTH COALITION, TANZANIA YOUNG PEER ASSOCIATION, TAMEYODA, TANGO, MaMa, CRDM, A RED ARGENTINA DE COOPERACION, Eurodesk, Viração, Rede Sou de Atitude, Rede jovem, Rede CEP – Comunicação, Educação e Participação, Rede Arte de Transformação Social (RayTS), Rede de Jovens Comunicadores, Rede Juventude Cidadã, REJUMA.

**Question n.4: How is financed your institution? And to what percentage of the total annual revenue?**



National government funds	12,27
Regional funds	5,45
EU funds	39,54
Courses	9,73
Economies of scale	0,10
Self-financing	14,27
International Govern. Funds	4,55
Subsidies/Bank loans	0,45
Public donors	5,82
Private donors	7,82
<b>Total</b>	<b>100,00</b>

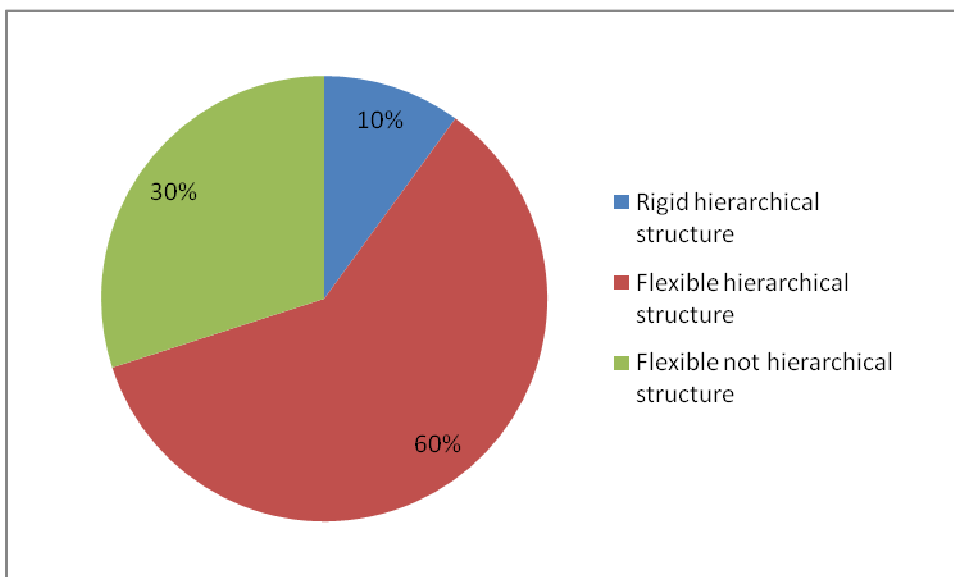
For private European NGOs EU funds are the main source of financing. For them another good resource is the self-financing, and also they are supported by managing courses.

Public bodies and public organization receive the main grant from National and Regional governmental funds. Public NGOs receive grant from public and private donors.

Subsides, bank loans, economies of scale have got a minimum impact in the overall balance of the interviewed organization.

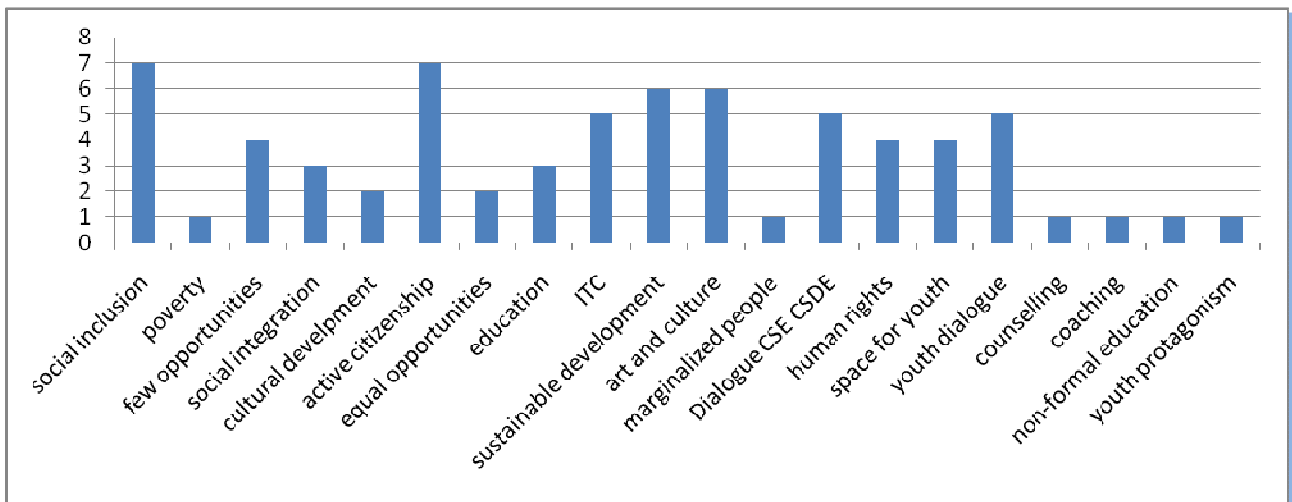
Nobody of the interviewed organization uses the financial tool of microcredit.

**Question n.5: How is structured your institution?**



The flexible not hierarchical structure is typical just of some no-profit private NGOs, while most of them prefer a flexible hierarchical structure. Rigid hierarchical structure is typical of public bodies and governmental institutions. The structure of each NGOs is full of meaning to understand the flexibility of making decision processes.

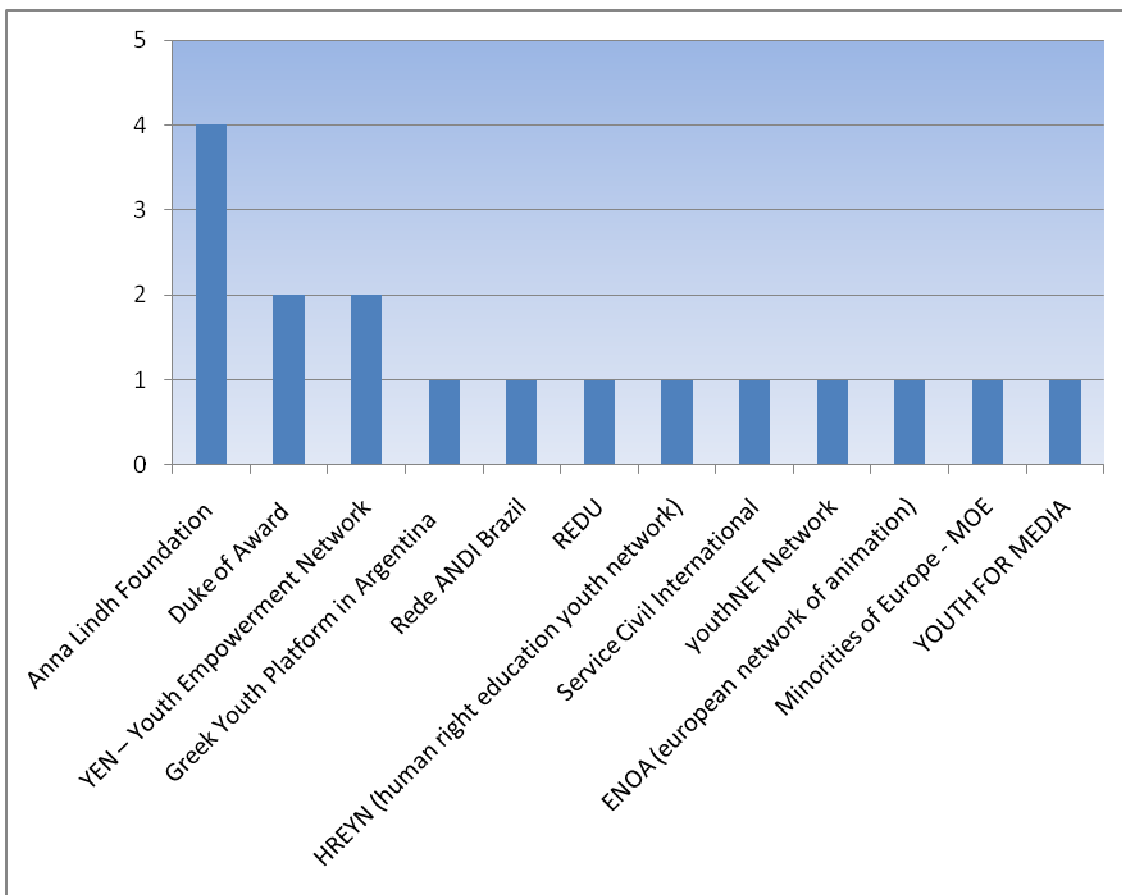
Question n.6: In which of these fields does it work?



The main fields are social inclusion, active citizenship, sustainable development, art and culture. Other interesting fields are Information Technology & Communication, Civil Society Dialogue and youth dialogue., but also human rights, space for youth and support to people with fewer opportunities. Poverty is a field of application typical of African NGOs.

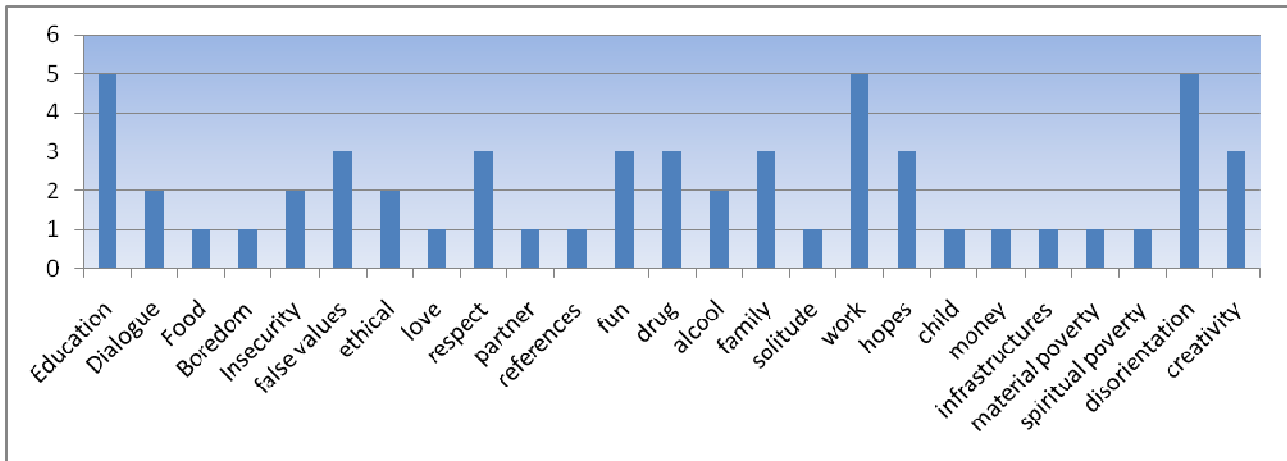
Question n.7: Is your institution affiliated with any national or international Network?

Yes 70% No 30%



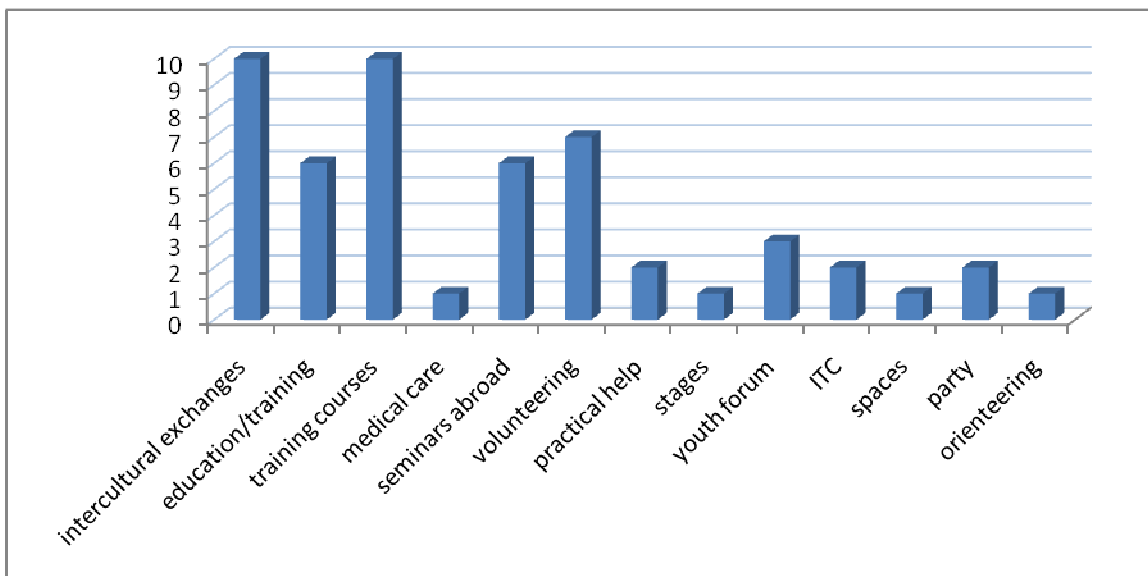
The main affiliation of interviewed NGOs in Europe concern with Anna Lindh Foundation, the programme Duke of Award and YEN – Youth Empowerment Network. In Brasil very interesting is ANDI network.

**Question n.8: What are the major youth problems to be tackled in your local area?**



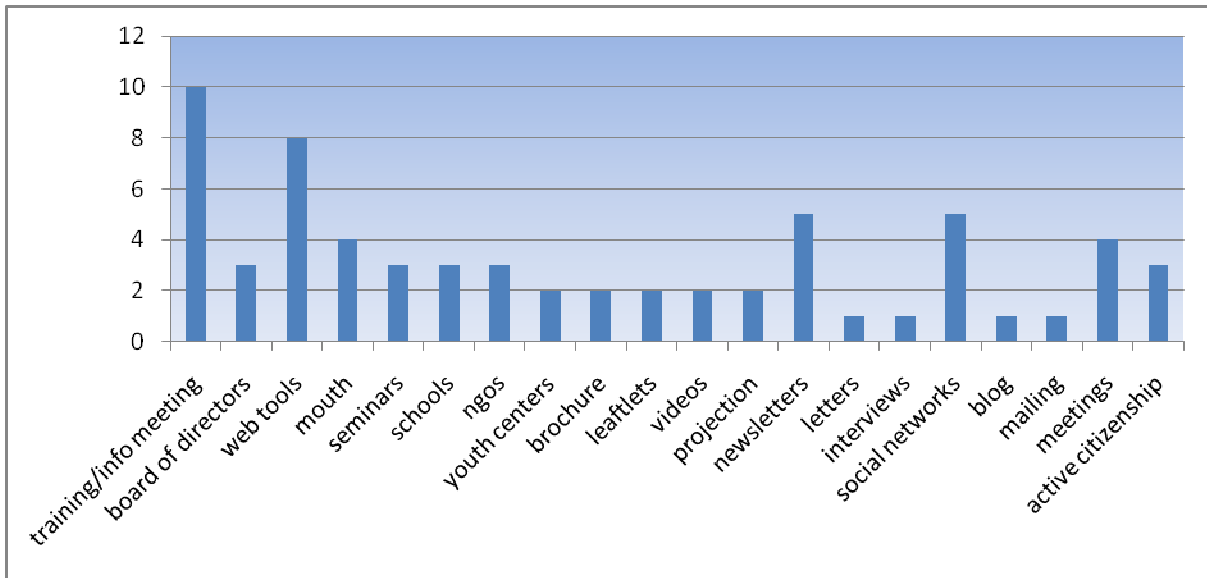
The major youth problems to be tackled are education, lack of work and social disorientation. Other sensitive problems are the false values, the lack of values and respect for the others, the inability to have 'healthy' fun, alcohol & drug, family disruption, the lack of hopes for the future and the lack of creativity.

**Question n.9: What are the opportunities for young people that your institution is offering?**



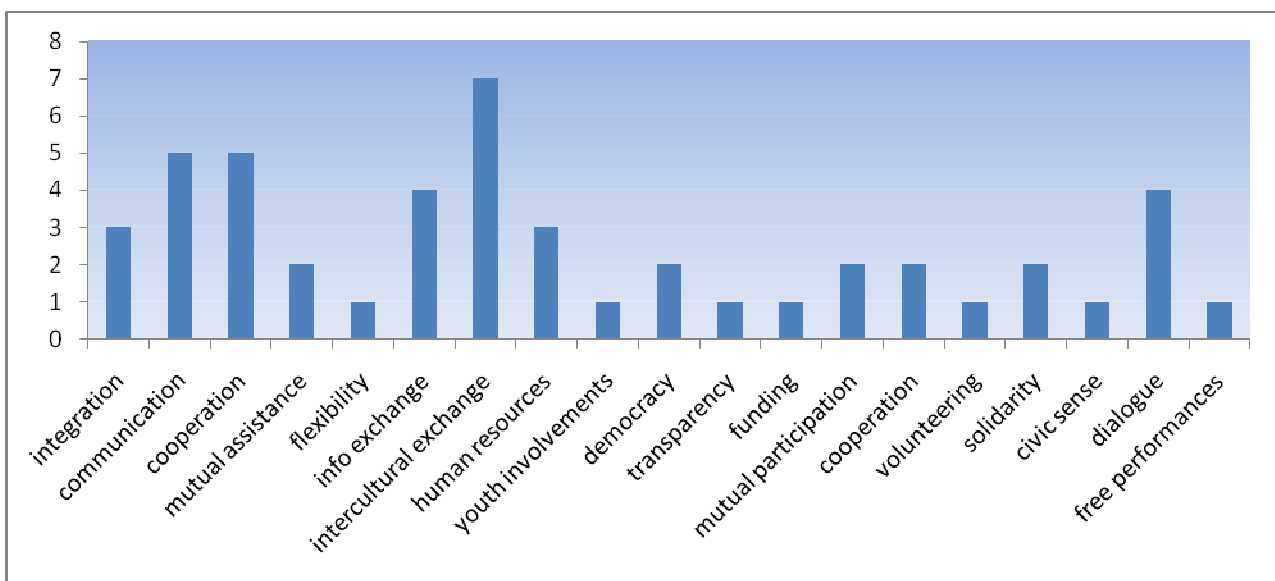
The main opportunities for youth offered by the interviewed organizations are intercultural exchanges, training courses, volunteering, seminars abroad, education & training,

**Question n.10: How are young people involved in decision-making processes & in your activities?**



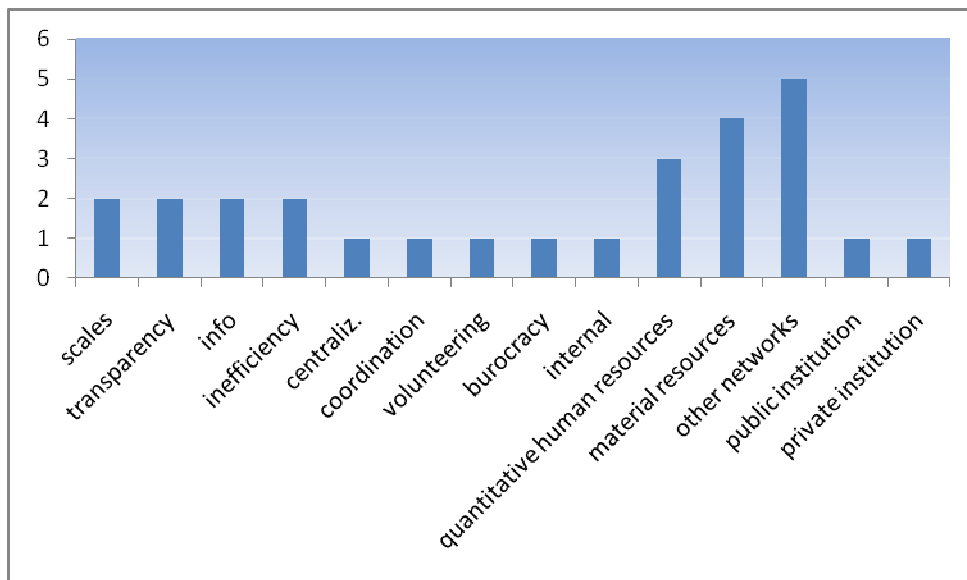
The young people are involved in decision-making processes and in the activities of the interviewed organization through training and informative meetings, web tools as newsletters, social networks, website, mailing list. In some cases they are involved through meetings in public and private spaces (i.e., parishes, library, squares, meeting points of youth people), and through word of mouth.

**Question n.11: Which are the strengths of the network to which you belong ?**



It is very clear from the survey results that for the interviewed organizations the strengths of the networks to which they belong are first of all the intercultural exchange, and then the cooperation and the communication. Very important points are the dialogue and the exchange of information.

Question n. 12: What are the weakness or where can they improve?



The main weakness are the limited quantitative human resources, the limited material resources and the lack of integration with other networks.

Question n. 13: What is the impetus/motivation for network formation in your local and/or national area?

I network nascono per operare in modo sinergico e per condividere sia prassi che risorse.

*Accademia Europea di Firenze – Italia*

ARDR has gained consistent experience in managing EVS group projects in local communities and in developing instruments for quality and sustainability in EVS projects. The motivation for network formation in the local area is to expand the inter-culturality of EVS projects.

*Association for Rural Development (ARDR) – Romania*

O surgimento de redes no Brasil está ligado ao contexto histórico da década de 1980, época em que a democracia começa a se fortalecer no país. Marcos como o movimento “Diretas Já”, em que a sociedade se mobilizou para lutar em prol da eleição direta para Presidente da República e a aprovação da Constituição Federal de 1988, conhecida como a Constituição Cidadã pelo compromisso com os direitos

humanos (em especial de crianças e adolescentes ao colocá-los como prioridade absoluta), impulsionaram uma maior organização social de pessoas e entidades em torno de causas sociais. Pouco tempo depois, em 1990, a mobilização social passa a contar com outra conquista: a promulgação do Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente, uma lei reconhecida internacionalmente por visar à garantia dos direitos infanto-juvenis. A consolidação do Terceiro Setor no Brasil ganhou fôlego e as instituições passaram a se agrupar, mesmo que informalmente, em busca do fortalecimento de suas causas. As articulações foram construídas a partir da rede de compromissos sociais e da visão comum sobre determinada ação social com o objetivo de construir parcerias que possibilitassem a junção de ideias, competências e iniciativas. Nesse contexto, a Rede ANDI Brasil surge no ano de 2000 como uma articulação de organizações que percebem e disseminam o papel crucial que a informação de qualidade tem na promoção e garantia dos direitos infanto-juvenis.

*Instituto Recriando – Sergipe - Brasil*

Ayudar a los jóvenes a independizarse. Dar la posibilidad de conocer otras culturas, fomentar la creatividad. Una mayor capacitación en el ámbito laboral. Inculcar los valores democráticos. Potenciar el respeto a distintas culturas.

*Dirección Xeral de Xuventude e Voluntariado – Galicia – Spain*

Grass root motivation; organizations form the network, later financed/supported by government.

*Zavod Voluntariat – Slovenia*

Unless you belong to a foundation that is funded by a big company, networking helps you by giving you the chance to get trained for free. That's one of the main reasons why you – as a volunteer – may want to get involved in a network. Thus, networking is popular – I guess. (Though besides my volunteer job in my NGO, I also have 2 other jobs in order to make an investigation on this ;o )

*Agenda Globo 21 – Santa Fè - Argentina*

The organizations in our local and national area are getting more and more aware of the positive impact that their membership into a network could bring. That is why recently they look for liaisons and networking possibilities, which could give them opportunities for development and provide them with support in various aspects.

*International Initiatives for Cooperation – Bulgaria*

No formula exists for how and why network develops. Network formation in our local area was instigated by external, internal sources, for practical or value-based reasons. The impetus for network formation in our local area is resulting from both the top down and from the bottom up factors.

These factors includes the following:

- Leadership.
- governance and management,
- Joint learning.
- Mutually beneficial partnership with donors.

Our network is effective as it has:-

- Dynamic membership and structure.
- Committed to excellence.
- Democratic decision-making processes.

Kilimanjaro Hope Organization is not yet linked to other networks established however it is in the process of establishing a link to them. We have our local network which links different youth groups from different areas within our operational limits. Our network is meant to meet the needs of our members who are vulnerable to poverty, lack of education, unemployment, diseases (HIV/AIDS, Malaria), hunger, lack of capital, Child labor, social exclusion, alcohol, trafficking, lack of water, and family disruption. Our network is not only a response to a very specific stimulus and time-bound but also with the intention of being sustainable in the long run and it constantly assesses all element of their functioning. We believe that considering the sustainability of benefits, such as the building of strong social capital, is a more useful concept to use in relation to networks than the sustainability of structure.

*Kilimanjaro Hope Organization*

#### Question n.14: What benefits do members perceive to be associated with networking?

O fortalecimento da defesa e disseminação das causas em que atua, a troca de conhecimentos e de experiências, a possibilidade de ter acesso a visões plurais e diversificadas, o desafio constante da gestão compartilhada e democrática e o crescimento que tais situações possibilitam são apenas alguns dos pontos fortes da atuação em rede. Em rede é possível, ainda, exercer um controle horizontal entre as partes, com divisão de atribuições e responsabilidades e ampliação da sua esfera de contatos e conexões com outras instituições. Há uma interdependência positiva, em que é preciso pensar obrigatoriamente no coletivo. Isso gera um fazer social ainda mais comprometido entre as organizações não governamentais. A organização que faz parte de uma rede, portanto, compreende que para alcançar seus objetivos é preciso cooperar para o sucesso das demais. O trabalho em rede permite ainda o compartilhamento de uma identidade reconhecida e de credibilidade e a possibilidade de estabelecer novas relações nacionais e internacionais, que de modo singular as entidades poderiam não alcançar.

*Instituto Recriando - Brasil*

Están bien informados sobre las posibilidades educativas, culturales, sociales. Tienen posibilidades de conocer otras culturas.

*Dirección Xeral de Xuventude e Voluntariado - Spain*



I membri hanno il beneficio di avere sostegno nelle azioni che fanno da altre organizzazioni o persone del network, poter scambiare esperienze, materiali e documenti.

*Accademia Europea di Firenze - Italy*

Strengthening of organizational profiles in their countries; Access to a broad range of opportunities offered by the other partners and financing institutions; Exchange of information, competences, knowledge, working methods; International recognition; Consistent human and material resources; Common strategic approach towards stakeholders; Empowerment of a new structure working for a common goal.

*Regional Association for Rural Development (ARDR) - Romania*

Spreading of information, cooperation, human resources...

*Zavod Voluntariat – Ljubljana - Slovenia*

As previously mentioned, I guess free training might be one of the most important reasons for networking.

*Agenda Globo 21 - Argentina*

The benefits that motivate organizations to get into a network the most are related to share of information, share of know-how and experience, possibilities for sustainable and fruitful partnership, possibilities for cooperation with other networks and institutions, opportunities to implement and organize projects and initiatives with vaster and bigger impact, support, funding opportunities.

*International Initiatives for Cooperation - Bulgaria*

#### **The Benefits of Network Membership:**

The benefits that are perceived to be associated with network are plentiful. Some of the benefits for network members are: increased access to information; expertise and financial resources; increased efficiency; a multiplier effect, which increases the reach and impact available to member organizations; solidarity and support; and increased visibility of issues, best practices, and underrepresented groups.

Other important perceived benefits are:- risk mitigation, reduced isolation, and increased credibility, particularly for developing NGOs such as Kilimanjaro Hope Organization.

There are significant risks to network membership as well, so NGOs that are participating in a network should undertake a cost/benefit analysis to determine whether or not network participation will meet their particular needs.

## The Benefits of Networks

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There are a number of general perceived benefits that make networks attractive to both NGOs and donors. It is important to reinforce, however, the fundamental voluntary nature of network membership. If members do not benefit from participation, they will cease to participate, and if the feeling is widespread, the network will cease to function. Recognizing the concrete benefits that members receive from network membership is therefore a crucial tool for members and leadership to use to evaluate how well the network is functioning (i.e., meeting its members' needs).

### Most Commonly Cited Benefits for Members are the following:-

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- 1) Increased Access** – One set of benefits to network membership comes from increasing access: to information, expertise, financial resources, etc.
- 2) Increased Efficiency** – By leveraging their numbers and allowing for some specialization based on comparative advantage, network members can reduce costs, as well as duplication of efforts. At the same time, the sharing of lessons learned and best practices can keep NGOs from reinventing the wheel every time they undertake new activities.
- 3) A Multiplier Effect** – Network membership can achieve greater accomplishments through utilization of the multiplier effect, which is created by effective networks. As mentioned earlier, since the value of the network is greater than the sum of its parts, individual member NGOs can achieve farther reach and greater impact in relation to their own organizational goals when they participate in networks. When one considers the reality that many NGOs belong to several different networks, it is not difficult to see how this multiplier effect can benefit NGOs on a variety of levels.
- 4) Solidarity and Support** – Interestingly, several authors mention the development of a sense of solidarity and support as an important benefit that NGOs receive from their participation in networks (International Council of AIDS Service Organizations 1997; Nuñez and Wilson-Grau 2003). However, this idea did not come up during any of our interviews with network representatives or in the survey responses.
- 5) Increased Visibility** – Increasing visibility of issues, good work and best practices, and contributions of underrepresented groups (such as youth or rural women) was mentioned quite often as a benefit during our communication with the networks. However, this idea appeared less frequently in the literature we examined.

### Less Cited Benefits

All of the benefits mentioned above resonate with the international development community's expectations of the benefits effective networks offer, but we discovered that there are a number of less thought-about benefits that are equally important.

- 1) Risk Mitigation** – This benefit did not come up in our communication with the networks. Levinger and Mulroy maintain that partnerships mitigate the risks associated with development projects by supplying diverse skills, contacts, and experiences, which in turn allow organizations to become more adept at responding to changing environments (2004). Perhaps the reason that risk mitigation did not come up in our communication with the networks is that too often risks are seen as something to be undertaken as a prerequisite for joining a network. It is possible that risk mitigation has not been adequately considered as a possible motive for network membership or formation.
- 2) Reduced Isolation** – Another less commonly considered benefit that came up in our communication with networks but not in the literature is that of reduced isolation. Through networking, individuals, NGOs, and communities in even the most remote of locations can tap into the resources, ideas, and inspiration of a global civil society.
- 3) Increased Credibility** – Since many types of networks have some form of regulated membership, participation in a network can open doors for developing NGOs to both the policy and donor communities.

This association assures other NGOs and networks considering partners that the NGO will be a capable contributor to a partnership.

*Kilimanjaro Hope Organization - Tanzania*

**Question n. 15: What role can networks play in fragile environments?**

O trabalho em rede requer uma atuação cujo olhar esteja voltado para o coletivo. Quando a organização está dentro de uma rede, busca não só captar novos conhecimentos e parcerias, mas também repassá-los para as organizações com as quais atua. A fragilidade de uma organização impacta diretamente nas demais que compõem a rede. Há uma ligação forte entre todas as organizações que compõem uma rede, especialmente no que diz respeito à imagem e à credibilidade. Da mesma forma, quando uma região/estado ou país que possui representações de uma rede enfrenta desafios pertinentes a área de atuação/interesse das organizações da rede, é possível garantir uma maior mobilização social, visibilidade, agregar novos apoiadores e aprimorar as metodologias e práticas através do compartilhamento de olhares.

*Instituto Recriando -Brasil*

Los jóvenes aprovechan su tiempo libre de forma mas beneficiosa para su desarrollo personal. Fortalecer el diálogo y los lazos culturales entre las personas.

*Dirección Xeral de Xuventude e Voluntariado - Spain*

Avere un maggiore impatto sugli enti pubblici e sulla società civile.

*Accademia Europea di Firenze - Italy*

Strengthening the partner's profile in their environments through the exchange of competences, innovative working methods, knowledge; through association and collaboration with experienced structures; through the intake of human and material resources; through mobilizing and activating local structures by expanding the pole of competences; etc.

*Regional Association for Rural Development (ARDR) – Romania*

Networks could serve as a stable platform that provides the organisations with support in terms of resourceful, operational and financial aspect. It could facilitate and create useful partnerships and reinforce the member organisations. It could increase the capacity of the organisations itself by creating preconditions for joint collaborative actions which could have more sustainable and effective outcomes.

Unify the strength of the NGO's.

*Zavod Voluntariat – Ljubljana – Slovenia*

It's hard to know. I guess the importance of networks is always high, especially in developing countries where even the directors of NGO's are volunteers and taking part of larger associations might increase organizational synergies. Though these networks are usually informal, and their objectives might not be clear enough.

*International Initiatives for Cooperation - Bulgaria*

## **Networks in Fragile Environments.**

### ***A Definition of Fragile Environments***

As articulated earlier, network formation and development is shaped considerably by the context in which the need arises, and it is not possible to apply a cookie-cutter model of network development that will work in all environments. Nowhere is this clearer than in the consideration of networks in fragile environments. By fragile, we mean most particularly *environments that are plagued by conflict, in transition, or are post-conflict*, although there are a number of other factors, such as famine or natural disaster conditions, that may render an environment fragile for a more limited period of time. To date, little research has been done that has specifically examined the role of networks in fragile environments, yet there is no question that characteristics of these environments may help and hinder network formation and development. We would like to offer some limited comments on networks in fragile environments, while also calling for targeted research in this area.

### **Social Capital: How Important is It in Fragile Environments?**

This study has already highlighted the importance of social capital in the effective functioning of networks. Where there are high amounts of trust, respect, and transparency among actors, the networks that form out of these bonds are almost always more effective than those that have been engineered. Successful networking, however, leads to the trust, respect, and transparency that form the backbone of social capital. The question remains then: is social capital a prerequisite or an outcome? We believe that it is both. Numerous studies and thought leaders have expressed the importance of social capital to network formation. And as one thought leader, Iain Guest, emphatically declared, "Social capital is an inevitable, irrevocable, and irreversible output" of successful networks (interview). It is the latter point which makes the case that even networks that are initiated by external forces, such as donors or international organizations, or what we have been calling "engineered" networks, have the potential to be quite effective. The difference is that a great deal of care must be taken to foster and develop social capital where it is not already in abundance. This reality is of extreme importance when addressing network development in fragile environments. As Alison Gilchrist explains, "[w]ell functioning communities possess a range of capacities for absorbing or adapting to change, managing internal tensions, and generating (and dissolving) a variety of forms for collective action" (2004). In fragile environments, communities are anything but well-functioning. Humanitarian emergencies, particularly those driven by conflict, break the bonds that have kept communities together, and create environments where the trust that underlies social cohesion is destroyed as individuals and groups enter survival mode. When conflicts contain an ethnic, political, or religious dimension, very often societies become stratified along those divisions. This trend can continue long into transition and post-conflict stages.

## *Networks in Fragile Environments*

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One largely unexamined category of networks is those that operate in fragile environments. Humanitarian emergencies, particularly those driven by conflict, break the bonds that have kept communities together and create environments where the trust that underlies social cohesion is destroyed as individuals and groups enter survival mode. However, effective networks in any environment can encourage the development of social capital. Effective networks can help to increase communication among various constituencies that may then buffer resistance to nationalist or extremist agendas. These productive elements of networks can be leveraged even further when networks are specifically geared toward conflict mitigation. Although most networks in fragile environments are not strong enough to significantly advance social change, they have the potential to do so with the appropriate resources and assistance. In our local area, fragile environments include, leeward areas in Same affected by drought, water sources, forests, mountains, agriculture on steep slopes, areas with bad cultural practices, sex workers centers, where people are affected by famine, areas where people are idle, all these environments are fragile and they need attention to bring about social change. sacrificed (Peer Learning Event, 7/22/04). NGOs considering network membership must also be honest and realistic with themselves about the degree of interdependence that they are willing to accept. Many organizations are willing to engage in more informal, sharing relationships, but may be reluctant to cede any autonomy through a formal network governance structure if there is no history of working together and little or no social capital built. Other problems may arise with networks. One is that, if poorly constructed and managed, networks can create more work than they reduce, and thus fail. Another potential problem is that members can suffer a loss of identity if they feel that they are not represented sufficiently in the network. A related concern is the potential for misrepresentation if the leadership or certain members speak for the network inappropriately. Along the same line, networks that face this problem may not build the capacity of members to speak for themselves. Finally, placing attention at the network level may take some attention and energy away from the grassroots or local levels. Networks are clearly not the automatic solution for development needs in every context. With sufficient support and careful attention to the potential pitfalls described above, however, it is possible to take advantage of the diversity and flexibility inherent in networks and construct them in ways that will maximize the potential for achieving real benefits.

### **The Importance of Networks in Fragile Environments**

Networks take on a dimension of extreme importance in fragile environments because the voids left by weak, corrupt, or nonexistent governments create numerous situations in which collaboration is essential for social change (Advocacy Project website). In precisely these environments, however, networks often have a hard time flourishing because of the absence of strong social capital (Sarah Earl, interview, August 17, 2004). Oftentimes, the networks that exist in fragile environments are donor-inspired and created to operate temporarily during a crisis situation. As a result, these types of networks may not have any real constituent base on which to operate effectively (Beryl Levinger, interview, August 20, 2004). There is a real danger that, if not supported in the development of social capital and effective network governance, networks in fragile environments can be used as a platform for a particular political leader or group (Emmanuel Bombade of WANEP, interview, August 13, 2004). Increased communication through globalization can provide another threat when it results in institutionalization of radical groups or destructive societal elements (Ivanov 1997.) Interestingly, Ivanov points out that while it appears that informally structured networks may be received more favorably in fragile environments, evidence from a study of NGOs in the former Soviet Union shows otherwise. He states, “[i]nformal networks and isolated [NGOs] are more vulnerable to maltreatment and even persecution than the politically connected and firmly institutionalized networks with formal structure, and especially early warning [NGOs] collaborating with the governmental agencies on a permanent basis” (1997). This is yet another reminder that networks

in any environment, and particularly fragile ones, must be responsive to the unique context, including all of the challenges and opportunities that the context presents.

### Networks as a Conflict Prevention Measure

There is a great deal of anecdotal evidence that networks in fragile environments can serve as a conflict prevention measure. The diversity, transparency, and trust that underlie effective networks can help to increase communication among various constituencies that may buffer resistance to nationalist or extremist agendas. These resources can be leveraged even further when networks are specifically geared toward conflict mitigation or peace-building. Peace-building networks have flourished around the world and exist at local, national, regional, and global levels. One of the networks in this study, WANEP, provides a strong example of a peace-building network that operates at the national and regional levels. WANEP's experience has shown that its national networks are stronger and more effective in countries that are in or have recently emerged from active conflict. Because the threat is so potent, peace-building takes on a priority and relevance that has been more difficult to generate in other states that are immersed in more muted or submerged conflicts. There are numerous global networks that support peace-building undertaken throughout the world, such as the Alliance for International Conflict Prevention and Resolution and Women Waging Peace, just to name a couple. These networks serve as a vital source of knowledge generation, advocacy, and support for peace-building that helps to reduce isolation and connect peace-builders globally. One study of peace-building has shown that, in general, NGOs that are oriented toward conflict prevention are "as a rule, disconnected and under resourced" (Ivanov 1997). Networks can play a valuable role in leveraging resources, bridging gaps, and strengthening communities in fragile environments that should be encouraged and supported. An added advantage cited by Ivanov is that peace-building networks are in a prime position to serve as early warning advocates, and may be able to draw attention and resources to help stem conflicts before they become tragic (1997).

### Networks as a Stabilizing Influence

Local level networks in fragile environments can also be a stabilizing influence and build on existing social capital to provide avenues of communication for various stakeholders, even when not specifically formed for conflict prevention or resolution. One such powerful example of this is found in a multilaterally supported project in Macedonia called the Partners for Economic Development in Macedonia (PRiSMa). PRiSMa began in 1999 and fostered partnerships among local government officials, businesses, trade unions, civil society organizations, and traditionally marginalized groups such as women, ethnic minorities, and the disabled. These groups aimed to improve social capital. When escalating near-war tensions in 2001 resulted in the US Embassy ordering the departure of all American citizens, PRiSMa continued to implement its activities and was able to withstand the fragile environment. An evaluation of its success found that the multi-stakeholder formed implementation teams had built up enough social capital prior to the outbreak of war to air grievances, find constructive ways to work through a shortage of resources, and weather conflict by building a sustainable local community development strategy. The PRiSMa processes thus provided a neutral forum in which community members could meet in a positive atmosphere to work past ethnic and religious divisions to focus on the common issue of job creation and economic development (Information provided by Christina Thomas).

### The Potential of Networks in Fragile Environments

There is a great potential for networks in fragile environments to have significant impact in advancing social change and possibly even in preventing or mitigating conflict. It is clear, however, that most networks in fragile environments are not currently in a position to do so effectively. A great deal of support is necessary to provide networks in these environments with the resources, training, and knowledge sharing that will

enable them to first function effectively administratively and organizationally, and then to effect change in their communities (Iain Guest, interview, September 22, 2004; Ivanov 1997).

*Kilimanjaro Hope Organization*

**Question n. 16: What is the perceived impact of networks on NGO capacity?**

As organizações que atuam em rede tem um maior potencial de alcance e disseminação de suas causas. Ao ingressar numa Rede de organizações que possui respaldo e credibilidade, a capacidade de alcance e mobilização social da entidade tende a se fortalecer. A Rede ANDI Brasil possui um perfil de rede autônoma, ou seja, as organizações que dela fazem parte não estão subordinadas umas as outras, mas sim possuem uma relação de interdependência em que todas tem o mesmo poder de voz e voto quanto às deliberações. Desse modo, as organizações são estimuladas a desenvolverem ainda mais seus pontos fortes e corrigirem seus pontos considerados fracos com o intuito de manter o mesmo patamar de atuação e incidência política que as demais entidades parceiras. As ONGs que ingressam em redes desse modelo são estimuladas a desenvolver ainda mais suas capacidades, mas sem perder de vista seus objetivos específicos. As organizações da Rede ANDI Brasil se articulam em torno de uma idéia (a promoção dos direitos da criança e do adolescente através da Comunicação e Mobilização Social). É importante frisar que, embora sofram influência da imagem coletiva da rede, as identidades individuais são mantidas. Buscou-se a criação de uma identidade própria da rede, em que a gestão é compartilhada e as deliberações sobre ingresso de novos membros se mantem abertas mediante aprovação do coletivo. Outro desafio estrutural da Rede ANDI Brasil que está ligada diretamente às práticas cotidianas das organizações que dela fazem parte é a luta para garantir metas, produtos e resultados, com qualidade.

*Instituto Recriando – Brasil*

Mayor asociacionismo entre jóvenes. Fomento de la solidaridad juvenil con el aumento del número de voluntarios.

*Dirección Xeral de Xuventude e Voluntariado*

Probabilmente dipende dal contesto in cui operano. Ritengo che i network possano rafforzare le capacità e le potenzialità delle NGO.

*Accademia Europea di Firenze - Italy*

Intake of human and material resources; exchange of competences, innovative working methods, knowledge; Better awareness on the weaknesses and strengths of the structure; learning to build and to follow a common working frame; etc.

*Regional Association for Rural Development (ARDR) - Romania*

Networks improve the capacity of NGO's.

*Zavod Voluntariat – Ljubljana - Slovenia*

From my point of view, the impact perceived is high since our NGO in particular is quite young and we still need to learn from other NGO's experiences.

*Agenda Globo 21*

By being members in a network, organisations have the possibility to increase their partnerships, cooperate with institutions and organisations which have various fields of activity and experience in different spheres. Networks could serve as a space to share experience, knowledge and ideas, they also create synergies between different stakeholders and projects.

*International Initiatives for Cooperation - Bulgaria*

### **The Impact of Networks on NGO Capacity**

The contribution of NGO networks to building the organizational capacity of their members is complex and multifaceted. Essentially, the purpose of NGO organizational capacity building is to enable NGOs to be self-confident, independent, creative, and effective organizations that make a difference in the lives of the people, communities, and countries that they serve, as well as make a contribution to the thinking and practice in their fields. Network interventions take into account the entire organization and the context in which it operates, and recognize how changes in one part of the organization impact others. Organizational capacity building efforts appreciate that today's NGOs need a new set of core capacities, which can powerfully determine the future of the organization. An effective organizational capacity approach for an NGO is comprised of the following elements: a purpose designed to improve the functioning of the organization, interventions targeted to the entire organizational system, the use of capable capacity building providers, the presence of learners who are in charge of their own learning, a focus on organizational change, and the employment of a wide variety of tools and mechanisms. Standards for effective capacity building include considering the whole organization and taking a systems view of any intervention; treating NGOs as living, breathing organizations that need to be appreciated and understood in their own right, rather than viewed merely as conduits for programs of funds; finding ways to work with those organizations that have a more limited access to capacity building services in addition to those that always seem to be "first in line;" recognizing the power differential that exists when capacity building is linked to money and when the donor is the deliverer of capacity building services; understanding the history of the organization and its previous experience with capacity building efforts; and avoiding subjecting NGOs to interventions that may undo or undermine other capacity building efforts. Waging Peace, just to name a couple. These networks serve as a vital source of knowledge generation, advocacy,



and support for peace-building that helps to reduce isolation and connect peace-builders globally. One study of peace-building has shown that, in general, NGOs that are oriented toward conflict prevention are “as a rule, disconnected and under resourced” (Ivanov 1997). Networks can play a valuable role in leveraging resources, bridging gaps, and strengthening communities in fragile environments that should be encouraged and supported. An added advantage cited by Ivanov is that peace-building networks are in a prime position to serve as early warning advocates, and may be able to draw attention and resources to help stem conflicts before they become tragic (1997).

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### **Perceived Impact of Networks on NGO Capacity - Impact of Networks on NGO Capacity Building**

#### ***What is the perceived impact of networks on NGO capacity?***

Setting the stage for later discussions requires an understanding of the current state of NGO capacity building. This section first looks at current assumptions about NGO capacity building. It then presents a new definition of effective capacity building by offering a Framework of Contemporary Capacities for NGO Excellence emerging from our interviews and discussions with network members and thought leaders. Finally, the central, core question of this study is tackled – What is the perceived impact of networks on NGO capacity?

#### **NGO Capacity Building: Still Hazy After All These Years**

In the UNDP published *Capacity for Development*, the authors state that despite an almost constant reassessment over the last two decades of technical cooperation triggered by ongoing concerns over its effectiveness, the macro impact of technical cooperation on developing national capacities remains worrisome. Technical cooperation is still frequently criticized for undermining local capacity, distorting priorities, choosing high-profile activities, fragmenting management, using expensive methods, ignoring local wishes, and fixating on targets (Fukuda-Parr, Lopes and Malik 2002). While the authors are speaking of the macro-level here, technical assistance to build capacity of NGOs reflects these same challenges. We in the development field are operating using assumptions regarding capacity building. One of these involves who actually builds capacity. Capacity building is something that NGOs do for themselves. As outsiders, we can offer resources and facilitate the process, but we cannot deliver the desired outcome (Lavergne and Saxby 2001). When we lose sight of our role in the process and arrive with our plans and our grants, without even realizing it, we can easily distort local priorities or undermine NGOs’ self-generated efforts at

defining a niche or creating opportunities for capacity building. On the other hand, we need not bend over backwards in the opposite direction. It is essential that we guard against adopting a patronizing attitude that treats NGOs as if they are incapable of making good choices for their own future. It is clear that at times the skills we emphasize in our capacity building efforts are driven by our own priorities. Much of capacity building has been designed around specific projects that NGOs are funded to implement with or for their international partners and donors. This “project-focused capacity building” stresses the building of capacities that will: help protect the investment made (such as financial management), support the requirements of donors (such as monitoring and reporting), or help complete the project successfully (such as competencies in project planning and evaluation). While there is nothing wrong with building these capacities – they are important ones for an effective organization to possess – they are frequently the only ones that are emphasized, or they are taught in isolation from other capacities that are both more foundational and strategic. Organizational capacity building is about change. As organizations struggle to become more effective, to grow and to establish a niche for themselves, they must let go of old habits, perceptions, assumptions, and ways of doing things. This takes time, as well as a high level of trust between capacity builders and those seeking to build their own capacity. It requires taking into serious consideration the genuine interest and commitment of the organization, and designing learning opportunities that are congruent with the organization’s values and the context in which it operates. There exists the potential to inadvertently crowd out newcomers to the scene as well. Northern organizations’ penchant for choosing high-profile development activities and designing for high impact can create a tendency to choose the “best” NGOs as partners or targets of capacity building efforts. Oftentimes the bigger and stronger NGOs in a country find themselves approached repeatedly by northern organizations to become a part of the latest project. This leaves behind smaller, less-developed NGOs, which may not have as easy an access to these offers. While institutional strengthening and the building of organizational capacity remain a concern of donors, little is spent on them in comparison to the total development budget. And when one thinks of capacity building as a sector, such as microfinance or health, surprisingly little new thinking, writing, or practice has emerged in recent years. What little writing and research exists is being generated for the most part by UNDP, the European Centre for Development Policy Management, CIDA, and the International Development Research Centre in Canada. If our primary purpose is to strengthen the NGO sector, it is time to invest more resources in answering these and other questions, in developing a new definition of capacity building and standards for its practice, and in supporting communities of practice that are interested in furthering the field.

### What Do Today’s NGOs Need To Be Able To Do?

The European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) and the British Department for International Development (DFID) are currently conducting a major study on capacity development. The authors of this study, which is still in progress, speak about capacity as an amorphous concept. They state, “It is still unclear what capacity looks like, what its components are, how it develops, and what outsiders can do to encourage its development” (<http://www.ecdpm.org>). Countless organizational frameworks have been developed to guide capacity building efforts. Many of these frameworks are similar and identify the standard capacities that over the years have come to be synonymous with organizational effectiveness. There must be more research and discussion about the capacities an NGO striving for excellence today should possess, which are most essential; what differences there might be in the capacities needed according to variables such as sector, purpose, and size; and whether or not there is a strategic sequence to follow. Capacity builders are influenced by their own assumptions of what constitutes excellence in the nonprofit sector, and these assumptions differ depending upon their professions. A capacity builder whose primary discipline is health, for example, may tend to see capacity building as the acquisition of technical health skills – an important set of capacities for an NGO working in health, but only part of the picture. NGOs today need different kinds of capacities to survive and thrive. Romo Rodríguez discusses the new challenges for NGOs: “NGOs are facing increased demands, more complex problems and they now have to operate in more dynamic and complicated environments requiring effective relationships with a myriad of institutions” (Romo Rodríguez 2004). To support these relationships, NGOs need to develop and improve a variety of skills. “NGOs [sic]

current focus on narrow management issues (often borrowed uncritically from the corporate sector), the acquiring of skills valued by donors, and traditional skills of lobbying need to be replaced by a broader set of capacities that include the ability to listen, learn, and work with others at both local and global levels” (Edwards in Romo Rodríguez 2004).

## A Framework of Contemporary Capacities for NGO Excellence

Our interviews and research indicate that there is a need for a framework that recognizes the challenges that today’s NGOs face and highlights some of the new capacities needed in today’s world. According to Theresa Shaver of White Ribbon Alliance, capacities such as leading in new ways and learning how to balance cooperation and competition will be crucial in the next fifteen years as donors continue to encourage groups to work together. She believes that partnerships and alliances make the most sense for many organizations, particularly those working on issues for which there is little funding to go around, and that networks can make a major contribution to forging these linkages (interview, August 12, 2004). On the following page, we offer such a framework to open up a dialogue with the NGO community and begin the process of together reinventing what the practice of capacity building should look like for the 21st century and how networks can contribute.

### STANDARD CAPACITY AREAS

We have identified three Standard Capacity areas necessary for NGO excellence: *Technical Performance* - Technical performance refers to the actual work the NGO is in the business of doing, such as the prevention of HIV/AIDS, the development of microfinance networks, or the protection of natural resources. Oftentimes the development of technical capacity is what is meant when practitioners or donors speak of capacity building. This performance category contains the following capacities:

- Advancing sector policies
- Developing service delivery models
- Creating and disseminating practices
- Improving intervention approaches
- Raising program quality and standards
- Developing multi-sectoral strategies
- Building capacity in others

#### *Internal Organization* –

This category has to do with all of the capacities that are associated with the internal functioning of the organization. It includes capacity areas such as:

- Visioning and strategic planning
- Management systems and practices
- Financial management
- Resource generation
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Teamwork
- Project design and planning
- Governance

#### *External Organization* –

This category contains capacity areas such as:

- Lobbying and advocacy
- Public relations and outreach
- Partnership and alliances
- Donor relations
- Networks
- Knowledge management

Together, these three Standard Capacity areas represent those found in most frameworks used by organizational capacity builders in past years. While all these capacities are still relevant to NGOs today, they do not represent the whole picture.

## 1. GENERATIVE CAPACITIES

The Standard Capacity areas mentioned above can be daunting, particularly for new NGOs, but many of them are not difficult to learn. However, today's NGOs are in a world that requires them to undertake tasks with which they have no experience and to build relationships with completely new stakeholders. This requires skills and behaviors that have not been a part of their past repertoire. We have called these skills and behaviors *Generative Capacities*. Generative Capacities have the potential to be equally as important to the course of an organization as Standard Capacities. Generative Capacities are the capacities that, once mastered, have the potential to impact each of the three Standard Capacity areas. If an NGO is able to learn how to learn, for example, this will have a tremendous impact on program quality and standards in the performance area, on strategic planning in the internal organization area, and on partnerships and alliances in the external organization area. So what are these Generative Capacities? We have, with the help of our network colleagues, developed the following list. This list has been influenced by Matkku Sotarauta's article, "Building Knowledge Based Core Competencies and Leadership in the Flowing World" (2003). NGOs need to:

### *Work Across Traditional Boundaries*

Boundary crossing has become almost the norm in the NGO sector today. Traditional boundaries of all sorts are being traversed, including those of geography, culture, technical sector, and civil society sector – i.e., government, private institutions, universities, etc. The stovepiped organization that remains within its narrow confines is becoming more and more obsolete. Particularly at the field level, the integration points and collaboration potential between technical sectors, such as microfinance and HIV/AIDS, is becoming more apparent. This collaboration requires the ability to recognize opportunities for collaboration, to forge new relationships, to challenge stereotypes and prejudices that we have formed about others unlike ourselves, and to reconcile multiple agendas. Working across traditional boundaries brings with it increased visibility and the need to represent one's self in an articulate fashion.

### *Learn How to Learn*

Knowledge has become an important commodity in today's world. The NGO with the competitive edge will be the one that has learned not only how to create new knowledge, but how to manage it. New knowledge is best incubated in a culture of learning. Those NGOs that stand out as exemplars of organizational excellence have learned how to create that culture of learning. These are usually the same NGOs that have recognized that much of the knowledge on development resides not in the North but in the South.

The old hierarchy of knowledge is being dismantled. NGOs are experimenting with designing ways of learning collectively through the creation of new organizational forms such as knowledge networks and communities of practice. Participation in these new forms requires the ability to test assumptions; the willingness to learn from peers, including those from another sector or field; the commitment to contribute to the learning of others; the ability to adapt ideas from another context to one's own; and the ability to think creatively, experiment, and take risks.

### *Lead in New Ways*

NGOs are being called upon to lead in new ways. The old hierarchal command and control styles of leadership are giving way as more and more NGOs find themselves in situations and contexts that require leading colleagues, or what Skidmore refers to as Question 4: Perceived Impact of Networks on NGO Capacity 40 “leading between” (2004). Leadership that creates ownership and commitment across organizations or between groups of diverse stakeholders is now becoming the norm. Leaders and organizations that can inspire, build trust, and act transparently will be thrust into new roles of convening, facilitating, and enabling collective work. These new leader NGOs know how to share power, influence appropriately, and collaborate. They understand the power of appreciation and are able to see the best in others.

### *Develop a Systems View*

Development problems are increasingly complex and require a systems view in order to understand the interconnected web of causality and to brainstorm innovative solutions. Systems thinking views an organization and all of its elements, including the environment in which it exists, as a complex whole of interrelating, interdependent parts. The idea that the entire system needs to be taken into account for lasting change to occur is one of the underlying principles of organization development. A systems view can also loosen our grip on a more mechanistic view of the world and help us to understand organizations and communities as living systems.

### *Access the Potential of Technology*

Technology has brought with it the need to develop a whole new set of competencies. One must understand the potential of technology, as well as its limitations. This is particularly important in the developing world. While in some cases remote NGOs now have access to the Internet, this is still a long way from being the norm. The technological divide still exists and will for some time to come. However, the present applications of technology to knowledge and knowledge management are nothing short of miraculous. Many NGOs, if they so desire, can relatively easily link up to a global community of thought leaders in almost every area of their work. Information is available at the touch of a keyboard and has enabled decisions to be made and actions to be taken much more quickly. We must realize, though, that technology is only a partial answer. It must be combined with the appropriate human leadership and facilitation in order to be effective.

### *Act with Agility*

Acting with agility means being able and willing to “seize the moment” and take advantage of opportunities as they arise. This always involves some risk-taking and a willingness to make decisions that commit the organization to a particular direction. In an agile organization, leadership is distributive and knowledge is recognized as existing at all levels. An agile organization has many open avenues of communication, which encourage an ongoing dialogue about challenges and opportunities and allow members to recognize and act on emerging trends. Agility can involve the flexible use of teams, which form and then dissolve when they are no longer needed. Agile organizations are adaptable, but remain grounded in their core purpose and values, and are unwilling to compromise them at any cost.

### *Create the Future*

Organizations that create the future are able to focus on possibilities versus limitations. They have an optimistic view of what is possible and strive to turn possibilities into reality. They are less bound by current paradigms and systems and are able to create that which does not yet exist, while bringing forward the best traditions, values, and practices of the past. These NGOs have an expanded view of their world and the

role they might play in it. They work at the intersection of the imaginative and the practical. Most importantly, they recognize strengths and capacities in others and see potential where others cannot.

### ***Balance Autonomy with Interdependence***

NGOs must perform a constant balancing act to negotiate between the need to be an autonomous organization that is clear about its identity, and the need to act in relationship with others in order to help forge a collective identity or stance. This capacity also comes into play when negotiating with a donor whose agenda may not be consistent with one's organizational vision or mission.

### ***Manage Cooperation and Competition***

NGOs belong to fora, communities, and networks where they are being challenged to leave their egos at the door and to behave in ways that build trust and cooperation, and even more important, synergy. It is not enough to say that members of a network will cooperate and not compete. This stance is both unrealistic and overly simplistic. We must be able to cooperate and compete with each other at the same time. Sotarauta says, "[I]n order to be competitive in the network society, the actor must be cooperative, and in order to be cooperative, s/he must be competitive. An actor who is competitive in his/her own field is generally a more desirable partner. At its best, the development network comprises cooperative actors who are competitive in their respective fields" (2003). This is the balancing of cooperation with competition. It takes transparency, authentic communication, and the willingness to hammer out difficult issues, such as intellectual property rules, to make this happen effectively. The building of social capital through acting and behaving in ways that are seen as trustworthy is critical.

### ***Align Organizational Form with Purpose***

NGOs need to be able to be strategic about their choice of organizational form and to realize that we live in times in which new organizational forms and hybrids of all sorts are being born every day. These forms challenge the old notion of an organization as a collection of replaceable parts that is capable of being reengineered at any time. Some of these organizational forms, such as self-managed teams, can create a new sense of freedom at work. Strategic intention is very important when thinking through organizational design issues. With networks, for example, there are many different forms that are workable. The key questions, though, are: Does form follow function? What is the purpose of the organization and what is its vision? How can organizational structures be designed in such a way that they support purpose and vision rather than constrain it?

## **Toward a New Definition of Effective Capacity Building**

The term "capacity building" has been used so indiscriminately that it no longer holds much meaning. We must begin a new conversation that uncovers our basic assumptions about organizational capacity building and includes our views on how organizations learn best and how they change. In its broadest sense, there is consensus in the field that capacity building refers to developing the tools and techniques required for improving NGO effectiveness. An effective organizational capacity approach is comprised of the following elements:

### ***1. A Purpose: To Improve the Organization***

Some scholars and practitioners view the intended result of organizational capacity building as improved products or services, while others concentrate less on the result and more on the ability, or capacity, of an NGO to fulfill its mission. In a narrow sense of the term, the purpose of capacity building is often to improve a particular area in an organization that will enable it to better perform a stated objective. In its largest sense, NGO organizational capacity building is about organizational change and transformation. Even when focusing on smaller changes, such as hiring staff or starting up a new program, organizational capacity



building takes into account the whole organization. Organization-wide changes may include changes such as helping an organization create its niche in civil society, develop or change its mission, move to a different level in its life cycle, address major new markets or beneficiaries/clients, develop major new partnerships, and create changes in organizational structure so that the organization's vision and structure are more closely aligned. The question that is often asked and not often answered is whether or not building stronger, more self-confident and independent NGOs leads to improvement in products and services, and whether or not improvements in products and services lead to positive changes in the quality of life of intended beneficiaries. Another question is whether or not there is value in organizational capacity building as an end in itself – i.e., whether strengthening the NGO sector within a society is a worthy goal even if the lives of the poor are not substantially improved.

## *2. A Target: The Organizational Level*

The term capacity building is used to describe interventions on multiple levels, including with individuals, groups, organizations or institutions, networks, sectors communities, regions, and nations. For the purpose of this study, we are particularly interested in capacity building at the organizational level. Oftentimes we in the development community are satisfied with thinking that we have built the organizational capacity of an NGO if we have enrolled one or even several of its members in a training program. One can argue that by increasing the skill level of individual NGO staff members in a particular area, we are thereby increasing the capacity of the organization; however, this may or may not be true. Whether or not organizational capacity gets built by the training of an organization's individual members depends on variables such as those revealed in answering the following questions:

- Did the supervisor of the trainee support the application of the new skill to organizational life?
- Does the trainee have some influence within the organization to push for doing things in a new way?
- Can the trainee train others in the skills he/she has learned, or was there a critical mass of staff that was trained in the skills to make adaptation and application more possible?

Organization-level capacity building takes into account the larger system and considers the organization as a whole to be “the client.” This is fundamentally different from the “training approach” described above.

## *3. A Capable Provider*

The ideas that there is not a unidirectional flow of capacity from North to South and that southern NGOs can build the capacity of each other (and be even more effective as capacity providers) are taking hold. To the consumer as well, the mystique of the northern expert, while still powerful, is becoming less compelling as southerners develop greater confidence in their own capacity building institutions and recognize the benefits of learning from each other.

## *4. A Learner Who is in Charge of His or Her Own Learning*

Remembering that the beneficiary of capacity building assistance determines whether or not capacity is actually built has important implications for the way in which capacity building activities are designed. In order for capacity building to have a chance to “stick” and really make a difference, careful attention must be given to putting adult learners in charge of their own learning and making sure that capacity building efforts are actually going to promote the overall well-being and sturdiness of the NGO.

## *5. A Focus on Organizational Change*

If capacity building is focused on organizational change and transformation, all organizational members need to be involved in the process in some way. This whole systems approach helps to ensure some level of ownership of the process by everyone, but more than that, it taps into the collective wisdom of the whole and makes sure that all voices are heard as the organization charts its course. Interventions should be designed to build on local talent and capacity rather than displace it.

## 6. A Wide Variety of Tools and Mechanisms

Capacity building approaches go far beyond training and require a more holistic approach. Over the last ten years, our understanding of what capacity building could entail has grown from sending people to short-term courses, workshops, and training programs to designing new ways of learning that are laterally based. Some of these new approaches to capacity building include coaching, peer assists, and other knowledge management tools, rotations, benchmarking, real-time strategic change, and assets-based approaches to learning and development.

### NGO Organizational Capacity Building

*The purpose of NGO organizational capacity building is to enable NGOs to be self-confident, independent, creative and effective organizations that make a difference in the lives of the people, communities, and countries that they serve, as well as make a contribution to the thinking and practice in their fields. Organizational capacity building interventions take into account the entire organization and the context in which it operates, and recognize how changes in one part of the organization impact others. NGO organizational capacity building appreciates that today's NGOs need a new set of core capacities, which can powerfully determine the future of the organization. We combine all these ideas to arrive at the following definition of NGO organizational capacity building:*

### Standards of Practice

Practitioners in this field should not be exempt from meeting an accepted standard, and it is time that thought leaders and practitioners come together to establish standards of practice like those that exist in other fields. In considering what can reasonably be called capacity building, we propose the following guidelines or practices as the starting point for dialogue on this subject:

Consider the whole organization and take a systems view of any intervention.

Treat NGOs as living, breathing organizations that need to be appreciated and understood in their own right, rather than considered as merely conduits for programs or funds.

Find ways to work with those organizations that have a more limited access to capacity building services, in addition to those that always seem to be "first in line."

Recognize the power differential that exists when capacity building is linked to money, and when the donor is the deliverer of capacity building services.

Understand the history of the organization and its previous experience with capacity building efforts.

Avoid subjecting NGOs to another intervention that may undo or undermine other capacity building efforts.

### The Current Role of Networks in Capacity Building

#### *At the Organizational Level*

Not all networks are interested in building the capacity of their members. Social change networks in particular may have an entirely different agenda in mind. For example, the goal of the White Ribbon Alliance is to save women's lives. However, whether a network has the deliberate intention to build capacity or whether capacity building is a side benefit, we are finding that networks' members perceive that capacity is being built. The White Ribbon Alliance holds workshops on working with the media so that the safe motherhood issue is brought to the attention of the general public. One can assume that the skills learned about how to work with the media to promote the goals of the network are transferable to other



contexts. Of course, whether or not this translates into building the capacity of the NGOs involved in the network is another question altogether. There is a difference of opinion as to whether or not networks build the organizational capacity of their members. This idea goes straight to the heart of the definition of capacity building as well as to our understanding of organizational capacity building and its goals. David Brown feels that circumstances do not allow networks to build organizational development capacities at a very deep level. He feels that networks and national associations of NGOs are mostly only good at bringing people together as brokers and conveners of a capacity building process, which is then performed by a specialized capacity building agency, such as MWENGO in Zimbabwe or PRIA in India. Both of these agencies have been providing a variety of NGO capacity building services for years. However, if capacity building is defined more broadly, Brown acknowledges that the skills learned from networking relationships may build skills in democratic functioning as well, including an ability to understand the other's perspective in a new way. He says, "Instead of focusing on their work only, [network members] expand their horizons to include a greater, broader view. They become able to shift analysis from their own perspective to the perspective of the network, as in the case of an NGO that joins a social change network attempting to influence policy and in the process changes its own analysis parameters" (interview, August 18, 2004). When Peggy d'Adamo, who is associated with the community of practice Health Information and Publications Network (HipNet), was asked how participation in HipNet builds the capacity of its individual members, she answered: "I don't know. I have never thought of networks in that way. I always thought about networks in terms of efficiency. They cut down on the amount of time that it takes to do something. Through a network you can get five or six suggestions on how to do something and get it done more quickly and successfully" (interview, July 2, 2004). Her comment point outs that the capacity building potential of networks is not always obvious or the first thing that comes to mind. The International Development Research Centre (IDRC), a Canadian public corporation that works in close collaboration with researchers from the developing world, has made networks a distinctive feature of the way it does business for the last twenty-five years, and has allocated funds, time, and intellectual attention to their development. In speaking about these networks, Sarah Earl from IDRC felt that these networks were better at building individual capacity in researchers than building organizational or institutional capacity. She explained that research tends to be done in established institutions that are not necessarily open to capacity building. This raises the issue of how well networks can perform the kind of capacity building that leads to organizational change if their members are essentially

### Networks and Standard Capacity Building

Networks are best known for the capacities that they attempt to build in technical areas, although they may view themselves more as conduits of information or social action networks than capacity builders. Chief capacities that network staff and members in our study mentioned that fall into the technical performance area of our framework include the creation and dissemination of best practices, improved interventions and approaches, and project/program design. Those networks with a specific sectoral focus, such as SEEP (microfinance), CORE (HIV-AIDS), NicaSalud (health), or WANEP (peace-building), were perceived as particularly strong in building capacity in the technical performance area. Within CORE, for example, there are many opportunities for members to teach others about new approaches to HIV/AIDS prevention, such as the concept of positive deviance offered by Save the Children, or the latest practice in health information systems offered by CARE. The capacity mentioned most frequently in the area of external organization was the creation of partnerships, networks, and new linkages. All of the study networks, regardless of type and intention, are perceived as building this capacity. Finally, the last two capacities most frequently mentioned – creation of new ways of learning and working together and recognition of the possibilities for collaborative action – fall into the Generative Capacity area of our framework. Very few network staff or members perceived that capacity was being built in the internal organization area, which includes such capacities as visioning and strategic planning, management systems and practices, financial management, resource generation, and monitoring and evaluation – all of the capacities that are associated with the internal functioning of the organization. The networks that were donor-initiated and formed with the strategic intention to build organizational capacity, such as NicaSalud and PROCOSI, were the exceptions.

## Networks and Generative Capacity Building

We posit that all effective networks, regardless of purpose, strategic intention, or organizational form, have the potential to build the capacity of their members, particularly in one specific area of our framework – the Generative Capacities. Effective networks, even those with no stated capacity building mission, often build these capacities without even trying because of the nature of the attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors they encourage in their members.

**Example 1** – The ability to lead in new ways is a Generative Capacity that is often developed in network members. An effective network provides a learning laboratory for leadership that replaces the old models of leadership that are simply ineffective in this context.

**Example 2** – Another Generative Capacity often built by networks is the development of a systems view, which requires a great deal of critical thinking. The European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) describes this fundamental part of networking, maintaining that “civil society actors want to upgrade their performance through collective action, when they perceive a lack of access to relevant information to be a critical factor hampering their work. Networks are strong because they fortify creativity and critical thinking through dialogue and exchange” (Networking for Learning, p.6).

**Example 3** – A third capacity is the ability to work across traditional boundaries. This takes considerable skill because it requires the challenging of assumptions and stereotypes we may hold of the other. Without this capacity, it is not possible to learn enough about each other to understand the contribution that each can make to our shared agenda. Organizations that take the step and join in a network are already crossing traditional boundaries and looking for new ways of thinking and interacting. There is an assumption that these capacities are somehow already inherent in development organizations or that they do not need much practice to learn – that perhaps they come naturally. On the contrary, these capacities are some of the most difficult to achieve and, in some ways, are more difficult than learning how to develop a proposal or evaluate a project. Networks are the perfect place to acquire and practice these Generative Capacities. In fact, we will go so far as to say that networks may be better positioned to help cultivate these capacities than any other capacity building mechanism.

## Networks and Organizational Change

When network members were asked to select from a list the most significant changes that they had seen in their organizations or units over the last five years, the most frequent choice was “collaboration and alliances: the way our organization works with other organizations and institutions for service delivery, capacity building, or learning.” The second most frequent choice was “learning and innovation: the development and application of new ideas to our organization’s operations and service delivery.” The vast majority indicated that they thought these changes were either strongly or moderately connected to membership in one of the study networks.

Some of the organizational changes resulting from network association cited in an open ended response were:

- “Traditionally, we were a very Holland-based organization. Our membership in the Impact Alliance has helped us become boundary crossers, establishing learning and collaborative relationships with other organizations and networks.”
- “We cannot rate it yet; however the network has given us more exposure.”
- “Much improved strategic and business planning has resulted for our [microfinance institutions].”
- “Targeting the community at a grassroots level regarding reducing maternal mortality in the country has been effective.”
- “Support of the programme from local government and community leaders has occurred.”
- “More interest and involvement in innovative exercises has taken place.”
- “Networks have allowed us to better work across sectors – in this case with HIV/AIDS and microfinance.”

- “Because WANEP has shared information with us so freely, it has inspired us to do the same in our national level network.”
- “By participating in the network, we discovered many people who had the same vision as we do, so we are cooperating.”

Karen LeBan of CORE said that she has noticed changes in the organizational culture of members in their increased willingness to share and, with less of a need to claim ownership of ideas and practices (interview, August 6, 2004). Theresa Shaver of the White Ribbon Alliance said that working in a network is not an easy thing – it goes against the grain of many organizations. WRA therefore teaches organizations how to complement each other and not just compete (interview, August 12, 2004). Fernando Campos Ordeñana of NicaSalud reports that changes have been seen in member organizations being able to operate in an interrelated way with other public and private organizations, and in their technical competence, while Claudia Muñoz-Reyes of PROCOSI claims that the analytical capacity of members has increased (interviews, July 14, 2004; July 15, 2004).

### **Network Activities to Promote Organizational Change**

Invite/encourage a broader base of participation from each member organization so that a critical mass is bringing back ideas and innovations.

Choose as network members NGO staff who are willing and able to transfer the knowledge to others in their organizations.

Involve influential leaders within the organization in the network and get support from organizational leaders for the time and energy network participation takes.

Share visions for organizational change and bring in members that indicate a readiness for change.

Develop a clear strategic intention to be a capacity builder and create an approach to move forward.

It is important to note once again that the above information is based on a relatively small number of member responses to our survey and with their perceptions of capacities that have been built. Future studies will need to include baseline data and longitudinal tracking to which base judgments about changes in capacity can be compared. In addition, we cannot equate the building of capacity in any area of our framework with organizational change – the ultimate aim of effective capacity building. In other words, if one or even several members of an NGO are active participants in an effective network, and have learned and practiced the capacities outlined in our framework, this does not mean that the NGOs that they represent have also been strengthened as a result. There are important variables to consider when attempting to translate individual capacity to organizational capacity, and these are important to study if we want to improve the chances of networks contributing to organizational change.

### **Variables in Organizational Change**

As highlighted above, the issue of who actually participates in networks is an important one. Even when networks count organizations as their members, oftentimes this means that one or only a handful of people are representing the organization and active involvement can vary considerably. Much of the time the Executive Director and senior staff may be aware of their membership, but have little or no involvement in the affairs of the network and may or may not see it as an important capacity building resource. In a recent evaluation of a USAID funded network, it was clear that although some organizations were longtime members of the network, field offices and other important sections of the organizations were not aware of this. This scenario would not be uncommon in larger international NGOs that work in a number of sectors and have units that act somewhat autonomously from the rest of the organization.

If networks have an organizational change agenda, they must do some or all of the following:

### **Networks and Building Capacity of a Particular Sector**

Although this report focuses on networks and their role in building the capacity of individual NGOs, we would be remiss if we did not mention the role that networks play in the broader work of building the capacity of the NGO sector as a whole. One has only to look at our study networks and see many examples

of how networks have influenced the growth and professionalism of a sector. SEEP, for example, refers to itself as a “thought leader and learning center for North American NGOs around issues related to small enterprise development” ([www.seepnetwork.org](http://www.seepnetwork.org)). From its inception it has published documents that have set the standard for the sector, such as its *Monitoring and Evaluating Small Business Projects: A Step-by-Step Guide for Private Development Organizations*, which has sold more than 7,000 copies and been translated into three languages since its publication in 1987. Another way to look at sector is by profession. Researchers meeting in 1997 at an event organized by the African Economic Research Council, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Social Science Research Council investigated the role of networks in strengthening research and learning in sub-Saharan Africa. One conference participant offered the following benefits of networks in this context:

One is to provide a critical mass of professional peer review not available at the national level, thus sustaining peer pressure for learning and excellence as well as ameliorating professional isolation. Second is to provide an effective mechanism for keeping in touch with the rapidly changing frontier of knowledge through a more rationalized contact with the rest of the world and through information sharing. Third is to provide a medium of exchange of experiences in a comparative mode and a mechanism for gleaning from “best practices” in specific policy contexts, thus making networks an important resource for collective knowledge and contrasting experiences. Fourth is to provide cost-effective means for specialized training and skill formation often not viable at the national level given resource constraints and time availability of specialized trainers. Fifth is to project a professional image and maintain a high profile for a given discipline or specialty (Ndulu in Prewitt 1998). While organizations can be looked at as systems, the building of the capacity of a sector requires a multilevel approach that considers the interaction between systems. “Systems extend beyond the individual and organizational level to systems of organizations, their interfaces, and the institutions that guide them. The approach requires consideration of all contextual elements as well as the linkages between them” (Lusthaus, Adrien and Perstinger 1999). Networks are a major player in this level of capacity building. Every time a network successfully brings together organizations and groups to collaborate on research, projects in the field, or a social action agenda, social capital is being built and new approaches to development challenges are being born. A group whose members may once have thought of themselves as unlikely partners find themselves at the same table.

### *Networks and the Social Change/Service Delivery Agenda*

Networks are making a tremendous contribution to service delivery and social change. The global secretariat of the White Ribbon Alliance and its various working groups, for example, have provided tools and information to support the formation of new alliances and activities worldwide. Within the first year, the WRA’s International Working Group initiated the development of a field guide with basic safe motherhood information and ideas about how to initiate White Ribbon Alliances and organize special events to promote and raise awareness of safe motherhood. It also initiated the global White Ribbon Contest for Safe Motherhood, intended to encourage creativity in designing awareness raising activities and events, and to increase membership in the global and local alliances. The global secretariat also supports information sharing between member countries. For example, WRA/India developed a media kit that was adapted by the Safe Motherhood Network of Nepal. The Zambia WRA’s activity toolkit was translated into French and adopted by WRA Koupela in Burkina Faso. Other social change networks around the world have had enormous influence as well. In *World Resources 2002-2004: Decisions for the Earth: Balance, Voice and Power* published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) et al., several networks are mentioned that have brought important local issues to the attention of the world. Two examples are:

- o “The International Campaign to Ban Landmines, a coalition of 1,400 NGOs from 90 countries, convinced 146 countries to sign a treaty to ban landmines at a time when private companies and government agencies in 52 countries were manufacturing antipersonnel mines and 2.5 million new landmines were being laid each year.”
- o “Networks of NGOs from the West and from developing countries have successfully slowed or halted the building of large hydroelectric dams in India, Thailand, Malaysia, and other countries. These cross border coalitions also influenced the World Bank’s decision to give greater weight to the potential environmental and social impacts of a dam when making decisions on financing such projects.”

Networks can also perform important coordination of services. Pro Redes Salud, for example, coordinates the services of NGOs providing maternal and child health services in the Guatemalan highlands. Oftentimes networks with a goal of service delivery coordination are initiated by a donor, as is the case with Pro Redes Salud, NicaSalud in Nicaragua, and PROCOSI in Bolivia. These three networks in our study receive or received significant funding from USAID.

**Question n. 17: Please describe sustainability about the network your institution belongs.**

A sustentabilidade da Rede ANDI Brasil, como a da maioria das redes, tem duas dimensões: o custeio das atividades comuns e o custeio de cada organização. A maior parte dos recursos que propiciaram o surgimento da Rede ANDI Brasil, no ano 2000, veio do exterior. Especialmente da Fundação Avina (Suíça), da Fundação W.K. Kellog (EUA); Save The Children Suécia e da Comunidade Européia. O Fundo das Nações Unidas para a Infância (UNICEF) também foi um parceiro primordial. Atualmente, a sustentabilidade da Rede ANDI Brasil advém em maior percentual de projetos individuais das organizações, através dos quais é mantida boa parte da estrutura necessária para a execução das atividades da Rede ANDI Brasil. Além disso, há ainda o desenvolvimento de projetos conjuntos e colaborativos entre todas as instituições da Rede. Para isso, todos os membros estão sempre atentos a informações sobre editais e concursos na área de projetos sociais e dispostos a escrever propostas conjuntas que abranjam a Rede como um todo. Atualmente, a Rede conta com o apoio da iniciativa privada e do Fundo Nacional dos Direitos da Criança e do Adolescente, (órgão ligado à Secretaria Especial de Direitos Humanos do Ministério da Justiça, Governo Federal e que possui representatividade igualitária entre membros do Poder Público e de organizações não governamentais). A partir dos anos de 2004 e 2005, com a saída iminente de parceiros internacionais estratégicos, a Rede ANDI Brasil começou a passar por mudanças, especialmente no sentido de avançar nos processos de desenvolvimento institucional, no aprimoramento de canais de comunicação entre os membros da Rede, formação das equipes das organizações e avaliação dos resultados alcançados. Uma lógica de atuação ligada, é preciso frisar, ao modelo da Rede ANDI Brasil que busca se retroalimentar e adequar seu processo de gestão às novas oportunidades para uma atuação estratégica.

*Instituto Recriando - Brasil*

Tenemos en cuenta las opiniones de los jóvenes a la hora de tomar decisiones. Celebración continua de los cursos de intereses actuales de los jóvenes.

*Dirección Xeral de Xuventude e Voluntariado - Spain*

I network sono attualmente sostenibili perché si basano sul lavoro volontario di molte risorse umane, che dedicano il proprio tempo libero e le proprie competenze al mantenimento delle reti.

*Accademia Europea di Firenze - Italia*

The network was established following the development of a pilot project ( the Youth Empowerment Programme financed by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency ) that aimed at building a transcontinental network involving seven partners from Europe, Africa, Latin America,

in the frame of EVS. The project is currently continued through another approved project that aims at strengthening the Youth Empowerment Network-YEN by means of the development of thematic clusters of excellence in EVS, sharing best practice in youth work and needs analysis in terms of capacity to handle and manage EVS projects. Moreover, the partners within the network have started already to collaborate on EVS projects.

*Regional Association for Rural Development (ARDR)*

Common effort ensures we use up less time on research, development and implementation of our projects, networks provide long lasting human and institutional support.

*Zavod Voluntariat – Ljubljana - Slovenia*

Both networks, that our organisation is a member of, encompass organisations with experienced and resourceful teams who have achievements in their fields of activity. They have long history of cooperation and have identified ways to reinforce their strengths and improve their weaknesses by entering into diversified partnerships and exchanging experience and know-how, which increases the impact of their performance. The member organisations are quite diversified in terms of geographical scope, field of activity and target groups they work with, which brings huge benefits to the network and its members and improves their capacity.

*International Initiatives for Cooperation - Bulgaria*

### ***Characteristics of Networks that Build Capacity***

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We can identify four main characteristics of networks that build capacity. First, network members must be encouraged to “dare to share” (i.e., be confident enough in their work that they are willing to share it with others). This sharing can be facilitated by the creation of an open environment in which people are willing to analyze and learn from both successes and mistakes. Second, network members must have the capacity to fully contribute. This can be fostered by creating time and space for learning and reflection. Thirdly, network members must be committed. Strong commitment is naturally fostered when members make the priorities of the network match their own, and they see the network as adding value to their work. Simply raising awareness of the potential that members have in contributing to change in their organizations may help to strengthen commitment. Lastly, networks must possess the Generative Capacities if they are to be able to build these same capacities in their members.

### **Network Sustainability**

#### *Are There Predictors?*

As noted earlier in the discussion of typologies, there are a number of ways to evaluate the effectiveness of networks, and, obviously, networks that are effective are sustainable. In addition to possessing the characteristics of strong pre-existing social capital, strategic fit, donor relationship, leadership commitment, governance, management, mutual trust, joint learning, democracy, diversity, dynamism, and excellence



cited by the authors above, we can highlight a few principles that can help predict a network's chances of achieving sustainability:

## TRUST

Trust is an essential element of any sustainable network. It has been noted previously that pre-existing social capital provides the best framework from which to launch a network, and the reason for this lies in the trust that develops from a history of effective and fair partnership. Stephenson elaborates this concept eloquently, saying that, "[r]eciprocity is key to the power of networks, exerting a governing logic over them – the alchemy of mutual give and take over time turning into a golden trust" (2004). Trust is fostered and facilitated by strong network leadership, and, as Church et al. say, ". . . provides the glue that allows control to be relinquished into the hands of those [that] will act in the best interests of all" (2003). Trust can be developed in many ways, including through face-to-face meetings, long-term commitment by members, and respecting diversity (Church et al. 2003). By the same token, diminished trust can be a byproduct of poor governance or an insufficient governance structure. It is important that these issues be addressed in the formative stages with very clear mechanisms established, especially with respect to dealing with times of transition.

## ADAPTABILITY

Effective networks are adaptable to the changing contexts and needs of their membership, and are thus more sustainable. Pinzás and Ranaboldo state it well, saying that ". . . the more networks understand and effectively develop themselves as spaces for innovation, experimentation and learning . . . , the more successful they are in continually renovating and revitalizing themselves within an ever changing development context and hence, ensure their pertinence" (in ICCO 2004). Gilchrist says the same, saying that "[w]ell functioning communities possess a range of capacities for absorbing or adapting to change, managing internal tensions and generating (and dissolving) a variety of forms for collective action" (2004).

## LEADERSHIP

Leadership as a key indicator of sustainability came up repeatedly in the literature and in our interviews. It is important to clarify, however, the type of leadership that is needed in networks. Skidmore points out the difficulty, saying, "[n]etworks challenge our conceptions of leadership, which too often are still rooted in an outmoded 'great man' theory that mistakes the formal authority of status, rank or station with the exercise of leadership" (2004). Our conversations with WANEP elicited the same response. Emmanuel Bombande offered that leaders of networks need to be prepared to work in a different way to be able to handle the non-hierarchical nature of the relationships (, interview, August 13, 2004). Skidmore offers a new concept, that of "leading between," to describe the type of leadership by facilitation rather than dictation that networks need. He asserts that "[n]ew network-based ways of organizing social and economic activity will only thrive if we can evolve new models of leadership that embrace the distinctive 'organising logic' of networks, and do not seek to apply an old set of principles in an environment that has been dramatically altered. We must learn what it means to lead effectively not just within individual organizations, but across the networks of which they are part. 'Leading between' will be the new leadership imperative of the coming decades" (Skidmore 2004).

Skidmore points to six essential roles of network leadership:

- 1) Leading from the outside in
- 2) Being cognizant of the external environment and seeking ways to adapt accordingly
- 3) Mobilizing energy from the power source of network members
- 4) Fostering trust and empowerment
- 5) Coaxing members out of their comfort zones
- 6) Viewing themselves as "lead learners" in the network; and nurturing other network members to become leaders in their own right (2004)

IMAC highlighted the importance of having motivating leadership charged specifically with promoting the exchange and learning among members and giving support and follow-up (Jennifer Morfin of IMAC, interview, July 14, 2004). WANEP, too, mentioned the importance of strong leadership that is based on communication and consultation. In comparing the effectiveness of various national networks that comprise WANEP, Sam Doe cited the leadership in each country as a crucial factor of its performance. He says quite simply, "Where ownership was translated to members, the network became successful; where ownership was centralized, the network struggled and sometimes failed" (interview, August, 19, 2004).

### *Sustainability of Benefits is More Important Than Sustainability of the Organization*

David Brown claims that "One of the important skills in building a network is knowing when to celebrate victory. There is a knee-jerk reaction on the part of NGO supporters not to want to put an end to a network" (interview, August 18, 2004). Sarah Earl mentioned the same thing, claiming that the word "sustainability" has become a mantra, but that we do not really know what we mean by it. Sustainability is not always the goal and some networks are very time bound (interview, August 17, 2004). Iain Guest believes we have a hang-up with sustainability, noting that the nature of civil society is to ebb and flow. Drawing on his own experience in working with network partners, he notes that just because a network disappears for a few months, it is not necessarily dead, but may have gone into "cold storage" until it reemerges again in another form (interview, September 22, 2004). When a network is formed with a particular goal in mind, what happens when the goal is achieved? Karl points out that the light structure of many networks allows those that have been formed for short term purposes to disband relatively easily. When a network no longer meets the needs of its members, participation will drop off and the network will naturally cease to exist. At that point, members must make the crucial decision of whether it is time to adjust and adapt, or to call it quits. For this reason, we believe that sustainability of benefits, such as the building of strong social capital, is a more useful concept to use in relation to networks rather than sustainability of the institution.

*Kilimanjaro Hope Organization - Tanzania*

**Question n. 18: Please comment capacity building of networks to which your institution belongs, highlighting how to share best practices, good examples and know-how between NGOs and networks.**

O surgimento da Rede ANDI Brasil, em 2000, surgiu a partir do reconhecimento do trabalho desenvolvido pela Agência dos Direitos da Infância (ANDI) desde 1992. Com ações inovadoras e utilizando-se da Comunicação Social como ferramenta primordial para a promoção e garantia dos direitos da criança e do adolescente, a ANDI viu suas demandas serem ampliadas e sua atuação ser analisada de perto por outras organizações não governamentais. Durante o surgimento da rede, o processo de aprendizagem, articulação e nivelamento de conhecimento deu-se de modo presencial, com os membros/representantes de organizações que desejavam formar e fazer parte de uma articulação em torno do trabalho da ANDI passando um período acompanhando de perto o trabalho da organização e passando por períodos de formação. Nesse processo, a tecnologia tem sido uma parceira estratégica. Num país de território geográfico tão extenso como o Brasil, a internet e suas ferramentas são essenciais para o processo colaborativo do trabalho em rede. A troca de experiências ocorre cotidianamente através de contatos por MSN, skype, e-mails (e-groups yahoo) e telefone. A troca de experiências também fica nítida no momento da construção de projetos coletivos. Nesses momentos, em especial, as organizações apresentam não só a sua realidade enquanto membros da rede e seus pontos em comum com as demais entidades, mas também suas demais áreas de atuação em outros projetos e/ou articulações. Há uma constante na Rede



ANDI Brasil que merece destaque: a constante avaliação por parte das entidades que a compõem em relação às suas atividades, aos resultados alcançados e ao surgimento de novas frentes de atuação ou formas de qualificar ainda mais aquilo que já é feito. Todas as decisões são tomadas de modo democrático de modo a garantir a transparência das deliberações. Importante frisar ainda que o sucesso da gestão da Rede ANDI Brasil deve-se em boa parte ao fato de que todas as organizações acataram a importância da criação de uma Secretaria Executiva para a Rede. Mantida inicialmente dentro da ANDI, organização que gerou o embrião da Rede, a Secretaria Executiva hoje está montada estrategicamente no estado de São Paulo, com endereço e profissionais desvinculados de uma organização em particular da Rede. Dentre as atividades da Secretaria Executiva, estão a mediação das decisões, cobrança em relação ao cumprimento de metas e prazos, representação da Rede em espaços públicos estratégicos que estejam ainda 'descobertos' pelas agências, prospecção de novos parceiros estratégicos e sistematização das principais deliberações. A manutenção deste órgão é conduzida financeiramente com a inserção da demanda em projetos coletivos da Rede, sendo uma responsabilidade compartilhada entre todos os membros da Rede ANDI Brasil.

*Instituto Recriando - Brasil*

Seguir realizando seminaries, conferencias, intercambios, encuentros.

*Dirección Xeral de Xuventude e Voluntariado- Spain*

Affinché si possa sviluppare al meglio i network si dovrebbero individuare strategie di condivisione e di valorizzazione comuni anche ad altri network sia a livello locale che internazionale per massimizzare le buone pratiche e le esperienze oltre che le competenze. Tutto questo richiede uno sforzo organizzativo e risorse umane disponibili che non possono essere solamente volontari.

*Accademia Europea di Firenze - Italia*

Throughout the whole project, the participants were gradually empowered to shift from a participant role to the initiator, facilitator one by means of the actions they coordinated.

In concrete terms, the capacity building can be measured and described through the building of the capacity of the 14 participating organizations- it is expected that these will act as multipliers leading to further action on promoting EVS in the respective regions. That is to empower their status and role in their countries as providers for EVS projects.

The KIT on EVS Quality Management produced, was distributed in hundreds of copies and also in free electronic PDF version- that will make open access to other organizations to use it and indirectly build on their expertise in managing EVS projects.

*Regional Association for Rural Development (ARDR) - Romania*

Seminars, informational campaigns, study visits, trainings, annual meetings...

*Zavod Voluntariat – Ljubljana - Slovenia*

According to our experience, the best way to share knowledge, best practices and know-how lies in the sustainable and trustful communication process between network members, development of knowledge platforms and resource platforms. Of course all opportunities for the members to meet, discuss, collaborate and interact with each other are always welcome, since during those processes they have the chance to identify the most efficient approaches to the issues they have to deal with and find best solutions in their work.

*International Initiatives for Cooperation - Bulgaria*

There are a number of donor policies and practices that can help to strengthen networks in this regard. The donor-network relationship is a complex one, and when there is too much guidance and direction, networks can become detached from their understanding and appreciation of their own competencies. Networks are not institutions, and the same rules do not apply. Donors can help by de-linking networks from the formal project cycle. Networks take time to develop, and often funding is terminated just at the point when burgeoning networks are beginning to come into their own. Donors would also be wise to let go of their customary results orientation when they support networks, and trust that they will do their jobs. Donors can also revisit some of the traditional assumptions about networks. In terms of funding levels, support is needed for core funding and not just for projects. Often the things that network members value most in their networks are the things that take the most time to develop, but require the least amount of money. That being said, it appears that donor support is most crucial in the network startup phase, lasting approximately five years. After this point, many networks are able to find alternate or self-generated forms of funding. Donor assistance in referring networks to other potential donors would be another positive contribution. There is much more to learn about networks and their potential as capacity builders, and ample room for further study on this issue. Additional, and more rigorous, studies should be undertaken to challenge the prevalent assertions in the field with longitudinal data. We propose that the focus of research be in areas such as the development of evaluation and assessment instruments uniquely designed for networks, the connection between network form and impact, the impact of the early impetus for network formation on what a network achieves, and the potential benefit of networks in conflict prevention and management. We also advocate the promotion of learning and information sharing about networks by donors and practitioners. Finally, we suggest the formation of a community of practice devoted to learning about networks.

In conclusion, we make the following recommendations to PVC:

- Support research in areas that will benefit PVC and the development community.

- Encourage the development of networked approaches to learning.

- Fund and support existing networks.

- Recognize the special challenges of engineered networks.

- Encourage experimentation with various methods for building organizational capacity through networks.

- Encourage capacity building for network leaders and members.

- Be flexible with the funding of networks and offer long-term support where appropriate.

Support the creation of a community of practice devoted to networks and capacity building in international development work.

Unlike national networks, global and regional networks provide an environment for information sharing, social exchange, relationship building, and even social action that is unrestricted by geography. Network members often represent the organizations with which they are associated. In other cases, the focus is on the individual, and the organization with which he or she is affiliated may or may not be known. Some networks are comprised of both organizations and individuals. Members are autonomous and usually share a common purpose or philosophy. While formal networks often have a paid staff or secretariat (often a lead organization) to help provide organization to the network, relationships within the network are non-hierarchical. It is important to distinguish the coordination function from the network itself. Most networks

involve member collaboration to some extent and often promote mutual or joint activities. The benefits provided by membership in a network increase the value of the work done by each member. Communities of practice are self-organized networks of organizations and individuals that share common work interests and practices. Communities of practice often start out as informal associations that provide a space for knowledge sharing and encouragement of new ideas. They may become more formalized over time as the perceived benefits of regular exchange increase. While often loosely structured, there is a certain amount of regularity inherent in the communication within communities of practice that differentiates them from general networking. Communities of practice generally do not engage in collective action so the motivation for participation is usually to build individual capacity for individual work (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder 2002; Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research 2002).

### **Knowledge Networks**

As the name implies, knowledge networks have a mandate to generate and disseminate information through lateral learning to the benefit of the network membership. Knowledge networks also encompass more specific networks that include an information-sharing component as part of its *raison d'être*. Like most types of networks, knowledge networks can be either informal or formal, and the level of internal structure varies accordingly. Some originate spontaneously in response to a specific issue or need, while others are planned with long-term relevancy in mind. The latter type tends to be more formal in nature, with controlled membership and clearly defined infrastructure for management and communications. In many cases, formal knowledge networks engage in the formulation of joint research and aim to extend the knowledge dissemination beyond the network itself. In contrast to communities of practice, knowledge networks are purpose-driven and built on expertise rather than interest.

Ashman evaluates networks according to seven key characteristics: pre-existing social capital, strategic fit, donor relationship, leadership commitment, governance and management, mutual trust, and joint learning. For Ashman, effective networks are formed on the basis of mutual trust created from a shared history; employ methodologies and goals that are of value to all members; manage their partnerships with donors, allowing donors to neither unilaterally set agendas nor shirk accountability; and have strong leadership both within the network and within its member organizations. Furthermore, effective networks are managed in ways in which control is shared and management coordinates activities so that all members are represented and have influence. Network members are connected to each other by ties of trust in both quality and carry through, and there is a commitment to learn together through the embrace of new experiences, activities, and partners (Ashman 2003). Church et al. employ a different typology, which centers on democracy, diversity, and dynamism of networks. For them, effective networks are democratic when organizational structures promote non-hierarchical relations, access and participation is full and equitable, and decision-making processes are inclusive. Networks have diversity when the ideas and position of all members are reflected in network disposition and activity, and relationship building is a key component of network strengthening. Networks are dynamic when action is centered on established goals, coordination is responsive and effective, and there is a multiplier effect from activities (2003).

Nuñez and Wilson-Grau utilize the methodology of Church et al., and have added a fourth category, excellence, to explain that the effectiveness and efficiency of a network are derived from the quality of its structure, relationships, and processes. They assert that effective networks contain some mechanism for coordination and facilitation, manage relationships in ways that are horizontal and contextually relevant, and promote processes that bolster institutional and member capacities (2003).

### **Examples of Network Formation**

#### **CORE**

CORE formed in response to a donor and, initially, anyone who received a Child Survival Grant from USAID was a de facto member of the network. As relationships deepened, many of the members felt that they would derive more benefit out of forming a collaborative body and leading their own capacity building. They sought assistance from USAID to do this. Many years later, CORE became a registered nonprofit as a dues-paying membership association. With that formalization came regulated membership for which

interested organizations must meet a high threshold and be approved by the other members. During a two-year transition process, the network members created bylaws and application procedures that culminated in the 502c(3) status that CORE obtained in 2001. During this process, the work itself did not change and active members did not experience much of a shift at all. The increased formality, however, responded to members' desires to institute more measures of accountability, and created an environment in which they had more ownership over their work (Karen LeBan and Lynette Walker of CORE, interview, August 6, 2004).

### *The White Ribbon Alliance*

The White Ribbon Alliance (WRA), which was actually launched at a CORE workshop, began very informally out of an existing working group, and experienced rapid growth. WRA decided to institute more formalized structures, including a secretariat, in order to facilitate information sharing. WRA sees its evolution as a four-phase process: (1) a beginning period of mobilization in which awareness was raised and interest explored; (2) a period of foundation building in which shared vision, goals, and governance structure were agreed upon; (3) a period of continuous improvement in which adjustments were made according to lessons learned; and (4) a sustainability phase, in which financial and programmatic goals take a more long-term perspective (WRA 2003).

### *NicaSalud*

The NicaSalud network arose as a donor-instigated project to provide health services to the population affected by Hurricane Mitch. As the network evolved, it created an organizational architecture that has allowed it to remain relevant after the crisis. This structure combines a regional subdivision and a grouping around topics of high-priority interest to its members. Each of the three sub-networks operates autonomously, but is in close contact with the larger NicaSalud. By accounting for different needs and interests at the regional level versus the national, the level of coordination for intra-regional interventions has increased and there is greater cohesion and consolidation at the network level (Fernando Campos Ordeñana of NicaSalud, interview, July 14, 2004).

## **Characteristics of Capacity Building Networks**

### *What factors characterize networks that build membership capacity?*

Why are some networks better at building capacity than others? If we are arguing that all effective networks build capacity simply by modeling a different way of doing things (which, if the conditions are favorable, can transfer to their member organizations), then we must grapple with what constitutes effectiveness. ICCO (2004) addresses three main characteristics that seem to be common among participants of successful networks. Although the reference here is to learning networks in particular, we feel the stated characteristics are applicable to most networks. However, a fourth characteristic must be added to the list – a characteristic that highlights the ability of successful networks to build Generative Capacities in its member organizations

#### **1. Network members must “dare to share”**

(Padron in ICCO 2004) – This means that they must feel confident enough about their work that they are willing to share it with others. A network can help make this happen by creating an open environment in which people are willing to analyze and learn from both their successes and their mistakes. While Ashman suggests that networks made up of participants with a history of working together and with a certain level of established trust have the potential to be more effective (in ICCO 2004), we wonder if with the right kind of vision, shared agenda, leadership, and social architecture, this social capital can be an output of an effective network, rather than a required input? Perhaps this means that the network will have a longer incubation and startup period before it can reach the stage of maximum effectiveness.

## 2. Networks must have the capacity to contribute

– In order to foster this capacity there must be space in the day for learning and reflection. If members are completely driven by deadlines, this space will soon get filled with other activities (Gujit et al. in ICCO 2004). Senior leadership must support the involvement of staff in the network and see it as a way in which to build the capacity of the organization (Ashman in ICCO 2004). Also, all members must have equal access to any technology that the network uses so that certain groups are not marginalized. The involvement of senior leadership is particularly important if a goal is organizational change of member groups (ICCO 2004).

## 3. Networks must be committed

– Commitment will be strong if members see the network as adding value to their work, and if the priorities of the network match their own (ICCO 2004). The authors contend that incentive grants are of little value in enticing members (Rosenfield in ICCO 2004) and that funding should not be the reason that a NGO joins a network. In fact, they suggest that a golden rule for success may be to let a network start from its own resources with the idea that initial self-reliance builds commitment (Padron in ICCO 2004). The authors are quick to mention, however, that this does not mean that networks do not need funding for the activities they would like to undertake. It is our contention that networks also need funding to help support a facilitator, coordinator, or staff of some sort that is able to spend the time required to nurture relationships and tend to the mechanics of keeping the group together. It is important that careful attention is given to these aspects when funding is initially proposed.

## 4. Networks must build Generative Capacities

– The Generative Capacities presented in the Framework of Contemporary Capacities for NGO Excellence on Page 37 are applicable to networks as well as NGOs. We posit that networks have the potential to build these capacities in their members simply by giving members the opportunity to practice these skills while participating in the life of the network. More simply, networks must exhibit these Generative Capacities themselves before they can build them in other organizations. There are certainly many other elements that go into network effectiveness, and a number of these are beginning to be addressed by networks and organizations. One such example that addresses these issues in a practitioner-oriented way is the soon-to-be published *Network Strengthening Action Guide* written by PACT, a founding member of the Impact Alliance. This guide examines issues, including clarifying strategic intention and choosing a form of collaborative organizing that fits that intention, strategies for effective governance and management, the critical role that leadership plays, and the importance of communication and connectivity.

### *What more can be done to leverage the potential of networks as capacity builders?*

In addition to helping networks be as effective as possible, what else can be done to leverage their potential as capacity builders? Networks do not often form with an organizational capacity building goal in mind unless, of course, they are engineered by donors or others with a capacity building agenda. One approach, therefore, may be to simply heighten their awareness of the potential that they have to help bring about changes in the organizations of their members. It is also important to educate NGOs about some of the capacities that can be learned through participation in a network. This learning requires opportunities for self-reflection as well as a focus on process and content. Even networks whose priority is to work on a thematic issue or deliver services must take time to reflect on how the network is functioning and what is being learned about such topics as *leadership*, balancing cooperation and competition, using technology, working across traditional boundaries, and using innovative approaches for joint learning. Network members must also understand what excellence looks like in these and other areas, and what other networks have done that has worked particularly well. This means that members must have some standard against which to measure themselves and some models of effectiveness.

Networks that desire to make an impact on their members' organizations may need to recruit a broader base of participation from each organization so that a critical mass is bringing ideas and innovations to the

organization. Finally, if organizational capacity building is not one of a network's main activities, the network may want to consider partnering with a local capacity building service provider. This provider could bolster those capacities that networks are not particularly good at building. For instance, it could focus on the external and internal organization capacity areas.

## **Donor Policies and Practices**

### ***Are there donor policies and practices that appear to contribute to, or constrain network effectiveness, impact and viability? What Makes Networks Attractive to Donors?***

Just as networks are attractive to NGOs for a variety of reasons elaborated above, networks are attractive to donors as well. Perhaps Beryl Levinger sums it up best when she says that "bilateral assistance has gone from retail to wholesale" (interview, August 20, 2004). Both thought leaders and network representatives recognize the appeal of networks to donors. Networks are perceived by donors as a useful vehicle for achieving greater efficiency and more direct accountability (Beryl Levinger, interview, August 20, 2004), as well as reducing the required bureaucratic correspondence with individual organizations (Elizabeth Burleigh of Pro Redes Salud, interview, July 15, 2004). Donors often benefit from the standardization of administrative and financial processes as well as from monitoring and evaluation (Elizabeth Burleigh of Pro Redes Salud, interview, July 15, 2004). Donors also realize that networks provide checks and balances to individual organizations and network leadership by increasing transparency and equity, and minimizing opportunities for individuals to act in their own self-interest (Emmanuel Bombande of WANEP, interview, August 13, 2004). Networks also provide NGOs with opportunities for donor exposure because they attest to their credibility and potential for future partnership.

## **Recommendations for the Future**

### ***What are the gaps in our knowledge about networks, and what should be the direction of future learning and practice?***

Our final research question concerned the gaps in our knowledge about networks and posited the question of what should be our future learning agenda in this field. We were interested in determining some of the next steps that we take as a community to help set a direction for learning about networks and their potential. There is much more to learn about networks and their potential as capacity builders, and ample room for further study on this issue. The lack of longitudinal data has made it difficult to back up the prevalent assertions in the field, and we must repeat that this study is all about perception.

There is the need for more rigorous study of the capacities of networks, and we recommend the following steps:

#### ***1 Support Research in Areas That Will Benefit Community Development.***

Research in any of the myriad issues below will do a great deal to further our understanding of networks and their potential to effect change. There are many donors and research organizations that can be supported and a multitude of strong networks that are worthy of study. If research is designed as a learning and capacity building intervention in itself, the potential impact may be further increased.

##### ***1) Develop evaluation and assessment instruments that are uniquely designed for networks***

– This was mentioned to us as a vital need by the majority of thought leaders we interviewed. We have already pointed out the dangers in treating networks as institutions, and there is consensus in the field that traditional approaches to monitoring and evaluation are not appropriate. We commend the work done by authors such as Darcy Ashman and Marilee Karl in support of new ways to look at networks. There is

room, however, for more study in this area.

### ***2) Conduct more research on the connection between network form and impact***

– We have discussed the myriad of organizational forms that networks can take and asserted that the form should be related to the particular objectives for which the network is created or has developed. What we do not know, however, is whether there are tried and true methods for achieving certain objectives that are distinctly related to network form. Rigorous study on this theme would be a significant contribution to the field.

### ***3) Conduct research on how early impetus for network formation impacts what a network achieves***

– We have discussed the distinction between what we are calling “organic” and “engineered” networks, but the question remains whether they are really all that different. Much more work needs to be done to compare these types of networks and to try and connect them to network success.

### ***4) Study the potential benefit of networks in conflict prevention and management***

We were unable to uncover any studies conducted in this area, but have some indications that in certain fragile environments, networks that have built strong enough social capital can survive periods of conflict, and even provide a mechanism for communication to continue between various factions in a conflict situation. Focused research in this area would be another significant contribution to the field.

## **2 Promote Learning and Information Sharing on Networks by Donors and Practitioners**

ICCO is one recent organization to highlight this step for donors, maintaining that “[e]valuating specific donor experiences and sharing ‘best practices’ seems to be very urgently needed in this field; it might provide the much needed practical insights into the way donor agencies may effectively participate in promoting networking and learning” (2004). In this way, donors become learning organizations as well. A key element to this is the openness to do that which Theresa Shaver of the White Ribbon Alliance calls “embracing error.” The sharing across networks and donors must involve not just what works, but also what is not working (interview, August 12, 2004).

## ***3 Encourage the Development of Networked Approaches to Learning***

Rising recognition of the value of knowledge management is changing our traditional notions of knowledge, information sharing, and technical assistance. Networked approaches to learning, within or without networks, are quintessential ways to exponentially increase the value of learning. Making use of innovation that is occurring at the ground levels of development can do a great deal to more effectively plan development interventions that will achieve the desired impact and be efficient.

One of the advantages to networking for learning is that it moves away from the traditional concepts of knowledge transfer, which usually focus on a transfer from northern NGOs to southern ones. This notion has characterized much of development assistance in the past. However, a partnership methodology building on the knowledge and experiences of diverse actors in the international development arena is more effective. This approach marks a significant shift toward understanding and appreciating the value of “tacit” knowledge obtained through experiential learning, which supplements and in many cases surpasses the value of “explicit” knowledge obtained from books and workshops. Capacity building in this way changes from being mostly supply-driven to demand-driven, and consequently ensures maximum utility of the capacities that are addressed (Japan International Cooperation Agency et al. 2003). Networking for learning avoids many of the pitfalls associated with technical cooperation, and marks a significant development in the field.



#### ***4 Fund and Support Existing Networks***

In any environment, networks can be fragile and need a great deal of calculated support to help them maximize their potential. Those that evolve organically out of existing social capital are in the best positions to weather the complexities of network formation and evolution. Targeting resources toward core support of existing networks, particularly in the first five years of their life cycles, places networks in the best position to achieve their objectives and become leaders in the discourse on network effectiveness.

#### ***5 Recognize the Special Challenges of Engineered Networks***

Closely related to the above recommendation is the notion that network members and the donors that support them must pay special attention not to lose sight of the real reasons for forming or participating in a given network. When network formation is done without serious consideration of the amount of existing social capital among members, the structural support best for efficient and effective functioning, and the coordination of horizontal relationships among members, the network is not in a strong position to succeed. Networks that are formed in response to significant donor funding or PVO support must take special care to ensure that members retain ownership of network activities and stay true to their mutually agreed upon purpose.

#### ***6 Encourage Experimentation with Various Methods for Building Organizational Capacity Through Networks***

Networks that wish to promote capacity building for their members in any area have a variety of methods from which to choose, and we recommend experimentation with these and any future methods that may develop. With the help of a local capacity building provider, networks interested in organizational development can bring targeted interventions to members through training programs, on-site coaching, or organizational-wide efforts to undertake strategic planning, team building, and other interventions. Also, it may be possible to design networks that are formed for the principal function of organizational development. This would involve entire organizations instead of the particular units or individuals within organizations, which is typically how organizations participate in networks.

#### ***7 Encourage Capacity Building for Network Leaders and Members***

Since networks depend almost exclusively on the human capital that runs them, support for building the capacities of network leaders and members is crucial. Networks are not organizations, and leading them requires the embodiment of innovative leadership principles that are relevant to the particular challenges and complexities of an ever-evolving entity of multiple and equal stakeholders. At the same time, network members need to recognize the extreme importance of their contributions and develop key capacities necessary for participating in networks effectively. In particular, training programs in the Generative Capacity area are important.

#### ***8 Support the Creation of a Community of Practice Devoted to Networks and Capacity Building in International Development Work***

Our research has shown that there is no shortage of thinkers, practitioners, and funders intensely interested in the great potential that networks have to build capacities within their members and within the communities in which they serve. A Peer Learning Event held at PACT in 2004 was a crucial step in this direction. We believe in particular that a focus on the Generative Capacities that we have outlined in this study will be a valuable contribution to any future work done in this area. Forming a community of practice is one very concrete way in which to further many of the recommendations cited above.



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## **TANZANIA ASSOCIATION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION (TANGO)**

The **Tanzania** Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (**TANGO**) is the largest and longest standing national umbrella organization serving the **Tanzanian NGO** community. It was founded in **1988** by **22** NGOs. The coalition now has a membership of more than **500 NGOs** and collaborating with 30 district and 6 regional generic **NGO** networks. As an umbrella body it is committed to promoting the well being of its constituency by acting as a unifying organ and mandated representative in advocating for transformation for the common good.

**TANGO** envisions a strong and vibrant society in **Tanzania** where **NGOs** are taking an active and effective role in promoting people-centered development. **TANGO** seeks to participate in advancing development initiatives that are based on the values of **justice, peace, good governance, human rights, gender equality and equity, and sustainable human development.**

**TANGO's** Secretariat is composed of ten fulltime staff working in inter-connected functional departments. The Executive Director is the Chief Executive Officer for the organisation and is responsible for the overall implementation, supervision and reports to the Executive Committee. The highest governance body of **TANGO** is its General Assembly composed of all members that takes place every three years where a new Executive Committee is democratically elected.

**KIHO** shall become one of the members of **TANGO** so that it can share with other NGOs in promoting development in Tanzania.

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Karl, Marilee

General details of the organization who collaborate for this survey:

Institution	City	Country
Accademia europea di Firenze	Firenze	Italy
Audele	Montevideo	Uruguay
Eurogems	Treviso	Italy
Kilimanjaro Hope Organization	Moshi	Tanzania
Regional Association for Rural Development (ARDR)	Targu_Jiu	Romania
Zavod Voluntariat	Ljubljana	Slovenia
Czech Youth Programme the duke of Edinburgh's award	Prague	Czech Republic
Agenda Globo Siglo 21	Rosario	Argentina
International Initiatives for Cooperation	Razlog	Bulgaria
Dirección Xeral de Xuventude e Voluntariado	Santiago de Compostela	Spagna
Instituto Recriando	Aracaju	Brazil

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