



Networking and Relationship Building for CSOs

Course Toolkit



Cyprus
September 2007

Prepared by Indrani Sigamany

Introduction – About the Toolkit

This “Networking and Relationship Building for CSOs” Course Toolkit has been produced as part of the broader **Cypriot Civil Society Strengthening Programme** implemented by **INTRAC** (International NGO Training and Research Centre) www.intrac.org, UK, The Management centre of the Mediterranean www.mc-med.org and NGO Support Centre, www.ngo-sc.org, Cyprus.

This toolkit is intended for use by Cypriot CSOs – we hope you find these materials useful – please let us know if you have any feedback!

Networking and Relationship Building Course Objectives

- To discuss the importance of working together within the Cypriot context
- To review types and models of partnerships, including social partnerships
- To explore the development of networking
- To look at the existing debates around Partnerships & networking
- To discuss potential benefits, limits and limitations of relationships
- To consider issues of accountability and shared governance
- To unpack the dynamics of power within relationships
- To understand the link between successful relationships and a strong civil society

HOME GROUP RESPONSIBILITIES

You will be in your Home Group for the duration of the workshop.

You should agree a name for the group.

TASKS

(a) During each day, Home Group members should check with each other that there are no language or other practical problems. If there are, these should be raised with the facilitators.

(b) At the end of each day, all Home Groups should meet together for about 15 minutes to discuss the following:

What went well today.

What could have been better.

Suggestions for the remainder of the workshop.

Each group should select one workshop member to represent the group's views to the facilitators at the End-of-Day Review Meeting.

(c) In addition, on a rota basis, each of the Home Groups will have the following 'duty day' responsibilities:

Time-keeping to ensure that facilitators and participants keep to time.

Monitoring energy levels and suggesting short breaks when necessary (or introducing energiser exercises when appropriate).

On the morning following your group's 'duty day', group members will be expected to start the day with an energiser exercise and conduct a participatory review of the previous day's learning. The review should be fun and take no more than 10 minutes.

Peer Consultancies

During this session you will work in triads to:

- present a 'live' issue or challenge you are experiencing concerning a relationship or a partnership
- act as 'consultants' to each other in order to develop strategies for managing the issue
- describe the issue or problem (use your rich picture)
- pose the issue as an open question
- consultants help to clarify the issue and enable **you** to identify possible solutions
- agree (at least) two action points



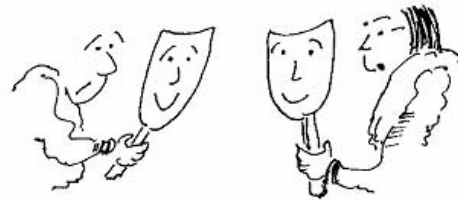
CURRENT RELATIONSHIPS

Name of Partner	How did you choose the partner?	In what ways do you benefit from the relationship?	What do you contribute to the relationship?	What issues (problems, challenges or plans) are you currently dealing with in the relationship?	How do you currently assess what capacity building support is needed by your partner?

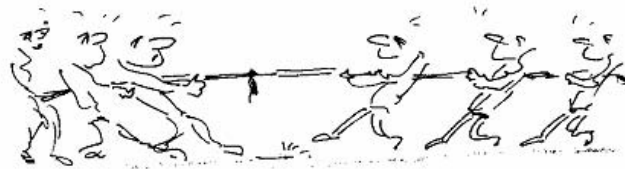
Key principles of partnership...

equity...

equity



transparency



mutual benefit...

mutual benefit

prepared for INTRAC by Indrani
Sigamany

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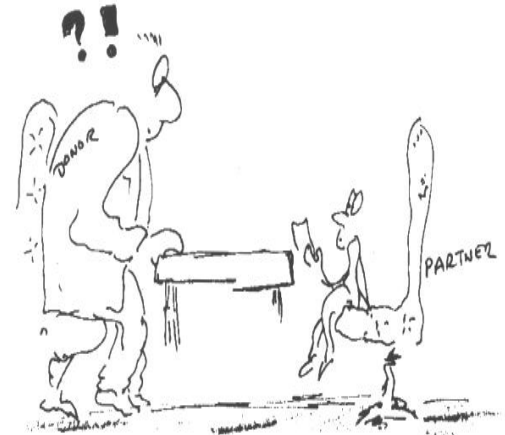
← / www.thepartneringintiafive.org

What makes a good partner

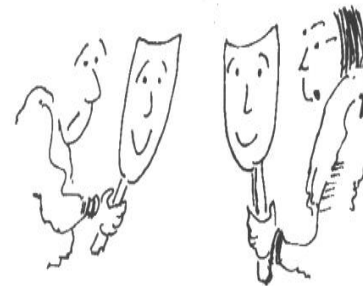
Someone who:

- **wants the partnership to succeed**
- **seeks win-win solutions**
- is **open and clear** about their own goals
- **listens well** and responds to other views
- is **prepared to trust**
- has **integrity** and **acts consistently**
- **effectively carries out their tasks** and responsibilities
- **respects others** and their contributions
- is **not prepared to sweep difficulties under the carpet**
- can be **flexible but retains focus**
- **understands how partners depend on one another**
- **leads their colleagues** in support of collaboration

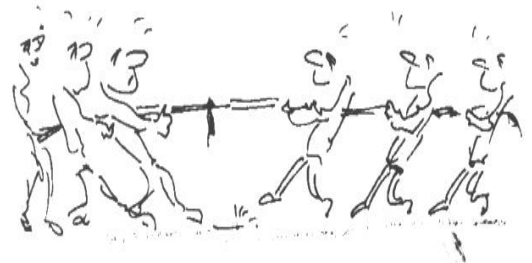
equity...



transparency...



mutual benefit...



Are you a good partner?

Bill Crooks 15/03/04

HANDOUT: MATRIX: IDENTIFYING OBSTACLES

OBSTACLES	OBSTACLES THAT ARE OPEN TO YOUR INFLUENCE AND HOW?	OBSTACLES THAT ARE BEYOND YOUR CONTROL AND WHY?
INTERNAL OBSTACLES		
EXTERNAL OBSTACLES		
OTHER OBSTACLES		

Handout

PERSONAL APPROACHES TO OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

APPROACH	SUGGESTION
Developing better skills	Use acceptable and not inflammatory language to soothe, rather than aggravate, a sensitive situation
Widening experience base	Go to see the Local Authority / department / an NGO in action if you have insufficient knowledge about the ways they work, and are finding partnership building hard
Thinking / acting strategically	Step back from an obstacle, analyse it, discuss it with colleagues whose advice you trust, and develop a strategy
Responding well to difficulties	Maintain objectivity, even in the midst of difficult situations. Provide a good role model for your colleagues and be conscious that the way you react will influence them
Modifying your behaviour	Look at what you might do differently. A sudden change in your behaviour (becoming assertive rather than passive, or vice versa) can sometimes `unlock` a tense situation or relationship
Building credibility	Prove your determination and good judgement over time
Contributing to `climate change`	If the circumstances are unsympathetic to partnership initiatives, mobilise support to challenge and change attitudes and organisations. Become a campaigner

Adapted from Managing Partnerships: Tools for mobilising the public sector, business and civil society as partners in development. R Tennyson. The Prince of Wales Trust. 1998

Handout

Scenario	An Albanian municipality with high unemployment, extensive deficits in services, a comparatively high rate of social exclusion and low revenues with which to address them.
Mayor's concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The budget is insufficient to meet priority needs • NGOs and the media are critical of inaction • Local authority staff are demoralised
Mayor's aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To meet his electoral promise to clean up the city, increase revenues and improve services • To establish an investment park to attract investors for light industry
NGO concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no recognition by the municipality of the contribution they are making to improving the poorest citizen's conditions
NGO aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To address youth unemployment in the city by providing skills training • To improve urban waste disposal and re-establish parks and leisure areas • To develop small scale income generation activities for those below the poverty line • To lobby the municipal authorities for support for their actions

HANDOUT: Negotiation Styles

Factual: tries to influence by presentation of the facts
Emphasis on detail and documentation

Intuitive: tries to influence by stressing the benefits of a solution
Emphasis is on the creative approach to new possibilities

Normative: tries to influence by an appeal to a common set of beliefs
Emphasis on a fair solution
Behaviours tend to be based on emotions

Analytical: tries to influence by showing causal relationships between parts
and then synthesising them

You have these unconscious preferences and you need to be aware of them

The person/people you are trying to influence will also have their own unconscious preferences, and you need to recognise them

You need to be able to `speak the same language`

Handout

NGOs and the State in Bulgaria: Towards Greater Cooperation

Luben Panov

An Image Problem

NGOs and the state in Bulgaria have often had a difficult, even strained, relationship with each other. In the beginning of the 1990s, NGOs (especially foundations) had a very liberal financial regime which gave rise to the problem of abuse of the existing benefits – at that time foundations were big importers of cigarettes, alcohol, etc. After this scandal all tax and customs benefits for foundations were abolished. Since then, foundations have had a negative image in society. It took more than 10 years to improve the public perception of foundations.

New Laws

The first step towards meaningful legal reform to make NGOs legitimate partners of government was the adoption of the new NGO Law in 2000 which introduced the concept of “public benefit organisations” (PBOs). The newly adopted status of PBO implied in itself the creation of special incentives (financial, tax, etc.) for these organisations, as their mission and role would be to help the state fulfil its social responsibilities although no special incentives were contained in the NGO law. Therefore the next step in the reform process was the adoption of new tax laws, which created incentives for donations to PBOs. Through such tax reform, the state began to recognise the importance of stimulating public benefit organisations, and linking stricter regulations with greater tax incentives.

Continuing Mistrust

The state, however, continued to demonstrate mistrust for NGOs. Subsequent tax reform initiatives seeking to stimulate PBOs by reducing the taxation of income from economic activities and eliminating VAT on donations received were rejected by the state. More recent scandals relating to foundations supporting political parties have made enabling fiscal reform very difficult in the near future. Hopefully, the government will understand the benefit of having and supporting public benefit organisations.

Civil Society Committee

The current Bulgarian government has shown a greater openness to working with NGOs. When the new Parliament was formed, a special standing committee to discuss issues related to the development of civil society was created – the Civil Society Committee. The creation of the Civil Society Committee was a good idea. It gives NGOs a good opportunity to present their issues before the parliamentary institutions. Unfortunately, however, there are several obstacles which prevent it from becoming a forum where all issues relating to civil society can be discussed. One problem is that civil society is diverse and amorphous and cannot be represented through a single committee. Even on basic issues such as the legal framework for NGOs (registration, taxation, operation), the committee can only give consultative opinions as the respective laws (e.g. the tax laws) are considered an area of special interest of various other committees (in the case of tax laws, this is the budget and finance committee).

Public Council

To increase its legitimacy, the Civil Society Committee designed its own consultative body called the Public Council which consisted of NGO representatives from different fields of expertise and different geographic regions. The aim of the Public Council was to advise the committee on various issues related to civil society. The Council members have the right to participate in the meetings of the committee without voting rights. One problem is that Council members from the regions have problems coming to Sofia for a two-hour meeting each week. But the more serious problem is that the role of the Council has been more reactive than proactive; its agenda is based on the legal drafts introduced in Parliament that have been assigned to the Civil Society Committee. The Council's challenge is to promote its own agenda in Parliament.

Compact

One of the first joint initiatives between the Civil Society Committee and a number of leading NGOs was an initiative to create a Bulgarian Compact to govern relations between NGOs and public institutions. It was to take the form of a declaration by Parliament as it was meant to show the general attitude of the state towards NGOs. During its preparation, NGOs recognised that only they were pushing the initiative forward and that the state was unengaged and uninterested. Thus, the process of drafting the Compact has stopped. The truth is that probably the state still does not view NGOs as fully legitimate partners in public affairs.

Partnership in Service Provision

There are areas in which the process of NGO-government partnership is developing well. A good example is the social sphere and the provision of social services (the term social services is interpreted narrowly under Bulgarian law to include only "services designed to promote and expand the potential of individuals to exercise an independent life" – in other words, it excludes areas such as health care and education). With the latest legislative amendments (December 2002), the right of municipalities to contract with independent providers of social services, including NGOs, is for the first time explicitly recognised. The new law requires an open competition to select the service provider. In addition, the law facilitates joint social work between NGOs and municipalities (or government institutions).

NGOs are currently excluded from other potential areas of cooperation. The best example in this respect is health care. In Bulgaria, hospitals and other health institutions cannot be organised as NGOs (but only as commercial companies or cooperatives). There is now a draft in Parliament allowing PBOs to perform health activities, prepared after a careful study of European Union and US legislation and a broad public discussion with NGOs working in the social sphere. Hopefully the draft will be adopted.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is necessary for the state to understand the potential NGOs have in providing public services. Such recognition is fundamentally important and will change the attitude of the state towards the Third Sector. To generate better understanding, however, it is necessary for NGOs to learn to market their own successes and abilities. There are many NGOs doing good things but the general public usually does not hear about their work. Instead, public perception is based on the negative media coverage of those few organisations that are in no way representative of the whole sector.

Luben Panov.

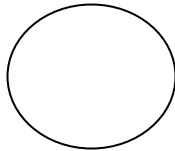
Web: www.bcnl.org

First published in SEAL (Social Economy and Law Journal), Winter 2003 - Spring 2004. See <http://www.efc.be/publications/sealabstract.html>.

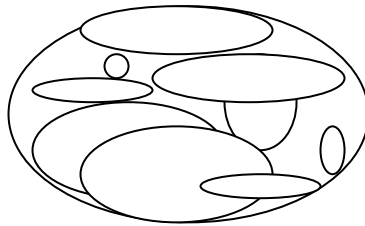
Handout

NETWORKS

Networks are a powerful mechanism for sustainable development of any sort. They can be dynamic and are a good example of working in partnership in which the whole



Is worth the sum of all it's parts:



Networks are a powerful mechanism for

- Sharing information and knowledge
- Promoting communication
- Acting as effective catalysts for building up relationships and commitment among the public, private and civil stakeholders
- Promoting coordination at the local, national, regional and international levels
- Building trusting relationships
- Serving as mutual learning and capacity building mechanisms
- Bringing multiple stakeholders together
- Activating the interface between knowledge and action

Informal Networks and Formal Networks

Informal Networks:

(a) community of practice

Communities of Practice develop when organisations/people come together voluntarily. These networks are defined by KNOWLEDGE and EXPERIENCE, not by specific tasks to be completed in a specific amount of time. Very little administration is involved, and people participate because they have a real need. To know what others are doing.

(b) social networks

Social Networks are Maps of personal, friendly or business relationships consisting of informal, individual relations between professionals or friends. There is no deliberately defined purpose, and they grow organically, and are not actively planned or managed.

Social networks play an important part in managing daily private and working lives. They can be recreational, informative (book clubs), helpful in times of need. (in smaller communities, people rally in times of death)

Formal Networks:

These can be defined as interrelated groups of several independent institutions or organisations, established for a specific need or according to a specific design.

Members share a set of common activities, and they meet regularly. Sometimes they have legal arrangement, and they usually require a subscription.

This is based on common needs of members, and a goal of achieving change in their own contexts.

Formal Networks also form around political agendas of countries and regions.

In development cooperation, formal networks consist of NGOs, government organisations, development agencies, and other regional and national or international organisations.

Differences between Networks and other organisations

(a) Culture of 'giving and receiving'

Membership is a main feature of a network and members participate but can also remain autonomous. They are providers of services to other members within the network, and at the same time they also receive services from other members. This culture of giving and receiving is at the core of every network.

(b) decentralisation

Networks, are characterised by *decentralisation*. Members can be scattered all over the world if it is an international network. Networks can be regional or national, or local.

(c) Living Organisms

Each networks is unique, and it's members influence its nature and management.

Networks are dynamic and complex, and their outcomes are unpredictable.

Taken from Work the Net, GTZ

Handout for Networks

Networks

MECHANISMS THAT HAVE HELPED ENSURE HIGH LEVELS OF MUTUAL TRUST

Meetings and Communication

Annual face-to-face meetings

- Open and frank discussions
- Willingness and ability to co-operate constructively and work hard and creatively together
- Frequent exchanges together with the interchange of ideas
- Good safety standards on email
- Meetings held under 'Chatham House' [off-the-record] rules

Membership and commitment

- Personal experience of the country by members and an understanding of the issues and problems
- Long-term commitment to the issues and the welfare of the people
- Very high moral standards, integrity and skill
- Meeting of equals
- Everyone has something different to offer
- Relatively small circle, with similarity of views and interests
- Clarity and limits about who can be a member, given the circumstances and the nature of the work

Consensus and autonomy

- Institutional limitations are respected and honoured
- No attempt to force cooperation
- No attempt to over-represent the level of consensus; each action initiated by the Secretariat leaves open the option to sign off or not; only those who have signed off on an action are actually listed

Handout

CHECKLIST FOR NETWORKS

The idea of this set of criteria is to provide a broad checklist of characteristics that networks tend to share and some potential questions you might like to ask when thinking about doing monitoring and evaluation. Some will apply to the capacity-building functions of a network, others to a lobbying function. Many networks have combined goals.

Similarly some will be more relevant to a tightly-focused limited task network, in which membership might be limited to those with relevant contacts and skills, and others to looser and more open-ended exchange networks.

This list is the result of extensive reading done for this project, and is intended as guidance only. To be useful in understanding the *process* aspects of working in a networked way. *How* you decide on what work to do, who does it and *how* you do the work together. And, of course, what questions you need to ask about its value.

1. What is a network?

'Networks are energising and depend crucially on the motivation of members'
(Networks for Development, 2000:35)

This definition is one that is broadly shared across the literature, although it is more detailed than some.

A network has:

- **A common purpose** derived from shared perceived need for **action**
- **Clear objectives** and **focus**
- **A non-hierarchical** structure

A network encourages:

- **Voluntary participation** and **commitment**
- **The input** of resources by members for benefit of all

A network provides:

- **Benefit** derived from participation and linking

2. What does a network do?

- Facilitate shared space for exchange, learning, development – the capacity-building aspect
- Act for change in areas where none of members is working in systematic way – the advocacy, lobbying and campaigning aspect
- Include a range of stakeholders – the diversity/ broad-reach aspect

3. What are the guiding principles and values?

- Collaborative action
- Respect for diversity
- Enabling marginalised voices to be heard
- Acknowledgement of power differences, and commitment to equality

4. How do we do what we do, in accordance with our principles and values?

Building Participation

- Knowing the membership, what each can put in, and what each seeks to gain
- Valuing what people can put in
- Making it possible for them to do so
- Seeking commitment to a minimum contribution
- Ensuring membership is appropriate to the purpose and tasks
- Encouraging members to be realistic about what they can give
- Ensuring access to decision-making and opportunities to reflect on achievements
- Keeping internal structural and governance requirements to a necessary minimum.

Building Relationships and Trust

- Spending time on members getting to know each other, especially face-to-face
- Coordination point/secretariat has relationship-building as vital part of work
- Members/secretariat build relations with others outside network - strategic individuals and institutions

Facilitative Leadership (may be one person, or rotating, or a team)

- Emphasis on quality of input rather than control
- Knowledgeable about issues, context and opportunities,
- Enabling members to contribute and participate
- Defining a vision and articulating aims
- Balancing the creation of forward momentum and action, with generating consensus
- Understanding the dynamics of conflict and how to transform relations
- Promoting regular monitoring and participatory evaluation

Fostering diversity and dynamism

'too loose a structure ..drains potential and continuity, and too heavy a structure .. stifles initiative and innovation'.

(Networks for Development, 2000:28)

- Have the minimum structure and rules necessary to do the work. Ensure governance is light, not strangling.
Give members space to be dynamic.
- Encourage all those who can make a contribution to the overall goal to do so, even if it is small.

Working toward decentralised and democratic governance

- At the centre, make only the decisions that are vital to continued functioning. Push decision-making outwards.
- Ensure that those with least resources and power have the opportunity to participate in a meaningful way.

Building Capacity

- Encourage all to share the expertise they have to offer. Seek out additional expertise that is missing.

5. What are the evaluation questions that we can ask about these generic qualities? How do each contribute to the achievement of your aims and objectives?

Participation

- What are the differing levels or layers of participation across the network?
- Are people participating as much as they are able to and would like?
- Is the membership still appropriate to the work of the network? Purpose and membership may have evolved over time
- Are opportunities provided for participation in decision-making and reflection?
- What are the obstacles to participation that the network can do something about?

Trust

- What is the level of trust between members? Between members and secretariat?
- What is the level of trust between non-governing and governing members?
- How do members perceive levels of trust to have changed over time?
- How does this differ in relation to different issues?
- What mechanisms are in place to enable trust to flourish? How might these be strengthened?

Leadership

- Where is leadership located?
- Is there a good balance between consensus-building and action?
- Is there sufficient knowledge and analytical skill for the task?
- What kind of mechanism is in place to facilitate the resolution of conflicts?

Structure and control

- How is the structure felt and experienced? Too loose, too tight, facilitating, strangling?
- Is the structure appropriate for the work of the network?
- How much decision-making goes on?
- Where are most decisions taken? Locally, centrally, not taken?
- How easy is it for change in the structure to take place?

Diversity and dynamism

- How easy is it for members to contribute their ideas and follow-through on them?

- If you map the scope of the network through the membership, how far does it reach? Is this as broad as intended? Is it too broad for the work you are trying to do?

Democracy

- What are the power relationships within the network? How do the powerful and less powerful interrelate? Who sets the objectives, has access to the resources, participates in the governance?

Factors to bear in mind when assessing sustainability

- Change in key actors, internally or externally; succession planning is vital for those in central roles
- Achievement of lobbying targets or significant change in context leading to natural decline in energy;
- Burn out and declining sense of added value of network over and above every-day work.
- Membership in networks tends to be fluid. A small core group can be a worry if it does not change and renew itself over time, but snapshots of moments in a network's life can be misleading. In a flexible, responsive environment members will fade in and out depending on the 'fit' with their own priorities. Such changes may indicate dynamism rather than lack of focus.
- Decision-making and participation will be affected by the priorities and decision-making processes of members' own organisations.
- Over-reaching, or generating unrealistic expectations may drive people away
- Asking same core people to do more may diminish reach, reduce diversity and encourage burn-out

Handout

Group Exercise on Networks

Network Nuggets

Evaluation

Evaluation in the network context needs to pay attention to how networks foster participation by their members, how a network adds value to the work of its participants, and how linking participants and their work together across time and space can mobilise greater forces for change. Evaluation needs to be able to analyse that change both internally, at the level of processes, and externally, at the level of influencing activities.

On our understanding of networks

The world is becoming a networked environment. This is having a profound impact on the way we organise at the local, national and international level. We need to find new ways to think and talk and make meaning about our linked work.

Informal networks have been the basis of family, community, and even politics for centuries. However, particularly in the field of international development, the formal network has become the modern organisational form.

Many positive characteristics are attributed to networks, not least their capacity to challenge and change embedded power relations.

Networks have the potential to connect diverse actors, in many countries and at many levels. People participate through commitment to a shared purpose, as autonomous decision-making agents, joined together through shared values. People undertake activities together, often simultaneously, often spread across geographical space. It is the linked nature of the work, and the quality of participation in the shared space of the network, that makes this kind of working unique.

four Ds of core attributes of networked working.:
- diversity, dynamism,
democracy and decentralisation -
Chambers (1997)

Trust and relationship

Relationship is of fundamental importance. When autonomous individuals organise to do something together, and when that autonomy and diversity constitute our basic 'resources', the relationship between those diverse people constitutes the connective tissue of the 'network being'. These relationships are strengthened as trust grows. Trust grows through working together and reflecting together on that work. Acting together is born out of shared values, values that also need to be revisited and articulated over time.

Part of that trust-building work is done by the co-ordination function, in a constantly engaged process of knowing the members, facilitating their interaction, helping them to be in connection with one another. Coordinator(s) facilitate and lead.

Network structures in this field tend to have a co-ordination centre or secretariat, and a management or representative committee as a minimum. Too tight a structure, with many rules and regulations for participation may strangle creative spirit, diversity and dynamism. Too much time spent on internal business and management is draining. Too light a structure demands that very high levels of trust are present, which is generally only possible in smaller networks.

While structure needs to evolve with the network, and respond to the demands of the network, the ideal is the minimum structure and decision-making necessary to encourage democratisation, diversity, decentralisation and dynamism in our practice,

Participation

Participation is a key word for network working. Individuals and institutions join together voluntarily to work for a common purpose without losing their autonomy or identity. A network depends for its vitality, dynamism and capacity for creative action on the quality and extent of that participation.

Clarity of purpose helps to ensure that participants know what to expect and what they can offer.

Evaluation in the network context needs to pay attention to how networks foster participation by their members, how a network adds value to the work of its participants, and how linking participants and their work together across time and space can mobilise greater forces for change.

Evaluation needs to be able to analyse that change both internally, at the level of processes, and externally, at the level of influencing activities.

Channels of Participation

This helps the network to understand how and where the members are interacting with the network, and what their priorities are. By acknowledging and monitoring the channels through which members interact, a network can begin to explain the nature of participation.

Check-list for Networks

This gives an overview of how a network works, with suggested evaluation questions covering:

- Participation
 - Relationship-building and trust
 - Facilitative leadership
 - Structure and Control
 - Diversity and Dynamism
 - Decentralisation and Democracy
-

Networks can be a repository for the combined analytical intelligence of its members, and stimulate better, more creative and debated responses in the very challenging work of human rights protection, peacebuilding and international development. This 'creative space' enables reciprocal learning to occur

Cost-benefit

Networks fulfil fundamentally a process role, one of facilitating exchange, joint strategizing, sharing of analysis, and building of relationships.

The maximum benefit at minimum cost comes when the members work separately but together, pursuing institutional objectives which are affected by the joint strategic thinking of the network, and can be put to the service of the network's shared understanding and analysis.

The members do the work, using the capacity of the coordinator/facilitator to foster creative thinking, share ideas, and support one another's lead activities when they can.

Networks take time to consolidate, and get established. Network co-ordinators working over the long-term increase the whole network's capacity to understand its environment, the potential contributions of members, and the connections and relationships that need to be built along the way. Medium to long-term thinking is essential if institutional memory is to be retained and relationships nurtured.

The skill sharing, exchange of experience and information aspects of networks enable capacity building, reduces duplication of work, while at the same time improving responsiveness.

Networks' have a capacity to engender dialogue across diverse groups, address global problems through global action locally rooted; reduce isolation, and increase potential for political or social action.

They emphasise networks' capacity to engender dialogue across diverse groups, address global problems through global action locally rooted; reduce isolation, and increase potential for political or social action.

Once people have worked together on something, in a network pattern, they see the need or desire to continue to do so. There are four reasons, or whys: information sharing; advocacy; capacity-building and greater participation/less hierarchy.

The added value of networks for those involved in them: dialogue across diverse groups, ideas-sharing, addressing global problems through global action; overcoming isolation, increasing potential for political or social action; respecting diversity, linking the international to the local; being inclusive; flexibility and responsiveness; capacity to do more together than alone.

The core business of a network is **process**, that of **networking**, working with other points in the web. This process is diffuse, difficult to capture, a process that happens in the spaces and connection points, a process that belongs to the autonomous members and participants. These processes are formal and informal. Members fade in and out according to priorities, interests, conflicts. This is part of the norm of a network environment.

The work of the co-ordinator or secretariat is built on process - relationship-building, facilitating, enthusing, enabling, circulating resources, adding value where needed....Looking at process activities and output activities together indicates that one cannot happen without the other, and that if the process activities (the relationship/trust-building) are faltering the output activities will become harder and harder to implement.'

'Network structure must not only be satisfactory in substance, it must also develop through relationships and processes that satisfy network participants. Therefore, issues of network structure such as representation, finances, and governance must be addressed through iterative consideration in a participatory fashion as the network takes shape.' (Allen Nan 1999:15)

Trust and other forms of social capital are moral resources that operate in fundamentally different manner than physical capital. The supply of trust increases, rather than decreases, with use: indeed, trust can be depleted if not used.' (Powell 1996:52)

Too loose a structure .. drains potential and continuity, and too heavy a structure .. stifles initiative and innovation.' (HIV and Development Programme & UNAIDS, 2000:28)

Trusting trust and collaboration

What of trust? How does an understanding of trust help us to see what kind of structure we need?

Newell & Swan in their three year study of trust and inter-organisational networking between research institutions, make distinctions between three types of trust:

- Companion trust: this is the trust that exists in the context of goodwill and friendship
- Competence trust: this is where we trust in others' competence to carry out the task agreed
- Commitment trust: this is a trust made fast by contractual or inter-institutional

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agreements, ones that can be enforced.

(Newell & Swan 2000:1295)

'network organizations are self-regulating. Members, not a centralized source of power, are responsible for developing a vision, mission and goals for initiating and managing work activities. Members share their understanding of issues and devise ways to relate to each other in carrying out the work necessary to bring about a shared vision of the future. This vision provides the context that orients all network activity. Retaining this orientation is critical to developing and maintaining networks.' (Chisholm, 1998:6)

The network web is constructed through several relational processes. Participants contribute to a shared project with time, expertise, contacts, and information. They gain benefit from the pooling of others' expertise, access and resources. This happens in ways that respect their autonomy in decision-making and collaboration, and value their diverse views, mandates and institutional priorities.

What a network should foster:

- Diversity – interaction between diverse opinions and ideas is creative and progressive
- Dynamism – freeing participants to be dynamic and propositional. Keeping structure light and facilitative, enabling, supportive
- Democracy – decision-making seen to be fair, inclusive and effective and only applied to the essential - to keep the net working. A shared vision developed by all.
- Decentralisation – the specifics of the local
- can be celebrated and enjoyed in the global

Chambers 'whose Reality Counts?' 1997

A network is based on the relational. This is the process that gives the network its strength. The common purpose is what makes it a network, not simply networking. We are in pursuit of something joined, something together. And then we are doing, we are engaging in an effort to realise that goal. It is the joint activity that gives us edge and power.

'a network can bring institutions together, put the situation on the table and then help them work through how they can move. Each will then work out responses which suit itself, but are coherent overall. The network coordinates, facilitates and advocates, and different organisations can access its agenda in their own ways. In this way, the network can be as wide as the problem is, day by day.'
(HIV and Development Programme & UNAIDS, 2000:26)

Soderbaum (1999), in his study for Sida on African research networks, takes social network theory as his starting point, emphasising that 'networks are to be understood as vehicles by which social trust, communication and co-operation can be established and developed.' (Soderbaum 1999:2). His definition is drawn from the social understanding of how networks and networking form a part of all human interaction, and places value on the links and relationships between the participant 'nodes'. 'A social network is perhaps best understood as an informal, voluntary based, dynamic and borderless open system which is flexible, fluid, adaptable and susceptible to innovations, new ideas and needs without that [sic] its internal balance is threatened.' (Soderbaum 1999:3)

taken from
**PARTICIPATION, RELATIONSHIPS AND DYNAMIC CHANGE:
New Thinking On Evaluating The Work Of International Networks**
Madeline Church et al
2002 UCL, London

Handout

Participants' Exercises: Rich Pictures and Triads

Introduction:

These two exercises, which will take place over two sessions. They represent two stages of an analysis process of an issue or challenge that you are facing relating to any relationships or partnerships in the context of your work.

Briefly, the Rich Picture Exercise enables you to explore and illustrate the different dimensions of the relationship challenge;

The Triads exercise provides the opportunity for you to discuss this problem with colleagues and to develop strategies for addressing this challenge

Rich Picture Exercise:

You will use the idea of the Rich Picture to explore and illustrate a challenge which relates to relationships within your organisation or outside your organisation. This is an exercise that you will develop on your own:

Method:

1. Reflect on and select one relationship related issue or problem that you wish to explore in this exercise
2. On flip chart paper, make a visual representation of how you view this challenge in the context of your work, including information as appropriate about
 - key stakeholders / interested parties;
 - inter-personal and group dynamics;
 - organisational structures
 - resource issues;
 - other influencing factors both in the organization and in the wider environment.

Triads:

In this exercise you will be working in groups of three to explore and address the specific challenges that were identified during the Rich Picture Exercise.

Each participant will have the opportunity to be both a client seeking help from the other two participants who will work as consultants; and a consultant providing advice to two clients.

Method:

In groups of 3 people (Triads):

- Agree the order of problem presentation (who will be the first "client", and who will act as the consultants)
- The first client will present their rich picture and then describe the challenge that they have chosen to explore. S/he will then pose his/her challenge as an open question.
- The consultants will then interview the client, asking questions, analysing causes and consequences, clarifying and working to enable the client to identify possible strategies that s/he could use to address this challenge.
- This process should take about 30 minutes. By the end of this time, at least two possible strategies should have been proposed.
- Repeat the same process twice so that each member of the group has a chance to be the client
- Once all three people have been clients, prepare a short summary on flip chart of the common issues that have emerged from the individual drawings and problems solving exercise.

There will be a plenary session to discuss the summarised experiences

Handout

Motives for Strategic Alliances

There are several reasons why organisations come to together. Often organisations have multiple motives and at the outset it is worth clarifying why you are thinking about entering into a strategic relationship. This will also help you choose the right organisations to work with.

Why organisations enter alliances or relationships.

Reciprocity in the pursuit of common or mutually beneficial goals

Efficiency higher input/output ratios or economies of scale

Stability to overcome uncertainty through risk sharing

Legitimacy enhancing reputation, prestige of those cooperating

Necessity mandated through regulation or law.

additional motives are:

- Share experiences and learn
- Improve skills and
- Avoid duplication of activities

Thus the expectation is that when strategic relationships work well, CSOs are achieving their own missions more effectively as well as contributing to something more. Having a BIGGER VOICE for civil society is seen as a strong motive for joining forces.

The comparison of elements of the relationships which are understood to matter are:

- Overall purpose;
- Degrees of formality of the relationship,
- Extent to which decision-making authority, both formal and informal, is shared
- Rights and obligations within the relationship: what do the parties expect from each other and what do they expect to offer;
- Duration.

Strategic alliances need to be clear on the type of relationship they want and why. Even though the alliances are potentially short lived and flexible it is important that they agree the purpose and basic shape of relationships.

- Issue Based
- Time Bound

- Campaign oriented
- Capacity development integral to the process
- Accentuating the positive and facing the challenges

When alliances work well together there can be many advantages:

1) the strength in numbers and a unified voice on a particular issue in order to increase power and hence persuasiveness in delivering an advocacy message.

2) Alliance building may strengthen the members internally, enabling them to be more effective in other arenas.

3) There are other potential spin-offs that may not be the initial motive but emerge during the policy process. For example when a campaign is running, the organisations are more likely to receive media interest, which in turn raises their public profile as a group.

4) When more organisations are **spreading the collective message, the message reaches a wider audience**, increased awareness and may in turn stimulate more support for the issue.

In most cases alliances do not access *new* financial resources, but through the **pooling of resources each organisation will gain access to the contacts, connections, and relationships** established by other groups.

However the path to successful alliance working is not always smooth and the group mention that they do experience challenges in working in this way.

The main disadvantages which are noted are:

- The risk that the issue becomes more important than other work and may lead to neglect of other tasks.
- The alliance may only be as strong as its weakest link, and this imbalance may create tensions between the CSOs.
- Organisations may have different views on the appropriate tactics to be used.
- Conflict can arise over access and sharing of resources, especially in allocation of staff time to the alliance.

The capacity weaknesses in some members can mean that the alliance struggles to perform. Likewise member organisations will have different levels of resources

and experience as well as different internal problems. Organizations that provide a lot of resources and leadership may get frustrated with other members' shortcomings.

Research in Malawi observed that coalitions reflected the weaknesses of the organisations that were involved. Thus it is important for potential allies to analyse their own strengths and weaknesses, in relation to both the issue and inter-organisational working. Identifying shared capacities as well as gaps early on can avoid problems over mutual expectations later.

Step 1: Deciding whether to form an Alliance

The strongest foundation for joint working will be in the developing a shared understanding of the problem, and a clear idea about what an alliance will do about it.

Key questions to establish the joint purpose based on an identified problem:

Key questions	Sub-questions:
<p>What is the policy we want to change? Selecting the a policy: analysis of: who is interested? decision-makers, how interested; time frame ? etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the desired policy change we want to achieve? • What is our common purpose? • What action is required. • What is the objective of coming together?
<p>For this particular issue is an alliance of agencies the appropriate tool?</p>	<p>Are there other organizations who are already working on this that you could join?</p>
<p>What exactly do we want to do: clarifying the objectives:</p>	<p>Based on agreed objectives: what strategies and activities that will be necessary to pursue the policy influencing process. What will the alliance not do?</p>

Lead agency?

The alliance may decide that a selecting a lead agency would help to keep momentum going. The experience of the CSUP grantees has been that without a lead agency, the initiative does not take off in the desired way. If a lead agency is to be chosen the following selection criteria are useful:

- **Knowledgeable and inspiring:** of issues, context and opportunities and able to mobilize others around the aim

- **Consultative and decisive:** enabling members to contribute and participate and make decisions
- **Action and consensus oriented** : balancing the forward momentum and action with generating consensus
- **Networker and communicator:** identifying the links necessary outside the alliance able to negotiate with key people. Able to spread the message
- **Delegatory and decentralizing:** able to share authority and power

Once the full membership has been defined it is important for the group to develop a set of guiding principals and a common strategy. The guiding principle focus on how the group will work together on the basis of shared values. These principals should reinforce the collaborative efforts of the group. The strategy will focus on actions in relation to the issue and campaign.

Developing a common strategy and working with shared principles

The strength of an alliance lies in its **common understanding, shared purpose and mutual accountability**. Agreeing activities and joint implementation thereof is one way to increase the sense of collective ownership of the alliance. Identifying some areas for joint activities would serve to build confidence in each other, although it has to be appropriate to the activity concerned.

At this stage it can be useful to consider **what activities and also answer the questions why and how**. Being part of a strategic alliance also means behaving strategically as an alliance. The members need to understand clearly that the ways of working are important, e.g. for relationship and trust building , as much as the activities.

Of similar importance is agreeing **simple mechanisms and methods of communication and feedback**. It is important to have a focal point for information, one of the organisations took responsibility for providing up-dates to the members. It is equally important that this does not become a bottleneck. A distinctive characteristic of alliance communication channels versus network, is that all the members in an alliance should be able to communicate directly with each other rather than through a central network secretariat.

Successful mechanisms for mutual accountability depend on development and use of norms and procedures for two-way reporting, accountability and transparency among all levels of an organisation, and between organisations or institutions engaged in the alliance. Although it may be appropriate to have a lead agency, the channels of communication, norms and procedures need to be based on agreements between all the members, not just between the lead agency and individual members. If agreements are only based on lead to participating agency, the risk of over personalization may emerge. Mechanisms for mutual accountability should also serve to increase the sense of joint ownership.

As an outcome of the principal setting discussion all members of the Alliance should know:

- What each member can contribute and what each seeks to gain
- What the minimum commitment from each member is
- What mechanisms and principals will be used to resolve conflicts
- How the members' contributions will be recognised (internally and externally)

Members should also be willing to commit to their responsibilities in terms of :

- Active participation
- Agree and respect alliance principles
- Sell the idea to their own organizations
- Provide expertise
- Keep formal and informal communications open
- Delivering on their activities

Becoming an Agile Alliance:

Effective joint working requires some basic ground rules and decision about roles, responsibilities, and how decisions are made; how conflicts will be resolved.

A useful matrix which organisation can use as the basis for this discussion focuses on the rights and obligations of the parties.

Focus	Obligations of development allies	Rights of development allies
Information	To keep regular flow of information	To all information relevant to the initiative
Consultation	Not to modify message or tactics without mutual agreement	Consulted before changes to agreement
Campaign Agenda setting	To accept equitable divisions of tasks	To influence methods , tactics and divisions of labour
Control	Participate in co-management system	To co-manage the agenda
Duration	Maintain required capacity for the duration	Continuity of required inputs from other members

(Adapted from Fowler 2000.)

Effective alliances avoid spending too much time on internal issues and keep the focus on the issues that brought them together.

Developing successful relationships requires:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time to understand each others personality • Ground work • Total commitment in time and interest • Consultative decision making • Understand the common interest • Sharing and understanding task • Recognition of each others strength and weaknesses • Maintaining transparency to build trust • Mutual respect based on exemplary behaviour • Mutual support

- Effective communication and feedback
- Changing roles
- Collective generating of resources
- Mechanisms to handle internal conflicts
- Appreciating change whether positive or negative
- Enjoying life together
- Should be there for each other
- Pray together stay together

Checklist for building successful alliances:

Choose unifying issues: the most effective alliances already have a common issue. The development of goals, strategies and tactics should be a joint process.

Understand and respect each group's self interest

There should be a balance of benefits and gains between the goals and needs of the alliance and the individual organisations . check for congruence

Respect the diversity of the members

Understand and respect the differences between the members. Recognise the inter-dependence and complementarity. Make a commitment to learning about the history and interests of the participating organisations

Agree to disagree: but also put in place mechanisms for decision making where there is no agreement.

Structure decision making carefully: balance consensus building with action orientation

Distribute credit fairly: contributions will vary and all contributions should be appreciated. Acknowledge all contribution

Give and Take: don't ask for or expect support without being prepared to give it

Work on a common strategy. The strength of the alliance is in developing a unified understanding of the problem and a strategy. Common ownership of the strategy is critical; tactics should be endorsed by all.

Be Strategic: which organisations you ask, which people from those organisations, selecting a lead agency are all strategic decisions

Get commitment to consistency: Members should commit to sending the right people to the meetings and if these are different – need to guarantee information is shared.

Formalise for agility. Structures and decision making should be appropriate and not cumbersome. Awareness of rights and responsibilities will help the alliance function in a more fluid and decentralised way. Clarity here can help avoid conflict.

Some useful definitions

Fowler¹ identified a range of inter-organisational relationships and different forms of collaboration. These types of inter-organisational relationship vary on the degree of intensity and collaboration and joint governance. At the lowest end of this scale he identifies a category of *Development Ally* (see below):

Development ally In this relationship, two or more organisations agree to co-operate on a mutually agreed agenda, typically for an agreed period of time. They may do this by exchanging information, sharing expertise, or using their respective reputations and contacts in coordinated ways. Whilst modest financial transfers may occur, money is not the basis of the relationship.

Three distinct forms of inter-organisational collaboration are identified by Fowler however, in practice the boundaries between these are not so clear and the forms are often mixed and matched to fit the purpose:

Networks These are the loosest form of collaboration as members may be quite dissimilar, the primary function is information sharing.

Alliances These take collaboration a stage further providing greater benefits because participants **synchronise their efforts and resources**. Alliances tend to be functional and are increasing as NGOs actively seek to complement rather than compete with or duplicate the activities of others.

¹ Fowler, Alan (2000) Partnerships: Negotiating Relationships, Occasional Papers Series No 32, Oxford: INTRAC.

Coalitions and consortia

These terms cover organisational entities which are 'constituted by and (are) the legal responsibility of the founding NGOs but (do) not have authority over them.' Coalitions tend to **provide increased profile and leverage**. Consortia provide increased access to, and application of resources. Coalitions usually require considerable investment of time and human resources from members but can result in greater strength when voicing shared positions.

Coalitions often nominate one of the member agencies as a lead, with overall responsibility for facilitating the coalition: often described as "the convener"

² Developing Effective Coalitions (2002) downloaded from www.preventioninstitute.org

³ Networking: towards a better tomorrow (SANSAD 2007).

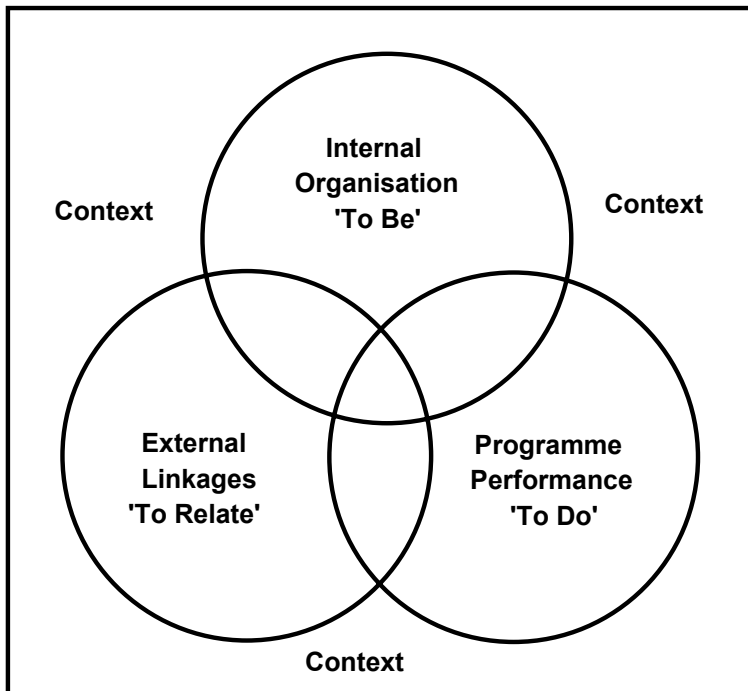
Handout

Strategic Alliances

Three Circle Model

Organisations can be represented as three interlocking circles existing within a wider context:

- The 'To Do' circle represents the programme activities that the organisation carries out and its ability to achieve its goals.
- The 'To Relate' circle represents the organisation's external linkages with other actors in all three sectors: public, private and civil society.
- The 'To Be' circle represents the organisation's internal functioning.



The three circles model of organisational performance illustrates that organisational effectiveness is dependent on internal functioning; programmatic impact and effective relationships. Thus it is essential that organisations consider the types and range of relationships it wishes to develop. The assessment is not about quantity: not the more the merrier, but about identifying and nurturing strategic relationships. For example to achieve change at community level we need to work with community groups and traditional leaders. When we are trying to influence policy we need to work with like-minded interested parties, with whom we can join forces and strengthen our ability to advocate. For this purpose

strategic relationships are those with other actors and organisations **that support the organisation in fulfilling its mission.**

Handout

Challenges and solutions shared in building partnerships

Exhaustion. Burn-out of key people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seek out more people to share the responsibilities and share the work • create new incentives • set small achievable goals
Too much focus on the task	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take time to reflect about the partnership, rethink the partnership itself
Managing a constant stream of problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create a 'problem solving culture' in which a problem is seen as a stimulus to innovation
Domination by one or more partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the co-ordinator/manager needs to work continually to maintain equity between the partners
Partners losing interest or energy for the partnership, or becoming complacent about achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • actively communicating & engaging is a continuous process though out the life of the partnership • important for all the partners to continue to feel a sense of ownership • create new opportunities / challenges • create celebrations of success (parties, festivals) • demonstrate achievements • all partners committing themselves to understanding and supporting each other's

	<p>institutional priorities/ constraints</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • frank and open debate between partners, so that they understand each other's constraints
Changes of key players	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • give time, don't be too impatient • create a series of well managed meetings to fully engage newcomers • take newcomers to see projects / meet beneficiaries / work in progress • give newcomers space to contribute their own ideas, suggestions for developments (enjoy the fact that they will bring something new to the table)
External factors that influence the partnership negatively, eg new legislation, local crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • keep cool • always position the partnership within the local/ national context
The changing nature of the partnership over time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognise the different types of leadership / management at each 'phase' of the partnership • train others in the partnership process

Adapted from Local Partnerships in Europe Workshop Report, May 2001. The Copenhagen Centre **Reader**

Handout

Elements of authentic partnership

Listed below are the main features ascribed to partnership. They have been extracted from definitions used by both Southern and Northern organisations. Extracted from Alan Fowlers OPS 32 INTRAC.

- Partnership is about working together to accomplish agreed results and *accepting joint responsibility* for achieving them.
- Partnership carries with it a long-term involvement.
- Partnership requires defined mutual roles and responsibilities - as covenants not contracts.
- Partnership is about trust, respect, integrity, accountability and equality.
- Partnership requires an acceptance of the principle that a local organisation has the right to set the final agenda for its own work.
- Partnership must not lead to a situation where the link between an organisation's constituency and leadership is weakened.
- When negotiating relations or contributions from outside the 'partnership', the spirit and letter of existing partnerships must be taken into account and respected.
- Within a partnership, neither party can unilaterally accept other relational conditions that materially influence the partnership. (A common example is Northern NGOs negotiating funding conditions with their 'back donors' that then appear as new or revised conditions towards existing partners without prior consultation or assent).⁴
- Partnership must not alter the basic priorities related to the identity, vision and values of any of the organisations.
- An underlying assumption of partnership co-operation is that the organisations concerned will become more competent in reaching their goals beyond this specific relationship.

Do these statements reflect the characteristics of all relationships that NGOs have? Obviously not. NGOs work with others in diverse ways. Each mode of interacting has characteristics that serve different needs and purposes. The question is, can we identify sufficiently distinctive ways of relating that may help in building a negotiating framework? Put another way, are there distinctive types of organisational relationships that developmental NGOs are part of?

⁴ 'Back donor' is a term referring to the source of a Northern NGDO's finance, typically but not solely a government ministry, department or specialist agency.

Glossary of Networking and Relationship Building for CSO's Terms

Activity	Actions taken or work performed through which inputs, such as funds, technical assistance and other types of resources are mobilised to produce specific outputs.
Appropriateness	A measure of whether an intervention is suitable in terms of achieving its desired effect and working in its given context. Suitability may apply, for example, to whether the intervention is of an appropriate type or style to meet the needs of major stakeholder groups.
Alliances	These take collaboration a stage further providing greater benefits because participants synchronise their efforts and resources . Alliances tend to be functional and are increasing as NGOs actively seek to complement rather than compete with or duplicate the activities of others.
Data Collection Tools	Methodologies used to identify information sources and collect information during monitoring and evaluation. Examples are informal and formal surveys, direct and participatory observation, community interviews, focus groups, expert opinion, case studies, literature.
Effectiveness	The extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.
Efficiency	A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results.
Evaluation	The systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the appropriateness and fulfilment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.
Goal	The higher-order objective to which an intervention is intended to contribute.
Inputs	The financial, human, and material resources used for the intervention.
Networks	These are the loosest form of collaboration as members may be quite dissimilar, the primary function is information sharing.
Objective	The intended physical, financial, institutional, social, environmental, or other results to which a project or programme is expected to contribute.

Coalitions and Consortia	<p>These terms cover organisational entities which are 'constituted by and (are) the legal responsibility of the founding NGOs but (do) not have authority over them.'</p> <p>Coalitions tend to provide increased profile and leverage. Consortia provide increased access to, and application of resources. Coalitions usually require considerable investment of time and human resources from members but can result in greater strength when voicing shared positions.</p> <p>Coalitions often nominate one of the member agencies as a lead , with overall responsibility for facilitating the coalition : often described as "the convenor"</p>
Partnership	<p>"...Partnership is a cross-sector collaboration in which organisations work together in a transparent, equitable and mutually beneficial way. The partners agree to commit resources, share the risks as well as the benefits to work together towards a sustainable development goal."</p> <p><small>Definition of 'partnership' currently used by The Partnering Initiative, January 2005</small></p>
Social Partnership	<p>Social Partnership is a collaboration among NGOs, the private sector and government to solve community problems in a sustainable way</p>
Social Compact	<p>"A jointly prepared, agreed statement of the general principles and shared values which will govern the future development of the relationship between Government and the voluntary and community sector" (Compact between Government & Voluntary Sector in Northern Ireland)</p>
Strategic Relationships	<p>are those with other actors and organisations that support the organisation in fulfilling its mission.</p>
Stakeholders	<p>Agencies, organisations, groups or individuals who have a direct or indirect interest in the development intervention</p>
Sustainability	<p>The continuation of benefits from an intervention after assistance has been completed. The probability of continued long-term benefits. The resilience to risk of the net benefit flows over time.</p>

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