

NETWORKING & VISIBILITY

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- By the end of the session, participants will be able to:
 1. Define and list the benefits of networking
 2. Identify a network of individuals and organizations within their own personal and professional lives; and
 3. Develop a list of elements needed to form and maintain successful networks.

General purpose

To help participants understand that effective networking for *advocacy* doesn't happen by itself. Before a network can even begin its *advocacy* efforts, members must:

- create a network identity,
- strengthen and practice communication skills,
- define decision-making processes,
- and inventory of the skill and resources represented among its members.

Introduction to networks

- Networks are universal and almost everyone belongs to one or more networks.
- Networks may be personal or professional; formal or informal; temporary or ongoing. They may include family members, school friends, colleagues, members of the same religious institution, etc.
- Members of a network have at least one thing in common with other members of that same network.

- Sometimes networks become the nucleus of a group concerned with taking on or supporting a specific cause or action.
- Networks are useful and powerful tools for achieving shared goals.
- Networks are effective because they provide a structure that permits organizations and individuals to cooperate, collaborate, and share expertise and resources to influence policy.

- To be effective, network members must develop skills that enable them to engage in dialogue with decision makers at all levels.
- Effective networks are well organized, develop a team identity, function according to agreed upon norms and procedures, establish systems and structures for decision making and communication, and use each member's skills and resources to maximum advantage.

Overview of networks

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- Sometimes networks become the nucleus of a group concerned with taking on or supporting a specific cause or action.
- Advocacy networks are useful and powerful tools for achieving shared goals.
- Advocacy networks are effective because they provide a structure that permits organizations and individuals to cooperate, collaborate, and share expertise and resources to influence policy.

- To be effective leaders and advocates, network members must develop skills that enable them to engage in dialogue with decision makers at all levels.
- Effective networks are well organized, develop a team identity, function according to agreed upon norms and procedures, establish systems and structures for decision making and communication, and use each member's skills and resources to maximum advantage.

Creating or strengthening
this type of network — a migrant
associations network—is the
focus of this workshop

Workshop 1- Let's define network

- a. Write the word Network on two sheets of newsprint.
- b. Divide the participants into two groups and ask each group to line up single file in front of one of the sheets.
- c. Ask each person to write on the newsprint a word or short phrase that she/he associates with the word Network. Continue until each person has contributed to the list.
- d. Ask each group to work with the words listed on its sheet of newsprint and to develop a definition of network that everyone in the group agrees with.
- e. Share the two groups' definitions and help the participants reach consensus on one definition. They may choose to accept one of the posted definitions or combine parts of each for a new definition.
- f. Write the agreed upon definition on clean newsprint and post in the room.
- g. Share the following definition with the group.

Definition of network

Networks are groups of organizations and individuals working together to achieve changes in policy, law or programs for a particular issue.

ACTIVITY 2 - Mapping individual networks

- Migrants and leaders they have met at conferences or workshops, meetings, etc.
- Political personalities concerned on migration issues
- A relative or friend in a government office or with NGOs whose work is connected with migration
- Migrant organizations/people they have contacted through the Internet
- Editors and writers of newsletters and other publications that could help you/your network become visible (Ex. Filipino radio, newspapers, etc.)

Analysis of Maps

- Do all of the names on the maps meet the criteria for inclusion (i.e., people have an interest in or linkage with migrant organizing issues)?
- What is the nature of the contact and/or frequency of the contact? Is the contact through personal or professional relationships?
- Which organizations and individuals appear on more than one map? Highlight these names with a colored marker.
- Which workshop participants appear on other participants' maps? Highlight these names with a different colored marker

Activity 3

Let us identify other benefits of network by writing it on a flipchart.

Benefits of Networks

- *Keep you up to date on what is going on*
- *Provide a ready made audience for your ideas*
- *Provide support for your actions*
- *Provide access to varied and multiple resources/skills*
- *Pool limited resources for the common goal*
- *Achieve things that single organizations or individuals cannot—power of numbers*
- *Form the nucleus for action and attract other networks*
- *Expand the base of support*

Mission statement

Creating a common purpose –

- Define the network's philosophy
- It clarifies—in the broadest of terms—what the network hopes to achieve.

Elements of networks

1. Formation stage

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

Elements....

2. Maintenance/growth stage

- a. Organization
- b. Leadership
- c. Meetings and documentation

a. Organization

- Define clear, specialized roles
- Establish a loose or fluid organizational structure. Vertical, hierarchical structures do not build strong networks
- Compile a skills inventory, including the skills/expertise of individual members and institutional resources (fax, Internet, meeting space, etc.)

organization...

- Prepare to fill expertise gaps by recruiting new members.
- Establish a communication system (i.e., telephone tree).
- Create a member database (name, address, organization mission, type and focus of organization, etc.).

b. Leadership

- Share leadership functions (i.e., rotating coordinating committee)
- Set realistic goals and objectives
- Divide into subgroups/task forces to take on specific tasks according to expertise.
- Spread responsibilities across all members to reduce workload and avoid burnout.

- Promote participatory planning and decision making.
- Foster trust and collaboration among members.
- Keep members motivated by acknowledging their contributions.

c. Meetings/documentation

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

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

Stages of Network Growth

Stage 1 – Forming

- group behavior exploration
(excitement, expectations, optimism,
suspicion, fear anxiety)**
- members of the network try to
determine acceptable group behaviors
and how to deal with this group.**

Stage 2 – Storming

Most difficult stage

- **Pressure**

Attitudes of impatience, blaming one another, questions and arguments on decision making (wrong) because of lack of experience, etc.

- **Competitive relationship**

Stage 3 – Norming

Reconcile competing loyalty and responsibility

- **Harmonious, cooperative, friendly relationship, acceptance of differences**
- **TRUST amongst membership**
- **Learning to express constructive criticism**
- **Accepting rules, norms of the network**
- **Focus on making significant progress.**

Stage 4 – Performing

- **Diagnosis**
- **Solving problems**
- **Implementing changes**

**Why
is
networking
important?**

Seven Secrets of Successful Networking

1. Be there!
2. Give to get!
3. Look good!
4. Be interested, rather than interesting
5. Come tooled up!
6. You're only selling yourself!
7. Follow up, Keep in touch

All it's really about

is simply

talking to people