



Weaving global networks

Handbook for policy influence

CIPPEC

CENTRO DE IMPLEMENTACIÓN DE POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS
PARA LA EQUIDAD Y EL CRECIMIENTO

Weaving global networks

Handbook for policy influence

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*Vanesa Weyrauch
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Introduction

Networks are increasingly drawing scholarly and practitioner attention as very effective ways to organise efforts towards achieving certain social agendas. This has even led to the idea of a network society (term coined by Castells in 1996) who argues that the information technology revolution has facilitated the emergence of a new economy, which is structured around flows of information, power and wealth in global financial networks.

“With the new information and communication technologies, networks have become one of the most prominent social phenomena of our time. (...) One of the most important insights of the new understanding of life that is now emerging at the forefront of science is the recognition that the network is a pattern that is common to all life. Wherever we see life, we see networks.” (Capra 2004).

The prevailing institutional discourse of many organisations (from governmental to the profit sector to civil society) is affected by this trend. Institutional communications officially states the importance of working through networks to achieve better results through synergy and cooperation.

“Banks use their networks to offer global services to customers; airlines fly passengers all over the world via their networks of partners; news agencies use media networks to keep us informed every minute of the day; and terrorist networks threaten citizens around the world. The importance of networks extends to the development sector: they organise civil society to advocate for and implement change; they link the local with the global, the private with the public; and they provide spaces for the creation, sharing and dissemination of knowledge. In a way, networks seem to make anything and everything happen.” (Mendizabal 2005a)

However, when civil society organisations (CSOs) are asked about current network participation in more concrete aspects such as methods of work or communication, evaluation of

impact, or leadership, the enthusiasm deflates or is at least mitigated by a wide array of “ifs” and “buts”. Internal and external factors affect the capacity of networks to actually become sustainable and develop effective ways to achieve social change for improving the life of human beings. Lack of consensus, poor communications, erratic funding and low openness of policymaking processes belong to a long list of barriers and threats of which there is an increasing awareness among CSO leaders. At the same time, the increasing demand from policymakers and policymaking bodies of more knowledge, research and evidence to address global challenges represents a promising arena for networks that are interested in promoting evidence-based policies.

In spite of these obstacles, new networks are being constantly created and CSOs continue to participate in them. There is a demand to improve knowledge about how these networks – as one mode of non governmental public action – operate today as well as demand to open up new spaces to think about how they can evolve in the near future in order to become more legitimate, effective, transparent, democratic and accountable.

Network revolution and evolution

The good news is that recent history is showing us how networks can evolve and revolutionise how we understand the solving of social problems.

This evolution can be tracked, for example, through the diverse results of CSO participation in the conferences on the environment, human rights and women organised by the United Nations. These include the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro (1992, known as UNCED, the Earth Summit or the Rio Conference); the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna (1993); and the Fourth World Conference Women in Peking (1995). In the case of Latin America, an empirical study conducted by Friedman and others have found that overall

CSOs in this region participated substantially in this set of conferences. They observed a *“growth both in Latin American NGO’s networking during the conference processes and in their strategic alliances with other Northern and Southern NGOs. Latin American governments were somewhat accepting of NGO participation at both regional and global conferences but were more eager to incorporate NGO delegates in conference processes than to promise future collaboration”*. (Friedman, E.J., Hochstetler, K. and Clark, A.M. 2001)

There are several driving factors that consistently place networks on the public agenda. Creech and Willard (2001) find the following drivers behind the emergence of networks:

- **Emergence of information and communications technologies (ICTs) in the 1980s and 1990s:** this has facilitated exchange of knowledge and information across sectors and borders.
- **Sense of urgency:** sectors and regions have recognised how major social, economic and environmental problems are inter-related and very complex. This is combined with a failure of narrow and traditional approaches to solve some of the more pressing issues of poverty alleviation, environmental degradation and social breakdown.
- **Sense of frustration:** in public and academic institutions, there is a growing concern about the marginalisation of many research endeavours and the lack of impact that research, in particular scientific research, has had on public policy.
- **Openness to private sector experience:** public sector and civil society organisations are intrigued with private sector experiments in knowledge management as an integral part of organisational efficiency.

To this list can be added a further set of driving forces behind the development of networks:

- **Network patronage of international organisations:** various international organisations such as the World Bank and initiatives like the World Health Organisation (WHO) “Civil Society Initiative” have been providing

funding, personnel advisory services and other resources to promote collective action responses.

- **The rise of the Third Sector:** around the world there has been a proliferation in the number and diversity of civil society organisations. CSOs with common interests have found reasons to cooperate across borders. Some philanthropic foundations have further propelled collaboration and networking through their grant giving.
- **Regional association:** The growth of regional organisations, like the European Union, NAFTA, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and so forth has promoted the development of formal channels and venues of communication and activism.

As multi-layered processes of globalisation of production, trade, and finance have evolved- so have changed the strategies and modes of work of networks: *“Labor unions, social movements, international NGOs, transnational issue and advocacy networks, and related actors have responded to globalization by pursuing –sometimes simultaneously, sometimes sequentially–a broad range of strategies: from collaboration and participation within existing institutional arrangements, to contestation, opposition, and confrontation with what are perceived to be the driving forces of globalization.”* (Korzeniewicz and Smith 2003)

Top-down and bottom-up approaches coexist. Bilateral meetings and formal multilateral summits led by world elites and policy-making bureaucracies present new opportunities to create and institutionalise avenues for network participation. For example, in 2004 and 2005 the Government of Chile provided the Nongovernmental Process for the Community of Democracies with funding to ensure CSO participation in this space.

At the same time, *“actors and organizations of civil society engage in collective action seeking to shape and transform these arrangements “from below.” (...) Their disenchantment with the meager results of petitioning national*

governments and working for change through established international institutions led some global social movements and advocacy networks to embrace a “new left internationalism” expressed through “transnational communities of resistance”. (Korzeniewicz and Smith 2003)

Therefore, there is no consensus among civil society about the potential of networks to effectively influence regional and global policies. There are competing “optimistic” and “pessimistic” visions of transnational networks and global civil society. This Handbook acknowledges the importance of further debating about these dilemmas and visions. However, it focuses on a more operational and practical approach towards how networks that are currently attempting to increase participation and influence in regional and global policies could enhance their impact.

Why should CSOs and those interested in participation in policymaking processes think about networks?

First of all, it is important to clarify what is understood by the term transnational network, civil society organisation and global (or transnational) policy since these terms are used to refer to very different realities. We recognise that these terms are highly contested in the academic literature. However, it is necessary for the purpose of this Handbook to operate with only basic definitions. For the terms ‘transnational network’ and ‘global policy’, we will follow Diane Stone’s clarifications. For the term ‘civil society organisation’ we adopt ODI’s definition.

Global Policy Processes

In classical political science studies, and common understanding, public policy processes occur inside the nation-state. A ‘realist’ perspective would also hold that states are the dominant actor in the international system and that international policies are made between states. The

presumption has been that nation-states are sovereign in making public policy decisions within their borders.

Economic globalisation and regional integration are proceeding at a much faster pace than official processes of global government. One outcome of this disjuncture is that the power of nation-states has been challenged, sometimes reduced or reconfigured without a corresponding development of international institutional co-operation. This is one of the major causes of a deficiency at global levels in the provision of public goods (that is, goods and services with public benefits or properties). For example, global or regional policies for the regulation of transnational financial flows, the amelioration of cross-border pollution, the prevention of the international spread of diseases like ‘bird flu’ or SARS or provision of human rights regimes to protect refugees or prevent human trafficking, are inadequately provided.

In the last decade, there has been increasing use of the term ‘global public policy’, analysis of processes of ‘global governance’ and mechanisms of ‘governing without government’. Scholars addressing globalisation and regionalisation are arguing that new forms of authority are emerging through global and regional policy processes that exist above nation-states. Networks are often the mechanism for these new modes of policy making connecting the structures of multi-level governance. Transnational networks (as those described below), or ‘global public private partnerships’ like the WHO partnership on Tobacco Dependence and ‘private regimes’ such as ICANN (*Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers*) are becoming more prevalent. However, they lack the formal authority of state actors and operate with ‘soft authority’ or via ‘soft law’. These arrangements are also more fragmented and issue or sector specific. Additionally, their legitimacy and efficacy is often contested. Consequently, global public policy processes are more fluid and fragmented than those of national governments due to the absence of clearly designated powers and legal responsibilities.

Transnational Policy Networks

There are many competing ideas about networks and how they work to inform policy. The interest in networks in the policy literature has become important due to the fact that policy-making includes a large number of public and private actors across different levels and functional areas of government and society. One definition of a policy network:

“... a relatively stable set of mainly public and private corporate *actors*. The *linkages* between the actors serve as channels for communication and for the exchange of information, expertise, trust and other policy resources. The boundary of a given policy network is not in the first place determined by formal institutions but results from a process of mutual recognition dependent of functional relevance and structural embeddedness” (Kenis & Schneider 1992: 12).

However, few researchers agree on how to categorise the different kinds of policy network that are now operating beyond nation-state in global and regional policy venues. This Handbook addresses three of the four different types of transnational networks identified by Stone (1, 2 and 4):

- **Global Public Policy Networks:** Over time, working relationships evolve between NGOs, international organisations, corporations and government agencies. These are policy networks operating between and above the nation-state. They are ‘alliances of government agencies, international organisations, corporations and elements of civil society that join together to achieve what none can accomplish alone ... and give once ignored groups a greater voice in international decision making’ (Reinicke, 1999/2000 go to: <http://www.globalpublicpolicy.net/>). These networks are easily identified in terms of policy focus and participants, are relatively well institutionalised and formal. They tend to cohere around international organisations and governments that have entered into a policy partnership for the delivery of public policy. Examples include the GAVI Alliance, the World

Commission on Dams, and the International Forum for Rural Transport and Development. Virtually, all draw in experts and advisers along with various NGOs, community groups and business interests specific to the policy focus of the network.

- **Transnational Advocacy Networks:** These networks include relevant actors working internationally on an issue, who are bound together by shared values, a common discourse and dense exchanges of information and services (Keck & Sikkink 1997). It is a looser concept than GPPN, more focused on individual activists, a range of private organisations and social movements cohering around common values. Both these concepts emphasise the role of principled ideas in shaping policy. However, the governing ideas of a transnational advocacy network are based more on normative concepts. Examples include the Global Campaign on Access to Medicines, Transparency International, and the Global Campaign Against Poverty.
- **Transnational Executive Networks (TEN):** Networks of government officials – policy investigators, financial regulators, judges and legislators – increasingly exchange information and coordinate activity on a global scale. These government networks are a key feature of world order in the twenty-first century (Slaughter 2004). They expand regulatory reach, allowing national government officials to keep up with corporations, civic organisations and criminals. They build trust and establish relationships among participants. These are the conditions essential for long-term cooperation. While this kind of official inter-governmental network is not the focus of this Handbook, nevertheless, it is important for CSO directors and activists to recognise their existence and their power. CSOs may find it necessary to act as interlocutors between TENs and other kinds of network or alternatively, regard TENs as the object of their advocacy efforts.
- **Knowledge Networks and Epistemic Communities:** The epistemic community approach focuses on expert actors in policy making who share norms, causal beliefs

and political projects and who seek change in specific areas of policy. Epistemic communities share consensual knowledge. This is generated from common causal methods or professional judgement and common notions of validity and usually expressed through a common vocabulary. Consensual knowledge is “the sum of technical information and the theories surrounding it that command sufficient agreement among interested actors at a given time to serve as a guide to public policy” (Haas 1990: 74). Broader concepts of ‘knowledge networks’ refer to the ‘invisible college’ of scientists, experts and scholars who interact transnationally, often to inform policy. Examples include the Trade Knowledge Network, the Global Development Network, and the Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century.

The distinctions between these different types of network are emphasised above. In reality, however, some networks blur and display characteristics from more than one type. Also, networks are not static and may evolve over time into a different kind of networks.

Civil Society Organisations

Defining the term ‘civil society’ has been subject to an inconclusive and time honoured debate. It is not the place for this Handbook to enter into these academic debates on a contested concept. Due to the joint collaboration with ODI to produce this Handbook under the Civil Society Partnership Programme¹, we follow their definition of CSOs as any ‘organizations that work in an arena between the household, the private sector and the state to negotiate matters of pub-

lic concern’² CSOs include a very wide range of institutions, including non-governmental organisations, faith-based institutions, community groups, professional associations, trade unions, media organisations, research institutes and think tanks. CSOs operate at many different levels: global, regional, national, local, etc. (Pollard and Court 2005).

Why join a network to influence policy?

There are many advantages of networks that could appeal CSOs interested in promoting more evidence-based policy. One network analyst – Thorsten Benner who works with Global Public Policy Institute³ – highlights the following beneficial outcomes of collective action:

- They are mechanisms that facilitate the transfer and use of knowledge and other resources of various actors in the global public policy-making process.
- They also offer a new mechanism that helps to bridge diverging problem assessments and interest constellations via political debate and mediation.
- They have played an instrumental role in placing issues on the global agenda and have thereby created awareness and political capital necessary in pushing problems forward.
- They have created new venues for participation beyond the closed shops of the ‘club model’ of international cooperation.
- They raise crucial issues of accountability that need to be addressed. (Benner 2004)

¹ ODI’s 7 year DFID-funded Civil Society Partnerships Programme aims to strengthen the voice of Civil Society to use research-based evidence to promote pro-poor development policy. It will do this by establishing a worldwide network community of practice for think-tanks, policy research institutes and similar organisations working in international development. For more information, see <http://www.odi.org.uk/CSPP/Index.html>

² This is taken from the DFID Information and Civil Society Division website. Identifying clear lines of separation between CSOs and households, the private sector and the state can be problematic. Many CSOs have complex and multifaceted relationships within these other sectors, and may be dependent on them for financial backing, political status and other kinds of resources. Our definition focuses on the nature of the work undertaken by CSOs (‘to negotiate matters of public concern’) rather than the nature of those organisations and issues of accountability and CSO dependencies.

³ GPPI: <http://www.globalpublicpolicy.net/>

A study commissioned by the International Development Research Council of Canada also sees values in networks as: “social arrangements; forms for social exchange; gateways to opportunities; builders and sustainers of member capacities; enablers of creativity and risk-taking; mechanisms for advocacy at multiple levels; interfaces with other sectors; and platforms for action.” (Korzeniewicz and Smith 2003)

Some of these findings have also been highlighted by practitioners as shown in Chapter 2 (see Strengths in page 18) where we also include some questions for CSOs to assess the value of joining a transnational policy network.

Goals of this Handbook

The goal of this Handbook is two-fold: 1) it aims at contributing towards the systematisation of lessons learned by practitioners from networks of civil society organisations throughout their participation in regional and global fora; and 2) based on these lessons, it seeks to offer some practical tools and guidelines that might help these networks enhance their impact through the use of evidence and knowledge in regional and global public policies and policymaking processes.

For several reasons, the Handbook does not cover all the challenges related to the process of influencing such policies from non-governmental action. First, the complexity of influencing public policies even at the local or national level has been recognised by the academic and practitioner worlds: not only is there a problem of attribution regarding who has influenced a certain policy due to the multiple intervening factors and actors, but there is also an increasing

awareness of the extreme difficulty of proving direct influence. (Krašev 2000; Neilson 2001; Stone 2001; Carden 2003; Pollard and Court 2005)

“There are no fixed points of policy impact or constant levels of influence for any set of organisations. Determining influence is as varied as the meanings that can be given to the concept of influence. Anecdotal evidence of policy impact or ‘rich description’ of the influence of policy research in case-studies can be more accurate. Such ‘stories’ can also be important to the internal culture of research organisations. Consequently, the methodologies for evaluating influence need to take into consideration that the meaning and interpretations of ‘influence’ vary considerably.” (Stone, D.; Maxwell, S. and Keating, M. 2001)

This complexity grows at the regional and global spaces as more actors and factors participate or try to have a voice in them, and define the types of influence they would like to have.

Second, there is no consensus among CSOs, and in consequence among their networks, on their current and potential role in these global processes. On the contrary, and as mentioned above, there are even contrasting optimistic and pessimist views on this. Korzeniewicz and Smith describe these two opposite views as insiders and outsiders. The table below developed by them very clearly conveys the differences between them:

	INSIDER NETWORKS	OUTSIDER NETWORKS
INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES & ORGANIZATIONAL PATH DEPENDENCE	Privilege close links with governments and multilateral agencies. Domestic politics and institutional arrangements facilitate delegation and self-monitoring by networks regarding the provision of public goods.	Privilege ties to grass-roots social movements and organized labor. Deployment of oppositional identities and confrontational strategies vis-à-vis free trade and globalization. Blockage of access by domestic institutional arrangements and focus on issues with strong distributional externalities networks to seek allies in other countries.
COLLECTIVE ACTION REPERTORIES	Strategies of cooperation & collaboration. Policy oriented research, policy papers addressed to influential political elites. Consultations and information exchanges focused on the official agenda usually do not lead beyond the formation of networks, with limited possibilities for coalition building. Priority on gradual reform of existing institutions.	Strategies of confrontation, contestation & mobilization. Action-oriented research, critical manifestoes addressed to key activists and broad mass publics. In addition to informational exchange, cooperation and coordination of issue campaigns with other civil society groups; teach-ins, street protests, etc. fosters coalitions and, in some cases, the emergence of genuine transnational social movements. Priority on accumulation of forces and systemic transformation.
IMPACTS ON THE AGENDA OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION	Relative success in influencing the rhetoric of policy elites on hemispheric issues by the politics of information, with less emphasis on generating broad public support.	Relative success in generating popular support and the mobilization of grass roots sectors against free trade, but likely to exercise only indirect influence in shaping the agenda of hemispheric integration through the politics of leverage, symbolic framing, and demands for accountability.

Source: Korzeniewicz and Smith 2003.

Of course, distinctions among existing networks regarding their position between these two polar strategies are most frequently not clear cut. Networks might collaborate with governments at certain phases of a policymaking process and later decide to adopt a more confrontational approach. This means that they might evolve through time and also according to diverse policies, policymaking spaces and levels of intervention.

Third, there is an ample recognition of the non-linear nature of policymaking processes. Such a view rejects the sequential and ordered approach posed by the traditional text book model of stages of the policy processes proceeding simplistically from problem identification, agenda-setting, decision-making, implementation and monitoring. In-

stead, the reality of the complex and chaotic nature of these processes plays against the effectiveness of elaborating step by step strategies and plans to influence policy.

As Clay and Schaffer maintain:

'The whole life of policy is a chaos of purposes and accidents. It is not at all a matter of the rational implementation of the so-called decisions through selected strategies.' (Clay, E. J. and Schaffer, B. B (eds.) 1986)

In this sense, new models for policymaking processes such as the garbage can (Kingdon 1995) or the policy network (Reimers and McGinn; Stone; Hecl; Haas) highlight the difficulty of sorting out independent and single actors,

strategies or tools that play a distinct role and that could explain the success or failure in achieving certain goals. On the contrary, the idea of policy networks highlights interdependence and how a policy is a result of interaction between several actors with divorced interests, goals and strategies. According to Klijn (1998), policymaking takes place at scenarios where there are multiple actors and ambiguity regarding preferences, information and strategies. Interorganisational networks with a more lasting nature also present similar features.

A fourth factor that adds further complexity to the purpose and relevance of this Handbook is that the heterogeneity of CSOs regarding their views and degrees of network participation, has its correlative at the policymakers' end: both governments and international organisations have different positions regarding CSO participation in regional and global processes; in certain topics or in specific countries openness and work with CSOs is more institutionalised and advanced than in others. This clearly affects how networks can operate in the various levels of their intended impact: national, regional and global, as well as how they articulate actions from the national level to the global one.

Why a Handbook?

Even while acknowledging the degree of complexity and heterogeneity expressed in non governmental action through networks that aim at influencing global processes through the use of evidence and research, we believe there is value in drawing and disseminating lessons and tools that have helped or could help those who have participated in such spaces. The Handbook combines knowledge produced and disseminated in general literature about this topic, and the ideas expressed by practitioners who were consulted on this project⁴ who were asked about their perceived needs

and opportunities for influence when entering the global or regional policymaking spaces.

According to Court and Mendizabal (2005),

“there is a considerable body of evidence suggesting that networks can help improve policy processes through better information use. They may, for example, help marshal evidence and increase the influence of good quality evidence in the policy process; they can foster links between researchers and policy-makers; bypass formal barriers to consensus; bring resources and expertise to policy-making; and broaden the pro-poor impact of a policy”.

The Handbook intends to contribute to strengthen and amplify these roles. We understand that effective, strategic and sustained network management requires a very ample set of skills and resources. Not all of them are covered by this publication but we have tried to make lessons, experiences and reflections valuable and usable for those interested in how to enhance networks' performance in the global policy realm.

Potential users and uses of this Handbook

We believe that this Handbook can provide diverse publics with a valuable contribution about how to interact with networks. What we present can help the following groups in these specific ways:

Global and regional networks

- Better understand their strengths and weaknesses and how to build upon or minimise them in order to enhance their policy impact;

⁴ Seventeen in depth interviews were made to CSO practitioners that have been involved in regional and global networks; additionally an online discussion on the topic was conducted within the Latin American Network of ODI's Civil Society Partnership Programme. Further consultations to validate findings have been made to African, Asian and Latin American collaborators of the same programme.

- Access best practices and lessons of similar networks that can be used to initiate new ways of planning how to influence a certain global policy through research and evidence;
- Gain knowledge about internal and external factors that most frequently facilitate or hinder the potential impact on policy and how to work upon them;
- Learn where they can obtain useful resources or information about the above mentioned factors;
- Better focus their investment of time, knowledge, financial resources and people;
- Widen their contacts with similar networks to exchange experiences, lessons, or combine efforts.

Civil Society Organisations

- Count with more defined criteria to assess whether to join or create a new network to influence a global policy;
- Enhance their current participation in networks and seize this participation to achieve organisational goals;
- Learn where they can obtain useful resources related to the diverse factors that most frequently affect policy impact.

Policymakers interested in opening up spaces for participation of civil society

- Gain insight into the limitations and potential contributions of CSO networks to policymaking processes;
- Understand how they can better facilitate and support participation of networks based on their needs and weaknesses;
- An improved appreciation of the constraints and challenges faced by CSOs contemplating network activity.

Donors that are currently supporting or thinking about supporting networks

- Understand how they can better facilitate and support participation of networks based on their needs and weaknesses;
- Promote lessons learned and tools among networks that they are currently supporting and enhance capacity building activities in this sense;
- Develop strategic thinking about the type of support and

advice that they can provide in order to strengthen current or future networks.

Finally, to facilitate the use of this Handbook, we have developed the following resources within the following chapters:

- A wider guide of resources to consult, which are organised according to main challenges faced by networks when trying to achieve policy impact (See chapter 5),
- Case studies that reflect how the different factors interplay in accounting for the achievements and challenges faced by networks (See chapter 2),
- Practical tools that are related to main challenges and are organised according to each step needed to be made in order to enhance policy influence (See chapter 3).

Structure of the Handbook

The Handbook is structured as follows: at Chapter 1 we present a SWOT analysis of networks based on most common findings both in the literature and from practitioners' own experience and reflection, along with a description of those challenges that networks most frequently face. We then look at four case studies in Chapter 2 that shed light into how strengths and weaknesses, and threats and opportunities interplay within different types of networks and throughout diverse issues and policymaking processes. Reflections and lessons from the two previous chapters are used in Chapter 3 to propose tools and guidelines that can help network improve their policy influence process. We then turn in Chapter 4 to the Latin American region to illustrate the different issues, networks and policy spaces that CSOs in this region can consider when thinking about forming or joining a network to influence specific policies. Finally, Chapter 5 consists of a guide of resources organised according to the diverse challenges that will allow each network to further explore materials and knowledge to face these challenges. One set of resources we provide includes the 'Non Governmental Public Action' program, a research program funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council which provided funds for the production of this Handbook.

CHAPTER 1: Where we are and how far can we go

Networking across borders is unfamiliar territory for many civil society organisations. It is difficult enough to collaborate with partners within a country. It is far more difficult and time consuming to collaborate with partners in other countries when considerations of language, legal context, different accounting standards and tax requirements, and a host of cultural expectations must also be kept in mind. Networking that involves frequent communication, conference attendance and international travel as well as membership fees and contributing to fundraising efforts can be a huge drain on the financial and human resources of an organisation. It is a wise CSO director who considers doing a SWOT analysis of a network before becoming immersed in a network's activities.

Although we are directly interested in contributing towards the systematisation of lessons learned by CSO networks and offering some practical tools and guidelines that might help networks enhance their impact, we decided first to deploy a set of research strategies¹ with the two following goals:

- 1) Identify the current strengths and weaknesses as well as threats and opportunities that global and regional networks could take into account to build their capacity to influence policies (Where are we?)
- 2) Detect where most significant challenges and potential reside from the practitioners' point of view (How far can we go?)

As will be shown below in the final section after the SWOT outline, many threats could be turned into opportuni-

ties. Several strengths could be transformed into weaknesses and so on, depending on how CSOs and networks become aware of barriers and potentials and decide to work on them. We identify eleven challenges confronting CSOs when considering the costs and benefits of network membership. This means that we could assume an optimistic, neutral or even pessimistic approach to answer where CSO networks stand today and what they could achieve tomorrow. In the same vein as Stone and Maxwell (2004) we believe that "although there are significant grounds for scepticism over the potential of networks, at the same time there are equal grounds for optimism: Networks can play an important part in helping to create a policy process that is research rich, inclusive, and accountable – at least in theory. Even so, the virtues of networks are not straightforward."

Where are we?

The following SWOT analysis was built on the basis of secondary and primary sources in order to capture both academic and practitioners' inputs on what helps and does not help networks achieve their policy goals.

We also provide a list of questions that should allow each network to compare these general findings and trends with its own status quo. By developing its particular SWOT, a network would be able to highlight those factors that better describe their internal and external situation and then prioritise and build upon them. Strengths and weaknesses are directly related to the networks as organisations; threats and opportunities belong to their immediate and mediate contexts in general.

Also, a network should conduct its own SWOT more than once, maybe every year or before drafting a plan. The

¹ Research methodologies included: surveys and telephone interviews to CSOs that belong to global and regional networks, analysis of secondary sources and related training materials, including project's papers and research, and interviews with CIPPEC's directors and coordinators to systematise and evaluate network participation.

reasons are that not only do institutional contexts change throughout time – especially in developing countries – but networks themselves also evolve and change. A comparative analysis of SWOTs through time would provide networks with a more strategic understanding of their work as well as the possibility of having more proactive role in the future organisational and contextual developments.

Needless to say, networks should devote more attention and energy to internal factors, since these are under their direct control. However, a deep understanding of threats and opportunities is also useful in order to better focus efforts and resources, and thus improve the chances of effectively contributing to change.

Tips to build action-oriented SWOTs:

- *Conduct a SWOT session jointly with most active members of the network and its leaders in order to ensure that you capture a more inclusive view.*
- *Think about your own network and answer the questions in the last column in order to detect which are your own strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Prioritise those that are most important according to its relationship to the network's current goals.*
- *Repeat the SWOT analysis every 6 months or every year to have a clear picture of the intended or non-intended evolution of the network.*
- *Apply the SWOT to specific network goals: which are the most relevant opportunities regarding selecting the issues to do research? Which are the most relevant weaknesses related to implementing a new communications strategy?*

Strengths

STRENGTH	HOW TO ASSESS WHETHER APPLICABLE TO THE NETWORK OR CONCRETE POLICY GOAL	HOW TO ASSESS WHETHER TO JOIN A NETWORK
<p>(S1) Knowledge creation and sharing: networks are optimal channels to distribute and integrate knowledge, share analytical capacity and publish information in order to better influence policies. In this sense, members might contribute with diverse pieces of research and evidence and gather them in a way to better address the complexity of regional and global issues. They also allow members to learn from each other and build on each other's strengths. Debates and disagreements within the network can help members come up with a more solid and viable position.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a fluent exchange of information, knowledge or other resources in the network? • Do members contribute with research products or evidence? • Is the information properly organised in order to ensure easy access to it? • Have members incorporated new tools, practices or changes in projects or within the organisation due to imitate or adopt another member's practice? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the network count with useful databases and research pieces? Or web-site access? • What opportunities for meetings, conferences and other gatherings with members to exchange knowledge does the network offer?

<p>(S2) High capacity to convene multiple actors: based on the diverse relationships and resources of their members, networks enable that different actors with diverse –sometimes even conflicting– positions gather and discuss about concrete public issues. By bridging actors from multiple sectors, different countries, and many levels, networks facilitate consensus building, collaborative efforts, and the development of joint proposals and agreements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have any unexpected discoveries been made due to interaction among members? • Were you or other members able to acknowledge connections or plausible fertile grounds for joint work as a product of the network debates and projects? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are members carrying out specific joint projects? • Are there any capacity building initiatives?
<p>(S3) Serendipity and creativity: networks favour a climate for discoveries to be made (i.e. members might discover the links between two problems that they were addressing separately or the contradictions between governments). Open and two-way communication among a diverse range of actors offers a fertile context for creative action.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there several interests/positions represented by the members of the network? • Do members of different positions interact with each other? Do they frequently reach agreements? • Have there been any agreements or joint project proposals as products of the interaction of members in the network? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What profile of relevant stakeholders has the network been able to convene? Who gets to be a member? How is the incorporation made? • What credentials, experience or resources do you need to have? • Which other partners can you help bring to the network?
<p>(S4) Complementary work: a network allows combination of efforts of persons and organisations with diverse and specific talents, capacities, skills and expertise to achieve a common goal. Members can also bring in new partners and supporters. When funding is scarce, members can divide roles and tasks according to the strengths of each. When a member is weaker or more vulnerable due to a threatening political and/or economical context, more solid and stable CSOs can protect and help them. Finally, comparative work can also become very effective for policy impact. For example, the comparative data produced by members of different countries (i.e. an index of transparency in political party financing in Latin America) becomes a useful way to raise local awareness of a public problem as well as potential solutions based on the performance of similar nations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there joint work in the network? • Is the joint work distributed fairly between members? • Is this distribution made according to the members’ skills and expertise? • Has this distribution concretely increased the effectiveness of the network? • Are members able to conduct projects at the regional or global level that they could not develop before joining the network? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do current members count with skills and expertise from which you could learn or seize to better perform some projects? • Would your CSO be able to better achieve a policy goal due to new resources that derive from working from the network (i.e. communications materials, experts’ assessment, etc.)?
<p>(S5) Multiplying effects: working through networks strengthens and multiplies opportunities for policy influence and public reach since members undertake activities together, often simultaneously, and sometimes spread geographically. Local actions gain more weight by linking them with regional and international initiatives: policymakers are</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have there been any simultaneous or coordinated activities in the network made to increase its impact? • Has the network been more publicly recognised due to its parallel actions? • Have policymakers been more open to receive proposals from members due to their belonging to wider movements? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do policymakers in your country pay more attention to CSOs that work at the regional or international level? • Are there any specific activities done at the network in which you could participate and that would provide you with more credibility at the local level?

<p>more prone to listen when organisations are backed up by wider movements. When effective, those parallel actions also increase the reputation, visibility and image of the network.</p>		
<p>(S6) Solidarity and socialisation: networks foster the production and dissemination of common messages through multiple avenues and channels which enhances the opportunities to establish new topics or frames in the public agenda. They also contribute to developing the capacity to act on common grounds which works as a stronger platform for influence processes: members align resources, efforts, and communications towards an agreed upon policy goal. Networks are also effective to influence those policy aspects that negatively affect collective rights.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the network been able to agree to work on a specific issue or geographic location even though it does not directly imply all members? • Have members decided to unite efforts to conduct collective actions such as global or regional campaigns, press releases, or write a policy brief to address a concern of some of its members? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is your organisation willing to join efforts to causes or initiatives that are not directly related to funded programmes or projects? • Are you seeking to bind your local work to broader issues or needs addressed by other CSOs? • Would you measure your impact by the capacity to frame public issues in a different way that derives from consensus building with other organisations?
<p>(S7) Mobilising resources: Membership in a network can help CSOs raise more funds for local policy impact under the reputational and credibility umbrella of a recognised network. Providers of local funds (governments, business or foundations) may regard the network as a leverage opportunity to enlarge impact of their support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have joint proposals been presented to donors in the context of the network? • Have any of those joint proposals been accepted by a donor? • Have you used the network as an umbrella for any fundraising activity? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you been suggested by donors or potential donors to work with similar organisations to achieve policy impact? • Is your CSO interested in developing joint fundraising strategies?
<p>(S8) Political weight and relevance: when composed by organisations with experience in working with governments and ability to engage decision makers, or organisations that represent wider social groups, networks become very effective means to legitimise topics and proposals in regional and global political agendas and also to then influence at the local level. Also, the more numerous, the more political weight that the network can obtain.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do network members have relevant experience in working with governments? • Have network members already been involved in decision making processes? • Do network members have solid links with wider social groups? • Can the network claim to represent a wide social group? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your organisation face recurrent difficulties in reaching policymakers involved in regional or global issues? • Could your organisation strengthen its legitimacy based on wider representation of interests?
<p>(S9) Laboratories for citizenship and democratic practices: the challenges of inclusion, openness and representativity within the network convert them into valuable and fruitful spaces to favour regional and global citizen participation. Socialisation of knowledge and expertise also turns networks into effective mechanisms to promote healthier democracies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the network applied participatory approaches to make decisions and implement projects? • Is participation one of the core values of the network? • Do members promote ample citizen participation in public issues? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is your organisation interested in fostering wider participation in public policy processes or does it tend to work in a more direct and close relationship with policymakers? • Are you interested in validating research findings among a broader set of stakeholders?

Weaknesses

WEAKNESS	HOW TO ASSESS WHETHER APPLICABLE TO THE NETWORK	HOW TO ASSESS WHETHER TO JOIN A NETWORK
<p>(W1) Low legitimacy: when criteria for inclusion and participation within the network are not clearly defined nor are there sound process standards in place to guide the involvement within them, criticisms from diverse sectors (including other civil society groups) about the legitimacy of the network to participate in certain policy processes may emerge. As they are not representative from the electoral standpoint, policymakers frequently pose questions about the reasons and grounds for network participation in decision-making processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there clear and public criteria for inclusion and participation in the network? • Are there any specific routes to ensure member representation? • Is the network open to promote dialogue among opposing views? • Does the position of the network frequently reflect those of a particular interest group or actor in the decision making process? 	<p>Have you heard about any claims or critics about the legitimacy of this network?</p> <p>What is the Secretariat structure like? Is it clear how decisions are made?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there clear and public criteria for inclusion and participation in the network? • Can you assess the degree of its transparency via the web-site?
<p>(W2) Deficits of accountability: Benner (2004) could not have described this weakness more clearly: "Networks as diffuse, complex and weakly institutionalised collaborative systems are neither directly accountable to an electoral base nor do they exhibit clear principal-agent relationships." Complexity of interactions between members does not allow to clearly identify the cause and effect of actions and decisions. Furthermore, the avoidance of bureaucratisation - characteristic of networks- sometimes leads to scarce or inexistent mechanisms of social accountability. Questions about the transparency of networks proliferate; along with perceptions about the arbitrariness, manipulation, and lack of accountability erode the credibility and reputation of the network, thus damaging its potential to influence policy. Power and authority are also more contested beyond the nation state.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the network decision making process clarified or institutionalised in some way? • How does the network inform to diverse stakeholders about its operations? Does it publish an annual report or balance? • Is the network transparent about its funding sources? And about the expenditure of the resources? • Is someone responsible to look after network accounts? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What mechanisms are there in place to provide accessibility to the network among stakeholders? • Is it easy to detect which are the funding sources and how these are spent? • Would you be able to contribute with specific mechanisms to ensure transparency and accountability?
<p>(W3) Scarce funding to plan ahead and seize unpredictable windows of opportunity: all too often CSO networks carry out ad-hoc policy influence activities around specific regional and global events that convene policymakers in order to advance agreements or commitments. However, due to the lack of secured and discretionary funding, they have not been working jointly for a longer time in order to articulate and strategically devise their interventions based on a wider policy understanding. Moreover, very frequently they cannot devote time nor human resources to monitor decisions and commitments after these have been made in order to guarantee a good policy implementation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the network have any institutional non-project-related funding? What percentage of the total budget corresponds to institutional funding? • Is the network able to work according a long term plan? • Does it have free resources to invest when unexpected events take place? • Does the network count with resources to monitor or participate in the implementation of its proposals? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the network economically sustainable? • Does it have capacity to raise enough funds to achieve its proposed goals? • Would your organisation be willing to contribute to fundraising efforts?

<p>(W4) Low institutional memory: if the expertise and know-how are held by only a few individuals or institutions, the network sees its capacity of policy impact diminished when these members leave. The lack of documentation of processes within the network affects its effectiveness in building on what has been achieved, or in avoiding mistakes that have already been made in previous instances. Frequently, transnational organisation spreads and thins institutional memory.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the network have any institutionalised mechanisms to ensure that decisions, processes and experiences are systematised and written down? • Does the network count with mechanisms to promote engagement of organisations and not only individuals representing organisations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you detect whether the network relies on codified means of communication and not only informal interaction? • Can you access documents produced by the network that enable an understanding of achievements so far and future plans?
<p>(W5) Elitism and lack of social support: academics and practitioners agree that the risks of those networks that have very select criteria to incorporate members or share information and knowledge because these features attract questions about their lack of representation and social legitimacy. It is believed that a broad representative inclusion of all relevant actors is a key prerequisite for successful cooperation in networks. The absence of policies that guarantee inclusion and openness has triggered criticisms from Southern CSOs that opt not to participate in some regional or global processes following the conviction that they are only led by the North and that global governance is only part of their discourse. Also governments distrust these networks perceiving them as narrow groups of interest instead of channels for the voices and proposals of citizenship, even when the network may argue their legitimacy based on their expertise and knowledge. In this sense, a broad sourcing of knowledge and positions can become very helpful.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the network have closed criteria for eligibility of members? • Is it difficult to reach the eligibility levels? (i.e. do they require a specific academic degree?) • How technical are the debates in the network? • Does the network represent all relevant actors affected by the issue? • Are there any policies or mechanisms that guarantee inclusion? • Can the network be perceived as an interest group? • What provisions are there in the network for redistribution of resources so that all can participate? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you heard of CSOs that wanted to join the network but were rejected? • Do you endorse the selected criteria for eligibility of members? • Do groups from certain countries, specific organisations or professions dominate the network?
<p>(W6) Internal distrust: stereotypes, prejudices and mistrust are constant challenges when networks are being created and hinder the possibilities of quickly getting together to implement a strategy of policy influence, for instance before a global event takes place. Tensions about who to include, or how decisions should be made or who should talk in representation of the network sometimes drain time, resources and energy from the direct goal of influencing a certain policy process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do open and frank discussions take place among members? • Is there any space or mechanism to expose problems and conflicts? • Are the relationships between members too formal? • Does the network have trust building exercises or mechanisms? • Are there internal divisions in the network? • Are there frequent attempts to over-represent the level of consensus? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you know other members of the network? Do you trust their work? • Can you foresee some imbalance between North and South participants?
<p>(W7) Meagre concrete results: the complexity of interactions between multiple actors throughout chaotic processes makes it hard for networks to demonstrate tangible ways of impact. In fact, transnational activity can mean uneven and variegated impact. Hence, perceptions from policymakers about the networks'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the network produced concrete outcomes as a result of members' interaction (publications, meetings with policymakers, policy documents, public campaigns, etc.)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you identify a concrete policy influence achieved by the network? • Has the network received continuous support from donors?

<p>potential contribution are diffuse and unclear. This becomes even more complicated due to the difficulty of balancing process with outcomes. The need for direct, concrete and quick results is often confronted with the need to ensure wide participation, consultation and inclusion of traditionally excluded voices and groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the network received any direct appraisals from policymakers regarding its work? • Can the network tell a story about a specific policy influence that it has achieved? • Are there discussions among members about how to make quick progress on certain topics without damaging participation and inclusion in decision-making? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will the lack of concrete results be perceived by your own Board of Trustees or by your core donors?
<p>(W8) Lack of focus and clarity about what the network is for: often members abandon networks or CSOs hesitate about whether to join them because they cannot clearly see how to seize advantage of them. Confusion among participants about the purposes, advantages and value of belonging to network abounds. Hence, they do not know how to contribute to it. This is worsened by the fact that there are relatively few opportunities for face to face interaction which leads to social capital formation of international networks. This confusion also reigns for policymakers who do not understand the contributions that the network could make, or in certain cases even welcome the lack of focus to advance their own agendas without providing the network with a space of dialogue or debate. On the contrary, Creech and Willard (2001) have observed that when institutional collaboration takes place around a single issue or problem rather than a broad spectrum of interests, the network becomes more influential.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a clear intention behind the setting up the network? What policy or practice do members want to change? • Are partners needed to move that change forward, and if so, why? Is it clear for potential members how they can contribute to the network and what they can gain from participation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How issue specific is the network. What is its 'glue'? • What advantage, if any, will the organisation gain, or lose by not working in a network with others? Will partners water down rather than strengthen your efforts?

Opportunities

OPPORTUNITY	HOW TO ASSESS WHETHER APPLICABLE TO THE NETWORK	HOW TO ASSESS WHETHER TO JOIN A NETWORK
<p>(O1) Institutional transition: Opportunities for the organisation of networks are likely to be most prevalent during periods of institutional transition, when one set of arrangements is being displaced by another. One such period was during the transitions to democracy and implementation of neoliberal restructuring in the 1980s in Latin America.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any institutional reforms taking place in the region or in a global policymaking agency in which the network could participate? • Is there a demand from policymakers for advice, experience and evidence to make new policy decisions? • Are some countries of members undergoing significant policy reforms that other members have already experienced in their own countries? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the network recognised for its expertise on a certain policy area on which your national policymakers are currently making decisions? • Are there significant policies being formulated in the country and in which your organisation would have more opportunities to participate if backed up by a regional or global network?

<p>(O2) Policy transfer: When states are engaged in policy transfer to enter regional agreements or unions: there is higher demand for proposals for change and of expertise for implementation. An example is Eastern European countries entering the European Union in which part of the bureaucracy lacked the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out the required policy changes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there members of the network whose countries are in the process of applying to a certain treaty or agreement that requires learning from policy experiences of other countries? • Are there network members from other countries whose policy experience can be transferred? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are policymakers in your country open to working with organisations with policy expertise from other countries? • Has the network successfully participated in a policy transfer project?
<p>(O3) Common policy responses: international organisations like the OECD or the United Nations (UN) that promote the development of common standards and policies in certain fields become spaces for networks to interact with decisionmakers. Networks can provide them with proposals supported by CSOs in diverse countries that can then facilitate implementation, monitoring and evaluation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there common standards from international organisms being implemented in the network's areas of work? • Has the network built strong relationships with international bodies that develop and promote common policies? • Are there any policies or agreements made within a global organism that directly affect the network's objectives and that would be worth monitoring in a consistent way? • Are there systematic evaluation periods for public administrations that have agreed upon a common international policy? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there common standards from international organisms being implemented in your country and that are related to your work? • Is the network well perceived by international organisations and several governments?
<p>(O4) Need for alternative mechanisms to solve social, political, economic and cultural problems: Networks frequently emerge in response to the failure of traditional governance mechanisms, which they take as an opportunity to offer new and alternative ways of getting things done. New forms of networked governance at the intersection of the public and private sectors are born to deal with public issues. The lack of global and regional governance institutions also provides opportunities for networks. Also, the blurring of responsibility and the increasing awareness of interdependence foster debates about the traditional divide between public and private roles, and corresponding responsibilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the network have the patronage of international organisations, or several governments? • Are policymakers reaching for advice and evidence from CSOs? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is your government active in regional and global policymaking spaces in order to detect potential solutions to common problems? • Is the network perceived as a solutions provider by international organisations and governments? If not, is it promoting global issues that require alternative mechanisms of solution?
<p>(O5) Transnational nature of policy problems: the fact that issues such as environmental protection or HIV/AIDS go beyond the territorially bounded nature of the nation-state imply the need for coordinated and agreed upon responses that networks can facilitate and promote.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can the network contribute with a regional or global policy proposal to address a transnational problem? • Is the network participating in other networks where transnational policies to address global problems are being discussed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the network organised around a problem that visibly demands regional or global responses?

<p>(O6) Increasing complexity of policy formulation and implementation: policymakers both in developed and developing countries confront more and more challenges and problems that cut across areas of bureaucratic or disciplinary expertise. Interdisciplinary networks that can integrate research and policy analysis through a holistic and practical approach can turn into valuable partners for policymakers facing and aware of this type of challenges.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are members from different disciplines working together to develop joint research and evidence-based proposals to address complex problems? • Does the network integrate diverse approaches from different disciplines in the policy influence process? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do network members represent different disciplines? • Would your organisation benefit from working with the network members due to potential interdisciplinary collaboration in a regional or global policy?
<p>(O7) Institutional openings for CSO participation in regional and global processes: states such as Chile, Canada, and Costa Rica are currently fostering civil society participation in policy processes and negotiations. Some even promote the formation of non governmental processes and CSO networks through political clout and financial resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the network detected all the current institutional mechanisms for civil society participation at the global, regional and national levels? Does it have strong relationships with the policymakers in charge of implementing these mechanisms? • Are some national governments actively fostering the formation of non governmental processes in the policymaking processes? (i.e. through financial support) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the existent institutional mechanisms for civil society participation in your country more usually connected to regional or global policies than national policies? • Are national policymakers more prone to consult with networks than individual CSOs?
<p>(O8) Growing demand of quality of evidence: even though ICTs have enabled wider access to information and knowledge, policymakers often face the problem of how to ascertain which information is credible and reliable, as well as relevant for developing policy responses. Networks that can build legitimacy on the basis of the research and evidence that they produce can become sources of consultation and advice for policymakers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there an explicit demand of evidence by policymakers in the issues that the network is focusing on? Has the network received requests from any governments to produce some evidence or research? • Has the network produced high quality research oriented towards needs expressed by policymakers or international bodies? • Is your network recognised as a credible research locus? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a need expressed by policymakers in your country for evidence from other countries to improve decision making? • Would policymakers perceive your research and evidence as more credible if endorsed by a network? • Is the reputation of the research produced by the network recognised by policymakers?
<p>(O9) Increasing support of donor agencies towards networks: there are numerous donors and initiatives focusing resources in the development and strengthening of alliances and networks among CSOs with similar goals in order to achieve synergy and harmonization of efforts and support (examples are Avina, DFID, Help Age International, among others). International bodies have also fostered the creation of CSO networks to help discuss, formulate, implement and monitor programs conducted by the governments through their loans.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the network developed a list of potential donors that includes those who usually support the formation of networks? • Has the network solid relationships with donor agencies that are interested in supporting networks? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has your organisation been suggested by current or potential donors to work in a collaborative way with similar organisations in other parts of the region or world?

Threats

THREAT	HOW TO ASSESS WHETHER APPLICABLE TO THE NETWORK	HOW TO ASSESS WHETHER TO JOIN A NETWORK
<p>(T1) Lack of transparency and openness in policymaking processes; low political will: many times networks see their participation and influence obstructed by decision-making spaces and processes that are bureaucratic and diffuse. The labyrinth-like nature of these legal and institutional procedures does not allow them to clearly detect when, how and to who present claims and proposals. Even more challenging, there are governments that do not have the political will to open up policymaking to CSO actors. For example, using arguments about state sovereignty, several diplomats and trade negotiators resist public scrutiny and demands for transparency and participation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the governmental decision making process clear and explicit for all those interested in participating? • Does participation face high barriers regarding technical and legal procedures that need to be understood or followed? • Do centralised and vertical styles prevail in the corresponding decision making processes? • Are there any institutionalised mechanisms for consultation with civil society? If so, is there any accountability from government towards participants regarding their proposals? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the network developed expertise and experience in understanding complex policy processes that your own organisation would like to access? • Is the network promoting overall civil society participation in policymaking? Does it share the outcomes of its participation with other groups? • Would policymakers be more willing to open up spaces for networks than for individual organisations?
<p>(T2) Co-option: sometimes policymakers and technocrats may have political motivations when promoting or even financially endorsing certain type of CSO participation. By publicly displaying that they encourage civil participation they might aim at neutralising outsiders and other anti-systemic movements that have not been included or have not accepted to participate in the process under their terms and conditions. Also, they might find participant CSOs as effective partners to then help implement or monitor solutions that are politically sensitive such as trade liberalisation, or projects with environmental impact. The network could become an endorser of final decisions that have not taken into account their original ideas and proposals.</p>	<p>If the network is working directly with some government/s in a certain policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this policy backed by a wider social consensus/ stakeholder consultation or is it a conflictive policy that will significantly affect excluded groups? • Is the policy based on independent research and evidence that the government is accepting or is it mainly guided by political criteria? <p>If the network is funded by some government/s to help formulate, implement or monitor a certain policy,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • would it be able to continue its work if these funds are not granted? Is the contract clear in terms of independence, accountability and access to information to other social groups? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the network socially perceived as an independent one, even though it works with or funded by some government/s? • Does the network provide society with clear and transparent information about how it works with governments? Is there access to information about its contracts?
<p>(T3) Unequal access to participation: described by Benner (2004) as the dual participatory gap, there is a massive asymmetry between those who have access to the advantages of the system of globalisation and interdependence and those who are left on the sidelines. Global governance still represents an abstract issue, not popularised in public debates. It is more treated as a rational and technical process than a question of democratic participation. There is no strong and visible civic</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there important differences in the resources available for the network members? (i.e. internet access) • Is the network striving to support the engagement of most affected groups to ensure that their voice is adequately represented? Or does it tend to exclude those that lack the technical expertise or skills to participate? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the network perceived as elitist regarding membership and consultation with other stakeholders? • Has the network lowered barriers for policy participation for its members and other CSOs (i.e. producing handbooks and guidelines on how to's)?

<p>engagement in these processes due to lack of knowledge and information, distance from where decisions are being made, as well as lack of financial resources to afford the costs of participations.</p>		
<p>(T4) Unstable political contexts; high turnover of policy makers: economic, social and political environments are more chaotic, unpredictable and volatile in developing countries, thus the challenges of networking are significantly larger in these settings. Changes in state authorities imply in many cases the need to redirect or change agreements and partnerships that had already been established. It is frequently difficult and costly to establish long term working relationships with the public sector; sometimes roles and functions are not clearly established and the network cannot know who will attend a global event or who will be in charge of implementing the commitments that have been made.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can the network clearly identify who are the governmental interlocutors? Are these often changed or replaced? • Are the economic unpredictability indexes high in the countries your network operates in? (i.e. country risk) • Can the network count on any long term working relationships with the public sector? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the network count with long term working relationships with the public sector or is it in constant need of developing new contacts? • Would working with a network help your organisation better deal with constant turnover among policymakers by providing credible institutional memory?
<p>(T5) Non involvement of national and subnational governments: networks have sometimes appealed to regional or global instances to solve national issues finding that at that level it is easier to gain access to senior officials, and obtain a response. "Leap-frogging" may prove effective in influencing domestic policies in countries under authoritarian rule or countries with weak democratic or corrupt institutions. However this might empower multilateral institutions or international organisms over national actors and may erode the process of domestic coalition building that is essential to sustainable development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the network ever tried working with national or sub national governments or is it mainly connected with multilateral institutions or international organisms? • Do network members focus part of their work in trying to also engage the national and subnational governments? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the network promote national coalition building where your organisation could play a leading role or does it only concentrate its efforts in the regional and global levels?
<p>(T6) Media logics and routines: urgency, novelty, and short: the nature of media treatment and coverage of certain topics often affect the capacity of the network to rise in timely fashion awareness of an issue or aspect of what is being discussed in regional or global forums. Journalists face time constrains and those in developing countries also often lack the resources to carry out in depth investigations that would enable them to consult more sources of information and treat more aspects of a topic as demanded from the network. Furthermore, the limited blank space hinders their capacity to communicate the complexity of some issues or the alternative points of views promoted from the network.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the network developed long term trustful relationships with journalists? • Do journalists approach it to gather information about a certain regional or global process? • Could the network become a partner with certain journalists in order to provide them with research that they are interested in but do not have the resources to carry out? • Does media coverage on issues related to the network tend to be too simple and narrowed to very few sources of information? • Does the network have a press relations strategy? Have there been systematic attempts to influence public opinion through the media? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are journalists in your country highly interested in regional or global spaces and events? Would your participation in these increase your media visibility? • Does media coverage of the network and its core issues tend to be too simple?

How far can we go? The most significant challenges for CSOs in networks

The SWOT analysis enables networks to more accurately assess where its main challenges reside in terms of effectively influencing policies. By focusing on the challenges that are most relevant, the network will be able to ensure that next actions and decisions are based on an awareness of what can and cannot be done according to its current situation. Challenges derive principally from strengths and weaknesses, which encompass factors that are under the control of member organisations. Some are also linked to external threats and opportunities. These relationships are highlighted in each challenge mentioned below in order to help readers assess which challenges should be prioritised.

Challenge 1. Securing funding and sustainability (S7, W1, W3, O7, O9, T2)

Many practitioners and network specialists coincide in the importance of planning and implementing a fundraising strategy to sustain the network. Creech and Willard (2001) observe that “Network literature often remarks that the basic structure of networks is consistently underfunded, and often jeopardised as networks mature and donors reduce levels of commitment accordingly”. Network operating costs should not be underestimated when developing the initial network grant proposals and subsequent project proposals.

The need of diverse and sustained financial resources to achieve policy impact is evident:

1.1 Policy processes are long term: it takes considerable time to build relationships with relevant policymakers and decision making processes start well before specific regional or global events, and their consequences extend for long after decisions have been made; implementation and monitoring require persistence over time which implies continuous funding.

1.2 Reputation of the network: usually networks need to convey a public image of having diverse groups of supporters and of independence from interest groups, or certain governments. In this sense, relying on a single funding source affects their legitimacy in terms of participating on the policy processes.

1.3 Effective coordination: a minimal administrative and coordinating structure has been pointed out as a key factor for ensuring policy influence since it contributes to implement fundraising plans, and also helps members to divide roles and tasks throughout policy participation. Discussions about the size, role and costs of such structure abound.

1.4 Ample portfolio of continuous and complementary projects: the multi-level nature of policy influence generally requires significant funding to ensure that the different stakeholders are being reached in the diverse levels of decision-making (local, national, regional, global, etc.)

Larger awareness of the need of long-term commitments from donor agencies should be promoted, in order to ensure that networks develop a solid and viable fundraising plan. However, sustainability not only depends from a rich and diverse funding source; it also requires active leadership and membership interested in promoting and implementing policy change. Finally, networks are not necessarily meant to last for a long time; some networks cannot be expected to be sustainable (Mendizabal 2005b). On the contrary, networks can be very useful means of distributing funding and other resources among their partners in developing countries; and can provide excellent channels of research dissemination.

Also funding can become the means to achieve a good communication strategy within a network.

Challenge 2. Empowering a healthy leadership (S2, S8, W1, W2, W6, W8)

Even when horizontal in nature regarding participation and with decentralised decision making processes, it is recognised that networks also benefit from the existence of

some individuals or organisations that take a leading role in them, in the sense of motivation and entrepreneurship as well as facilitating policy influence. Ensuring this leadership without affecting broad participation and engagement represents a challenge; manipulation by a few individuals or organisations should be avoided. An effective leadership contributes to a positive public image, presence in relevant spaces and management of expectations. Leaders can help to bring consensus among common goals and the roles of different actors within the network and also convey to external stakeholders what the network can really achieve. Last but not least, leaders also take care of most significant relationships and alliances, especially with policymakers, that the network encompasses.

Challenge 3. Coordinating and gluing members: rigidity and flexibility (S1, S3, S4, S5, S6, W4, W8)

The need to build trust and consensus about the main goals of the network requires capacity to convene and organise members through a delicate balance between structure that implies some rigidity, and flow that ensure flexibility for such a diverse constituency. Network structure needs to evolve with the network, by responding to its demands (Church 2002). Thus, the ideal is the minimum structure and decision making that enables democratisation, diversity, decentralisation and dynamism.

To ensure such a balanced structure, Benner (2002) calls for fostering interface management skills that consists of mediating among highly diverse organisational cultures, finding common ground across wide-ranging interests, and using innovative techniques to communicate. He explains that in some networks an independent secretariat plays a key role in this interface management. Church (2002) adds that part of the trust-building work is done by the coordination function, in a constantly engaged process of knowing the members, facilitating their interaction, helping them to be in connection with one another. This function also conveys to members the idea that the network is active and living. Clearly, attracting members who have organisational

management skills that are essential for building and maintaining networks is one of the main challenges.

Finally, it is felt that there should be tangible incentives for members to frequently participate, not only in terms of the information that they can exchange through the network, but also some practical advantages such as funding assistance, provision of working tools, or the possibility of joining international campaigns or global initiatives that increase their reputation.

Challenge 4. Achieving good internal governance (S6, S9, W6, W7, W8)

It is worth noting that both leadership and coordination are key components of ensuring effective governance for the network, which in turn helps to enable that the right decisions are made at the right time. Court and Mendizabal (2005) emphasise the importance of clear governance agreements as one of the key success factors for networks to ensure policy impact: it helps set objectives, identify functions, define membership structures, make decisions and resolve conflicts.

An effective governance model contributes to decision making: networks need to decide the issues on which they are going to seek government action and establish an efficient mechanism for making collective decisions for issues such as selecting and approving areas of work, disseminating research results, and putting together funding proposals for new initiatives.

Challenge 5. Nurturing participation and commitment (S1, S4, S5, S9, W5, W8)

The quality and extent of participation of members has direct consequences in the ability of the network to become a legitimate and effective actor in policy processes. It is extremely difficult to guarantee good and substantive participation if the network lacks clear goals or focus and if these are not aligned with the participants' own strategic objectives. In evaluating networks, Church (2002) has found that participation is the most visible issue: "It seems

many networks are confronted by the challenges of how to generate participation and sustain it, how to provide incentives, how to encourage greater diversity, how to enable those of a variety of languages and cultures to get involved, and how to manage a diverse range of capacities”.

Other factors that directly affect possibilities and incentives for participation are how to manage cultural differences, how to work in multiple first, second and third languages and how to deal with geographic distance (face to face interaction has been pointed out as a requirement to keep the network alive). Tensions between North and South organisations are also frequent. There are three types of culture that can affect a virtual team: national, organisational and functional. All these aspects affect even minor operational issues such as coordinating a virtual conference considering regional holidays and seasons.

Challenge 6: Generating credible research and evidence (S1, S4, W1, O4, O5, O6, O8)

The capacity to produce research and evidence to inform policy debates, and to develop policy proposals is strongly linked to how networks can better seize new and increasing opportunities such as the need for alternative mechanisms to solve social, political, economic and cultural problems, and the increasing complexity of policy formulation and implementation. Moreover, policymakers in certain processes demand high quality evidence but at the same time do not know how to discern if the information they receive is credible and reliable. To become legitimate and respected voices in the policy processes and advocates for policy reforms, networks should demonstrate their capacity to produce rigorous research, solid evidence and sound data, by ensuring, for instance, that they count with scholarly or academic backing.

Challenge 7. Communicating effectively within strategic relationships (S1, S2, S3, S6, W1, W2, W6, O6)

Excellent management of communications becomes one of the principal challenges for networks since by developing this ability a network would be able to cover several factors that have been detected by practitioners as academics as key for policy influence:

- Informal links can be critical in achieving objectives both at the internal level as well as with policymakers.
- Making room for new forms of cooperation and avoiding the emergence of blocking coalitions.
- Packaging of evidence in a way that becomes useful and relevant to policymakers so that they can put the research of the network into action.
- Taking advantage of ICTs to ensure that the right information arrives at the right time.
- Establishing alliances with communications media to publicise proposals among public opinion and opinion leaders.
- Forging internal consensus among members about the main influence goal and the means to achieve it. Previous consultations and debates to smooth out differences within the network before “going public” are key to generate a minimal basis of consensus to then undertake joint and coordinated actions.
- Ensure a coordinated communications effort to make sure that voices from the network converge in the same messages to reinforce claims and proposals at the different levels of intervention (local, national, regional and global).
- Building up reputation and high profile so that when the window of opportunity arises the network can quickly become a relevant stakeholder for public opinion, policymakers and media.
- Creating an effective mechanism to internally exchange information that is relevant for the process of influence.
- Raising interest and attention to those issues that are crucial for the institutional definition of the network;

public acceptance and the capacity to convene multiple actors are very important to have impact.

- Developing joint initiatives with other networks with common agendas.
- Detecting valid and direct speakers to assess which communications channels are working or not in order to nurture or modify them.

Communications is understood as a two-way and interactive process that aims at building and maintaining relationships of diverse nature with decision-makers within government, business, media, citizenship and civil society organisations around the world. Management of communications implies that networks face the challenge of promoting consensus among the diverse stakeholders about their goals, objectives and proposals, or at least diminishing potential conflicts with those whose interests and values are opposed. Networks need to overcome the traditional communications approach by which they perceive others as mere recipients of their messages and information. They should turn them instead into actors with which they can develop more complex relationships that sometimes imply negotiations, confrontation, collaboration, complementation, etc.

This concept of communications involves one major difficulty for regional and global networks: face to face communications are vital to build trust and ensure adequate interpretation of intentions and proposals. However, due to the costs of travel, CSOs have very seldom the opportunity to work face to face in this type of issues or to meet in person with relevant policymakers. Face to face communications are much more effective to resolve conflicts, avoid miscommunications, and encourage collaborative work.

Challenge 8. Ensuring capacity to follow up (S4, S9, W2, W3, O6, O7, O8)

Linked with the long term nature of policy processes, it has been noted that more attention should be devoted to ensure from the very beginning of the influence strategy that enough resources are being allocated to follow up after

the first goals have been achieved. Institutionalised openings for CSO participation have contributed to the possibility of affecting some discussions and agreements; growing demand of quality of evidence opens up a new avenue for sustaining influence throughout implementation and evaluation. Short, mid and long-term follow up activities need to be developed to assure effectiveness, validity and sustainability of changes that have been claimed for. Networks face the challenge of effectively becoming means to exercise public control and require accountability.

Challenge 9. Accessing governments (S8, W1, W2, W5, O1, O2, O6, O7, O8, T1-T5)

Fruitful networks need to devise the adequate mechanisms to reach policymakers in a timely fashion that will vary from open governments to those that need policy advice for implementation to those that distrust CSOs in general. Based on a clear understanding on the importance of opening doors in the complex and chaotic policy process, networks should try to nurture political sensitivity, develop new channels of communication not only with governments, but also the new transnational governance structures, and court leaders with political expertise on how to influence policymakers. When attractive opportunities of joint work emerge, the challenge becomes to keep an independent stance so as to ensure social accountability and legitimacy as well as assure social support to promote democratic and open processes.

Challenge 10. Developing direct capacity of influence (S1, S8, O9, W1)

Several practitioners currently emphasise the need to count with more practical knowledge about skills, tools, methodologies and best practices regarding how to influence regional and global policies. Lobbying is not a regulated activity in many countries and thus poses challenges regarding the grounds for CSOs to engage in regional and global processes. In the case of Latin America, for example, several CSOs find that it is hard to promote collective actions since

civil society tends to be very individualistic, in large part due to competition for funds, which could be counterbalanced as more donors decide to invest in networks. Internal and external knowledge management on these topics is also related to this challenge. This capacity might also require the need to effectively connect regional and global issues. While seeking to incorporate local partners to ensure a broader constituency, networks are faced with the difficulty of relating issues on a particular region with global issues, and between regional issues from different regions. Besides ascertaining that the local CSOs in each region are as representative and legitimate as possible, networks also need to establish an agenda that captures at the same time local, regional and global concerns and interests. The tension between adding local interests to count alongside their advocacy and implementation partners at the national level, as well as serving a broader range of global interests, is constant.

Challenge 11. Monitoring and measuring impact and influence (W1, W2, W4, W7)

Last but not least, due to its relation with social acceptance and sustainability, networks deal with the problem of lacking concrete and realistic mechanisms to evaluate their work and outcomes. More thinking needs to take place to come up with effective means for evaluating networks. Creech and Willard (2001) clearly make this point: “A network needs to be able to determine what changes it has effected through its research and communications work. It needs to monitor whether it is fully realising its potential. This requires evaluation methods that not only assess individual activities, but provide some means for identifying changes as a result of its combination of efforts.” Constant monitoring and evaluation are essential to enhance network management and, consequently, policy impact.

CHAPTER 2: What we can learn from others

The literature on networks, as well as practitioners' reflections on their own experiences, make it clear that there are several strengths and weaknesses, and threats and opportunities shared by different types of networks when they attempt to achieve their goals. Therefore, there is opportunity to learn from other networks, even though they might be working in diverse global issues and participating in different policymaking processes.

By looking into how internal and external factors interplay to either hinder or ease how a network can influence a regional or global policy, a network can better identify common challenges and extract lessons about good and bad practices that can affect how it operates.

In the previous chapter we have highlighted how can become optimal channels to distribute and integrate knowledge, share analytical capacity and publish information in order to better influence policies. The knowledge they generate can also help other networks improve their thinking about their current behaviours and practices and how these could be improved by learning from how others are working, or even by anticipating challenges they might face ahead on the road.

Based on our conviction of the importance and need of sharing lessons, we include four case studies on global or regional networks that concretely illustrate diverse challenges and how these networks have been able or not to face them. The selected case studies are:

1. Case Study 1: GCAP (Global Call Against Poverty)
2. Case Study 2: IFRTD (International Forum for Rural Transport and Development)
3. Case Study 3: TILAC and the CICC (Inter American Convention Against Corruption)
4. Case Study 4: TKN (Trade Knowledge Network)

Case Study 1: Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP)

<http://www.whiteband.org/Gcap>

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: GCAP, the global coalition of community groups, trade :
: unions, Non-Governmental Organisations, individuals, :
: faith groups and campaigners from all over the world, :
: raise awareness on the importance of the achievement :
: of the Millennium Development Goals. The main focus :
: is the fight against poverty and all the groups that form :
: GCAP have country-based coalitions to promote its de- :
: mands and enable concerned citizens to put pressure on :
: world leaders and decision makers. :
:

Context

A Global Aim

The year 2000 was the beginning (and ending) of many happenings around the globe. It was a special time when people were wondering if computers would implode or if they have done something worthwhile for humanity. New Year's resolutions at the end of 1999 were difficult to put down on paper because expectations were too high. The social global movement was not an outsider in this process. CSOs took advantage of this moment and reviewed their work towards a new millennium. The UN was also preparing for discussions about the challenges posed by globalisation and how its forces could be moderated. Global leaders had accepted that globalisation was a fact. And some ideas were expressed on how to moderate its negative effects. In 1998, the UN General Assembly decided to convene the Millennium Summit of the United Nations¹ as an integral

¹ The Millennium Summit of the United Nations was held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 6th to 8th September 2000. <http://www.un.org/millennium/>

part of the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations. The outcome of the meeting was the adoption of the **United Nations Millennium Declaration**², which outlined a wide range of commitments as regards Human Rights, good governance and democracy, and where world leaders agreed to a set of time-bound and measurable goals and targets for fighting poverty, hunger, diseases, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women.

Placed at the heart of the global agenda, these are now called the **Millennium Development Goals**³ (MDGs). Poverty was one of the highlighted issues: *“To halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of the world’s people whose income is less than one dollar a day and the proportion of people who suffer from hunger and, by the same date, to halve the proportion of people who are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water”*, was signed by 189 Heads of State.

The Beginnings of the Network

In 2005, people assembled at the World Social Forum⁴ started debating whether actions were being taken to follow the MDGs by all the signatory governments. These goals had created great expectations but the situation worldwide demonstrated that the problems associated with them were still very much attached in many countries. CSO such as OXFAM⁵, Action Aid, NOVIB⁶, Civicus⁷, Social Watch and

the Millennium Campaign realised that there was no monitoring phase of the MDGs commitments, there were no formal spaces through which governments could provide feedback on the progress they were making in the achievement of the goals. This wake-up call was the beginning of a global network: **Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP)**.

The GCAP was initiated as an international alliance of organisations, networks and national campaigns to put pressure on world leaders to act against poverty and to hold them accountable for the commitments they had made regarding debt, trade and aid. It was conceived as a direct response to the opportunity (and challenge) presented by the congruence of three major international events that took place in one year, 2005: the G8 in Gleneagles (July), the UN Millennium +5 Summit in New York (September) and the WTO ministerial meeting in Hong Kong (December). The founding call focused on these three major events to be marked by three White Band Days, with subsidiary activities for other events taking place throughout the year.

Organisation



Challenges: Achieving good internal governance/
Empowering a healthy leadership.

² Resolution adopted by the General Assembly -without reference to a Main Committee (A/55/L.2)-, 55/2. United Nations Millennium Declaration. Eighth Plenary Meeting, September 8th, 2006. <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm>

³ The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – which range from having extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education, all 2015 – form a blueprint agreed to by all the world’s countries and the entire world’s leading development institutions. They have galvanised unprecedented efforts to meet the needs of the world’s poorest people. <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

⁴ The V World Social Forum took place in Porto Alegre, Brazil, from January 26th to 31st 2005. More than 200 thousand people took part. Around 6,872 organisations from 151 countries were involved in 2,500 activities distributed among the 11 thematic domains of World Social Territory. http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/main.php?id_menu=14_5&cd_language=2

⁵ Oxfam International is a confederation of 13 organisations working together with over 3,000 partners in more than 100 countries to find lasting solutions to poverty, suffering and injustice. As many of the causes of poverty are of global nature, members of Oxfam International believe they can achieve greater impact through their collective efforts.

⁶ NOVIB, a member of the Oxfam International family, has its headquarters in The Hague, Netherlands. NOVIB works closely with the 11 sister organisations of Oxfam International and with more than 3,000 local partners.

⁷ The World Alliance for Citizen Participation, CIVICUS, is an international alliance of around 1,000 members in about 100 countries that works to strengthen citizen action and civil society throughout the world, especially in areas where participatory democracy and citizens’ freedom of association are threatened. CIVICUS has a vision of a global community of active, engaged citizens committed to the creation of a more just and equitable world.

Choose Your Fight and Your Allies

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted by world leaders in 2000 provided an initial framework for action, setting forth limited and time bound-targets in 8 areas, to be achieved by 2015. The GCAP organisers wanted to spur action on Goals 1 and 8: goal 1 to eliminate extreme poverty and hunger, (establishing a more equitable set of trade and economic relationships), by and goal 8, to develop global partnerships for development.¹⁰ These two goals targeting poverty were thought to be the “civil society’s answer to the MDGs”¹¹.

During 2005, the GCAP members and supporters took more than 30 million actions around the world to put pressure on politicians and world leaders, who were attending crucial meetings that could commit to overcoming poverty, if the promised decisions were carried out.

The GCAP members took actions, staged events and activities at the local, regional and global levels, to show world leaders the unprecedented global support from people from different backgrounds to find a way to end poverty.

There was also some work done at the political level. These members were convinced that effective public institutions were vital for the progress of development: an important route for a broader impact for the fight against poverty was the engagement with government policy processes. Such work could help identify new problems, develop new or better strategies and make government implementation more effective.

The network partners felt that political influence on elected political officials and leaders was made possible thanks to the mass mobilisation. Local CSOs participating in the GCAP network had meetings and sent reports on the poverty theme to politicians that could support this fight within their arena. This strategy at the local level was backed up by GCAP at the

global level to show decision makers that the fight against poverty was something CSOs were willing to embrace and it was also something that could be accomplished with political will.

A Two Way Strategy: Local Lobby and Global Awareness

GCAP’s partners believe that the network’s strength has lain on its partnerships and its work with other networks, coalitions and campaigns. The broad basis and diverse organisations that constitute the network was pointed out as GCAP’s major strength and value added, constituting the basis for mobilisation, participation and mutual support¹². Each partner brings in commitments and responsibilities to support other organisations and coalitions.

Both at the local and the global level, politicians were targeted as the ones who could transform the fight that GCAP was leading into a public policy. The rationale underlying this was that state involvement would ensure that everyone received an equal treatment or, at least, that there would be formal institutional ways of claiming for it.

At the local level the strategy was to contact politicians and government officials to try to bring them into the campaign. Research, data, media work, and meetings were some of the ways chosen to reach the public agenda. When trying to make an impact on public officials and politicians, face to face communication was more successful at the local level.

“You have to know the right politicians or members of Parliament. We have developed a good relationship with them and then they are the ones who push forward our proposals. The key issue is to find the exact contacts within the political system so that it can add to our efforts. Lo-

¹⁰ Millennium Goal 1 is to eliminate extreme poverty and hunger with the target of reducing by 50% the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day and by 50% the proportion of people suffering from hunger by 2015 (from 1990). Goal 8 is to develop a global partnership for development by developing further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system. It includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction – both nationally and internationally.

¹¹ Interview with Heri Valot, MDG Campaign Manager, CIVICUS, October 24th, 2006.

¹² Interview with Heri Valot, MDG Campaign Manager, CIVICUS, October 24th 2006

cal organisations can strengthen these contacts by providing data, research and field work, and they can implement our findings”, FOCO an Argentinean GCAP partner.

At the global level, the political engagement was at three international events: the G8 in Gleneagles (July), the UN Millennium +5 Summit in New York (September) and the WTO ministerial meeting in Hong Kong (December). The strategy at the global level was to raise awareness of the issue by carrying out high profile activities: concerts, stunts, demonstrations, marches, etc. leading to increased mobilisation, and to put it in the global agenda by having an important role bringing together CSOs from all over the world in one global call to action.

The communication strategy and the coordination of key activities were also done at the global level. These contributed to GCAP’s large mobilisation and also to the world-wide press coverage. But also, GCAP partners agreed that the ambiguous global policy messages that were necessary to create broad-based coalitions at the global level, were somehow inadequate at the regional, national and local levels, where more clearly focused and detailed policy constructions and messages could be more effective.

The Difficult Balance: Local and Global; North and South



Challenges: Coordinating and gluing members/
Nurturing participation and commitment

Five years after the Millennium Declaration, the UN organised the UN Millennium +5 Summit to discuss the progress made by the countries in the search of achieving the MDGs. Local CSO members of GCAP network presented their independent reports on the country’s findings and many of them were critical with the work done by their governments. The common vision was that governments should have done more or could set higher goals in the fight against poverty.

In this worldwide venue the impact of the global campaign was significant, no more as an awareness-raising exercise, but as an advocacy effort with local influence. During the first semester of 2005, local NGOs were aiming to influence national governments to commit to the global fight; more than 80 CSOs carried out different events: *Benin* campaigners mobilised more than 200 NGOs and organised a massive march that congregated around the Parliament buildings in Porto Novo, the capital of Benin; Sierra Leone national coalition made a “Poverty Tour” video, collecting images and audio testimonies from people who are living in extreme poverty, and it was sent to the *Sierra Leone* delegates who attended the Millennium Summit; in *Paraguay*, the coalition held a peaceful demonstration outside the National Congress presenting a report about the country’s progress on the MDGs; in the *Czech Republic*, people signed postcards that were sent to the Czech Prime Minister, Jiří Paroubek, and the Czech president, Václav Klaus. The global campaign helped to access government and parliamentary spheres: local civil servants knew that the world was looking at them.

This was still a local-oriented plan to try to gain more associates for the campaign and more long-term achievements to win the fight. GCAP members were convinced that if politicians and governments could understand and take into account CSO’s proposals to halve poverty, the work at the global level would be easier. At the same time, national partners realised that, in order to gain support and achieve widespread mobilisation, they needed to be part of existing larger mobilisations and movements.

But such a balance is not always easy to accomplish. Some NGOs are too focused on local work and have little time or money (or interest) to attend and pay attention to global movements. This is still a challenge to most southern CSOs that are trying to get involved in international and intra-national networks so as to have a leading role in the reorientation of negative effects of globalisation.

North and South tension is another balance difficult to achieve. During the 2006 GCAP meeting, there was some tension between the agendas of European and American NGOs and also between the African and Latin American

Take Advantage: The Right Place at the Right Time



Challenges: Accessing governments/
Developing direct capacity of influence

As GCAP was conceived to put pressure on world leaders to act on poverty and to hold them accountable for the commitments they have made regarding debt, trade and aid. The G8 Summit - the meeting of the world's eight richest countries- was pointed out as an opportunity (and a challenge) for the first call to action. GCAP partners decided that if the United Nations Millennium Development Goals were to be achieved, these 8 men assembled in Scotland were the ones to speak to.

The UK coalition "Make Poverty History"¹⁴ was a member of GCAP and decided to organise the LIVE 8 concerts to raise awareness on the poverty issue. An estimated 3 billion people watched the LIVE 8 shows. On Saturday July 2nd 2005 concerts took place in 10 venues. 150 bands and 1250 musicians played across the globe to ask people not to give money, but to put their names for the campaign. On Wednesday July 6th 2005, the *Final Push* concert took place in Murrayfield Stadium, Edinburgh. It was the last day of the G8 meeting in Gleneagles. The outcome: over 30 million people from all around the world gave their names for the LIVE 8 list which was presented to the UK Prime Minister Tony Blair, as chairman of the G8, by representatives of LIVE 8 and the GCAP. Finally, these 8 men -and the billions they represent- would see that the world was watching whether they delivered what they had promised.

¹⁴ <http://www.makepovertyhistory.ca>

Esperanto... where are you?

Many global campaigners dream with the day when they will have enough money to hire simultaneous translations in all world languages or when a global campaign to promote Esperanto accomplished its objective. None of these are easy to become a reality so most of the time the English language is a big challenge. There are so many things that can be said nicely, intelligently and convincingly in our own language! Messages at the global venues are said and listened to by the interpretation of our colleague sitting next to us. And the simplicity of the translation acts as a barrier when things are in turmoil. There are few global Civil Society events that consider translation as one of the items to get funding for. Most of the time it is volunteered and this sometimes means that many things are left aside. Organisers should take this into account at the time of celebrating a global meeting.

Communications Strategy



Challenges: Communicating effectively
within strategic relationships/
Developing direct capacity of influence

Media activities were a major focus of GCAP. In December 2005 it received the International Achievement Award for Excellence in Communication from Inter Press Service news agency. All GCAP activities and issues were covered by international media and these were picked up by the Southern media.

The alliance with international press and celebrities was crucial. The massive attendance to the LIVE 8 concerts -led by the musicians Bob Geldof and Bono- and the spread of the word of the campaign -together with its symbol, the white band, considered "fashionable"- were a demonstration of the strength of the campaign.

Celebrities

Let's face it: famous people can spread the voice and can help raise awareness on the world's commitment to end poverty in ways you and me will never do. Bono and Bob Geldof led the LIVE 8 concerts and lobbied for the "Make Poverty History" campaign hand in hand with thousands of non-celebrities campaigners. GCAP took advantage of this situation and it invited them to be part of the campaign. The global network was gaining strength (especially in the North) and other celebrities from across the globe joined the campaign in saying "No Excuses, Promises Must be Kept"¹⁵.

"I think that the effect was achieved and that the concert was a very important advocacy tool because we had calls all around the year to ask for further information on the concerts and young people also wanted to get involved. Last year we marched with different cultural groups in town, we organised a concert and we gave out T-shirts, and these had a great impact on the media", Jorge Carpio, Director of FOCO, Argentinean GCAP partner.

A Symbol for Global Citizenship: White Band

GCAP supporters are united by their use of a white band as a reference to a global movement joined together to put pressure on governments to eradicate poverty, to dramatically lessen inequality, and to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The white band is the symbol that people, towns and cities all over the world are encouraged to adopt to show their support and to keep the anti-poverty message highly visible. The organisers decided that the white band could have a slogan or not, this was up to national campaigners. The election of a "material" symbol for the campaign was an asset, people felt proud of wearing something that, without even talking, could be associated with being part of a movement.

¹⁵ <http://spanish.millenniumcampaign.org/site/pp.asp?c=8nJBLNNnGhF&t=698845>

¹⁶ Former Director of UNESCO's Division of Youth and Sports Activities; among other evaluations, co-author for UNESCO-UNDP of The Experimental World Literacy Programme – a Critical Assessment

¹⁷ Gillette, Arthur, Financial evaluation, GCAP, February 2006.

Finding the Resources



Challenge: Securing funding

GCAP does not fund local partners, every country group has to seek its own money. Travel, accommodation, reports, translation, promotional material and logistics, communication and administration are all to be solved by local partners. Local partners pointed out that being part of a global movement helped when sitting with a donor and explaining the impact of the activity they were asking money for. GCAP provided with promotional material and global communication to their partners around the globe, and also helped to open doors of different sources of funding.

"The Colombian singer Shakira contacted the Latin American Secretariat and offered to do something. However, we didn't have enough resources to build something according to the artist expectations. We should have had to invest much more than what we were able to. But still Shakira was committed and decided to help us spread the voice of the campaign. She taped a video where she talks about the importance of the fight against poverty", Jorge Carpio, Director of FOCO, Argentinean GCAP partner.

In February 2006 GCAP commissioned the external consultant Arthur Gillette¹⁶ to evaluate the financial evolution of its resourcing and efficiency. The issue of funding was raised by several people during the review¹⁷. Problems arose from the following issues:

- Multiple funding from different donors to the same organisations,
- Organisations being formed in order to capture funds,
- Long established organisations in a country not receiving financial support,

- The detrimental effect of funding on existing relations between organisations as a result of competition for funds.

At a meeting in London in October 2005, a small group of founders came together to discuss the financial picture, and recognised that better coordination would be needed in the future. The question of how Regional Focal Points and National Coordinators should be involved in funding decisions was central.

Resources Mobilised

Because of the great multiplicity and diversity of actors involved, procedures followed, the kinds of resources mobilised and periods covered, GCAP was not able to establish a global figure on the total resources mobilised. However, the February assessment showed a provisional table of funds allotted since the inception of GCAP and through October 2005.

PROVISIONAL TABLE OF OVERALL RESOURCING UNDER GCAP		
ITEM	AMOUNT (US\$)	WHO CONTRIBUTED
GCAP central costs (Includes staffing, translation costs, GCAP materials)	425,000 (1)	ActionAid, Oxfam GB, Millennium Campaign, NOVIB
Website and e-actions	190,000	Comic Relief , Oxfam
IFG coordination meetings, workshops and phone conferences (mainly travel costs)	380,000	ActionAid, Millennium Campaign, NOVIB, Oxfam GB, World Vision
Regional coordination and consultation meetings (mainly travel costs)	310,000	Oxfam GB, Millennium Campaign, NOVIB
WSF (campaign materials - white bands and leaflets, translation)	50,000	ActionAid, Millennium Campaign, NOVIB, Oxfam GB
G8 (mainly travel costs of GCAP campaigners and campaigns stunt)	110,000	ActionAid, NOVIB, Oxfam GB
New York (travel costs of GCAP campaigners, newspaper advert and campaign stunts)	140,000	ActionAid, Millennium Campaign, NOVIB, Oxfam GB
Hong Kong WTO-related Action	76,000	NOVIB, Millennium Campaign, ActionAid, Oxfam GB
GCAP concerts	TBD (2)	TBD
National and Regional Coalition Support	3,750,000	Action Aid, Millennium Campaign, NOVIB, Oxfam GB
Total	5,431,000	

(1) This figure includes the \$250,337 mentioned for the Global Secretariat, but also covers other expenditures.
(2) Costs of the four concerts organised (Tokyo, Johannesburg, Accra and Delhi) are missing. Judging by the one on which a cost figure is available (Johannesburg), the concerts may have required a total input on the order of over \$2 million.

Non-monetary Resources

GCAP seems to have succeeded in mobilising or attracting non-monetary resources as well. Although rather sketchy, and generally impossible to quantify in terms of actual market worth, this information suggests that, as concerns services rendered and donations in kind obtained, such resources may well have been far from a marginal value:

- a) *Services*: staff time used for GCAP work but not funded under the Call seems to have been quite prevalent among partners. For example, one donor estimated that staff time equivalent in value to its financial contribution (\$50,000) was assigned to GCAP-related duties, and another mobilised staff time was worth \$8,000 while its monetary input was \$7,000. A further supply-side partner calculated that an aggregate total of six months' full time service was contributed to GCAP activities by several employees. One national coalition said that the Municipal Government of its capital city provided human resources for its campaign. It seems, too, that many national coalitions and other beneficiary-country partners received assistance from volunteers.
- b) *In Kind*: One beneficiary-country coalition valued the large banner and White Bands it received from CIVICUS at \$1,000 and another national coalition reported it had been loaned a conference hall by the Ministry of Social Affairs.

The Follow-Up: Do Not Forget

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▶ Challenge: Ensuring capacity to follow up

While 2005 was a crucial year for GCAP, with some victories in the struggle against poverty, there are some further changes that need to be done for a lasting solution to the problem of poverty and inequality.

The network was strengthened, more and more CSO and individuals were joining the campaign and, obviously, poverty was still part of the everyday life of billions of people around the globe. There was a need and a commitment from the global movement to keep on fighting. After not few meetings and hours of discussion, GCAP decided to continue putting pressure on those in positions of power and influence to do more to keep the promises they have already made, to provide additional resources and to make policy decisions that would lift millions out of poverty. GCAP was an actor with a loud voice and had reached high-level political spaces with its claim. It was not time to quit.

As the white band was the symbol for the Call to Action in 2005, GCAP supporters assembled in 2006 around the issue: "Stand Up Against Poverty". Citizens around the world have stood up to demand action against poverty, for equality and to meet and exceed the Millennium Development Goals. The two-day call for action in October 16th and 17th entered in the Guinness Record Book as "the largest single coordinated movement of people in the history of the Guinness World Record"¹⁸. Although the decision of continuing was saluted by all members, some low-resources CSOs felt that the process of decision making was too long and by the time the new campaign was launched they hadn't been able to put together all what was necessary to have an impact.

Conclusions

Networks are not a quick fix. Processes, management and the implementation of resolutions present formidable challenges and require long-term commitment.

GCAP case proved that greater networking helps setting and influencing the agenda. It was successful in overcoming the big challenge of setting a global problematic into the global agenda and making it widely known. It achieved this by developing an effective mechanism that engaged the network with key politicians and personalities; that

¹⁸ <http://www.whiteband.org/News/gcapnews.2006-10-17.1338317689/en>

took into account the political context and that was able to communicate very well to a mass audience.

However, there are some special difficulties and challenges that multi-member networks like GCAP face: North and South tensions can obstruct action and make it difficult to arrive at a general consensus. The decision making process whether to continue or to stop the call for action after the first year was very time consuming and the decision came somewhat late: some CSOs with scarce resources felt that by the time the new campaign was launched, they hadn't been able to put together all what was necessary to have an impact.

As an initiative from large international existing organisations, GCAP was been perceived by some Southern members as duplicating the work of existing coalitions and networks that in the region were already working in the issue but with not such "marketing". Member "gluing" and ownership is difficult to achieve in such big networks and there is still the challenge of building trust-based relationships, of understanding different organisational motives, timeframes, styles, cultures, languages and stakeholders.

Yet the ability of GCAP to participate in, and secure representation on prominent national and international fora concerning poverty and development is itself indicative of its potential policy making influence.

Case Study 2: International Forum for Rural Transport and Development (IFRTD)

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: The International Forum for Rural Transport and Deve- :
: lopment (IFRTD) is a global network of individuals and :
: organisations interested in rural transport issues in de- :
: veloping countries. It achieves its objectives by identify- :
: ing gaps in knowledge and capacity and priority issues :
: for change, supporting networking and new research, :
: and pursuing a programme of advocacy work that will :
: influence donors, policy makers and practitioners. :
:

Context

"What do you do when you have gone into labour but the nearest clinic is 30 kilometres away and means of transport are scarce or non existent? How can you complete primary school when you fall asleep during class after walking 15 kilometres to school each day?"¹⁹. These are some of the questions the International Forum for Rural Transport and Development (IFRTD) has tried to answer every day since 1996.

IFRTD believes that movement is essential if women, men and children are to have the power to be autonomous and to take control over their lives. This 3500 member international forum understands that improving mobility not only includes the development of transport infrastructure and services, but also overcoming the social, economic, political and physical constrains to movement that women and men face.

This case differs from the both previous one and the next case study on IACC: while IACC network and GCAP have advocacy goals and more defined lobby activities, IFRTD works for the recognition and importance of transport in developing agendas focusing in the relevance of knowledge and research.

.....
¹⁹ The International Forum for Rural Transport and Development Network Report 2005 http://ifrtid.gn.apc.org/new/about/Annual_Report_en_2005.

In this sense this organisational form could be better described as a forum than as a network. Following its own definition, the IFRTD is a forum of individuals and organisations interested in rural transport issues in developing countries and not a formal network of active members. At one level, it can be said that it is a movement for global change – because it is advocating for redirection of transport investments, for gender mainstreaming, etc. and at another level, it is a forum for the exchange of ideas among interested individuals.

Through tri-lingual information exchange, projects, workshops, and networking, IFRTD –or “The Forum” as it is called among partners– breaks down some of the mobility barriers by, for example, encouraging transport ministers to talk to rural farmers, engineers to collaborate with gender specialists, bi- and multilateral donors to talk to local stakeholders.

IFRTD has 30 National Forum Groups (NFGs) which aim to achieve IFRTD’s mission by “strengthening and supporting networking, identifying priority issues for change, and pursuing a programme of advocacy work to influence donors, policy makers and practitioners. Seeking to fill gaps in knowledge by promoting and disseminating research in a way that enhances networking, generates awareness of issues and advocates for appropriate changes and resource mobilisation”²⁰.

According to IFRTD’s website, National Groups are affiliated national networks that subscribe to the vision and mission of the IFRTD. Members of NFGs are drawn from a wide range of organisations and disciplines. They include representatives of government agencies, multilateral or bilateral projects, universities, and local and international NGOs. The NFGs are key stakeholders in the governance of the IFRTD and bear the responsibility to develop, raise funds for, and implement a programme of work at the national level that will address IFRTD’s strategic issues and help the Forum achieve its mission.

In 2003 criteria for NFG affiliation to the IFRTD were established which can be consulted at http://ifrtid.gn.apc.org/new/reg_wrk/NFG_criteria.htm²¹.

IFRTD is committed to ensuring that the interests of developing countries are represented in the global rural transport agenda, and that the interventions of its members both support and are informed by these interests.

Organisation

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Challenges: Achieving good internal governance

Members of the IFRTD include representatives from governments, academia, multilateral and bilateral donor agencies, consultancies, technical institutions, national and international CSOs and community organisations. IFRTD strives to provide all members with equal opportunities to participate in its activities. It encourages members to take ownership of the forum and participate in decision making processes.

The IFRTD is coordinated by a decentralised Secretariat based in UK in coordination with regional secretariats in Latin America, Africa and Asia. The UK Secretariat and the regional coordinators facilitate the international coordination providing support to IFRTD affiliated national networks²², coordinating and carrying out the Forum’s international activities and raising and managing funds for the Secretariat and IFRTD’s international and regional programmes. The IFRTD works also with Communities of Practice (COPs) that are autonomous networks of practitioners with a mutual interest in a thematic issue (e.g. gender and transport, rural waterways).

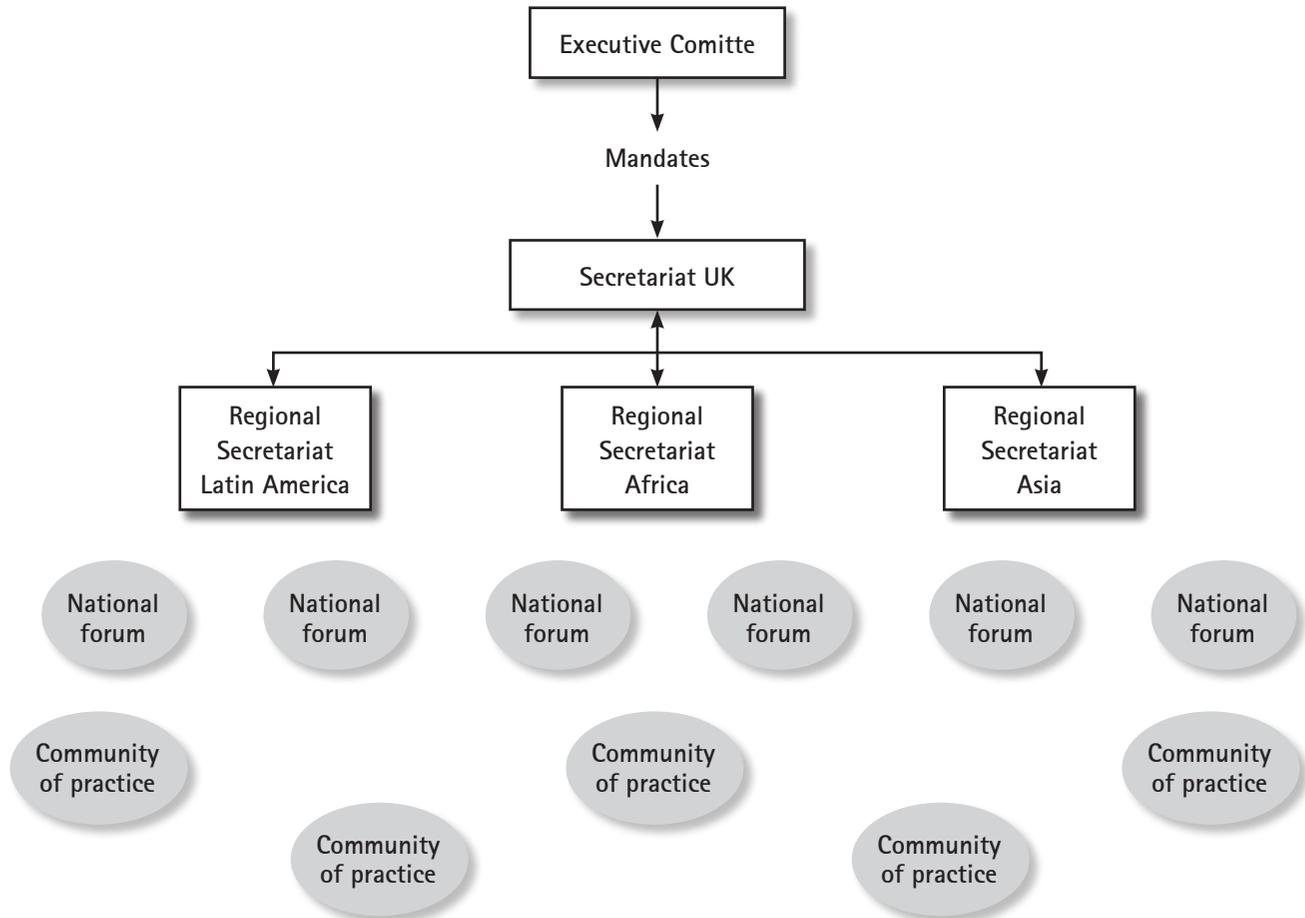
²⁰ Idem

²¹ These criteria were set by the IFRTD Advisory Committee in 2002. They form the basis for recognition of national networks as affiliated networks or National Forum Groups (NFGs) of the IFRTD: http://ifrtid.gn.apc.org/new/reg_wrk/NFG_criteria.htm

²² http://www.ifrtid.gn.apc.org/new/reg_wrk/NFGs.htm

The Secretariat's mandates come from an international Executive Committee (EC) composed by representatives from IFRTD's affiliated national networks (elected through regional meetings²³), donors, and individual members of the wider network. The Executive Committee meets annually. The current Chairman of IFRTD is Dangang Parikesit²⁴.

Since the network has no legal structure and cannot enter into contractual arrangements, the donor agreements and secretariat contracts are all done through a 'host' – in this case a British charity called Practical Action (ITDG). This arrangement allows for flexibility but requires considerable trust between the host and the Secretariat– this can naturally sometimes lead to conflicts of interest and tensions.

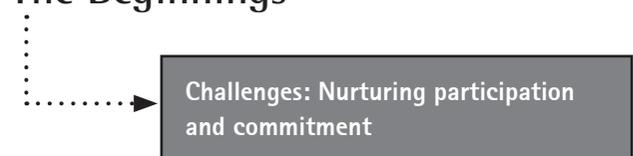


²³ http://ifrtd.gn.apc.org/new/reg_wrk/reg_work.htm

²⁴ <http://ifrtd.gn.apc.org/new/about/chair.php>

IFRTD receives core support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), The UK Department for International Development (DFID), and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).

The Beginnings



Challenges: Nurturing participation and commitment

Through an initiative of the International Labour Organisation in Geneva, in 1996, the Forum was informally created by a group of researchers developing programmes in Africa and Asia, financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Their work focused only on transport issues and responded to the needs of multilateral organisations for a better understanding of the problem. Essential to this understanding was the realisation that building more highways was not enough to target the objective of reducing poverty.

“We arrived at the conclusion that there was a need to complement these big constructing interventions: research was OK but wasn’t enough, we had to conform local and regional fora that could look into the social problems linked to transportation and development”,
Ana Bravo, Latin American IFRTD Coordinator.

With a small group of three professionals, a permanent Secretariat was established in 1996 in London, UK. The first Executive Committee (EC) was formed mainly by people from Europe and donors basically looking from the North to help the South. The following EC meeting focused on the incorporation of members from Africa and Asia into the Committee and on the promotion of national fora that could carry out IFRTD’s mission in field. To raise awareness on the subject, there was a need to create these national fora and to involve actors from the countries. This important step seems to have created two different instances of interaction with different strategies: a global forum of

knowledge exchange, and local networks of advocacy and influence.

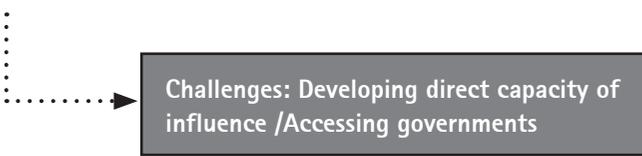
Getting in contact with pre-existent CSOs working in Africa and Asia was the first step to bring in actors from the regions and make them part of the decision making process within the international forum. The Secretariat was, therefore, thought as a “formal” body mainly dedicated to raising funds for the international forum, for the promotion of local networks and for communication work among all members.

In 1998 there was a rethinking of the global strategy to try to capture the richness of members’ views and interests. It was found that the rural problematic in Latin America was not that much different from the problems of Africa and Asia.

The forum understood that the aim was not just working to promote the developing of rural transport but also to promote networking as an effective way of meeting the forum’s objectives. Other actors were asked to get on board: not only CSOs but also academics, universities, donors, government and any other individual who was interested in transport and development.

“The key element of this process has been participation. A network’s strength comes from the variety of stakeholders who participate in its activities and information sharing”.
Ana Bravo, Latin American IFRTD Coordinator.

Creating Change at Different Levels



Challenges: Developing direct capacity of influence /Accessing governments

IFRTD understands that there is work to be done at different levels to achieve political influence. The international research programmes it develops seek to open new spaces and discover new components within the issue: such as transport and water, and the relationship between gender issues and mobilisation.

IFRTD pioneered international research on gender and transport through its “Balancing the Load” programme (1998-1999) and more recently in collaboration with the World Bank to research the mainstreaming of gender into its transport agenda.

“Let me tell you a story: when you go to the theatre, for example, you can see that in the interval people go to the restrooms. And when the interval is finished, men are back in the room and women are still queuing to go to the toilet. Have you thought of the reason for this? Simple: architects and engineers didn’t take into account that women cannot go to the toilette in 30 seconds as men can, but take 3 minutes instead. If they had taken this into account they would have built more women restrooms, instead of following aesthetic or symmetric needs. This is very graphic: urban and rural planners do not take women’s needs into account”²⁵.

In 1996 when Priyanthi Fernando, the first Executive Director of IFRTD, approached World Bank officials with this subject she was told that she was “missing the point” and that transport had nothing to do with gender issues. But she continued pushing for the issue to be taken into account and soon she got funds from different donors and carried out significant research that evidenced that gender was a big part of the transporting agenda.

Through research work on field, IFRTD evidenced that women often carry a heavier burden in terms of time and effort spent on transport, they have less access and control over resources and fewer opportunities than men to use transport facilities.

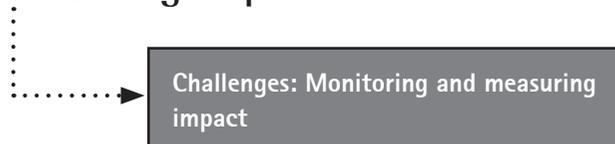
The research programme was significant in several ways: it highlighted the problem in several parts of Africa and Asia. But more significantly, it used a network of local researchers, who were able to integrate the findings of their research and the lessons they learned through sharing and discussing with others, in their own work in their countries – stimulating change at different levels.

IFRTD conducted a research about how transport affects women’s day to day lives. South African National Roads Limited (SANRAL) studied the nature of women’s travel in Eastern Cape, South Africa, to show how women are most likely to spend more time in travelling than men do. The findings of the research served to produce recommendations to promote not only social and political interventions but also transport policy and infrastructure interventions. (Potsieger et al. 2006)

IFRTD found out that improved mobility empowers women to take more control over their lives by increasing their access to markets, their exposure to education and information, their opportunities to participate in income generation, their access to health facilities, community and political activities, and by levelling the balance of equality in gender relations. These contributions are aligned with the UN Millennium Development Goals.

Once again research became a guideline for concrete actions of the forum and transformed theoretical discussions into evidence-based policy proposals. For example, in 2005 IFRTD focused its gender support on the Gatnet Gender and Transport²⁶ e-mail discussion list. In May and June the IFRTD and Gatnet hosted a ‘Virtual Forum’ on gender and transport. This Forum provided Southern input to a round table held in July by the United States Transportation Research Board’s Women’s Committee. This year, GATNET also hosted a virtual discussion that fed into the development of the World Bank’s Transport Strategy.

Evaluation: the Complexity of Measuring Impact



²⁵ Interview with Ana Bravo, Latin American IFRTD Coordinator, October 17th, 2006.

²⁶ <http://www.dgroups.org/groups/worldbank/gatnet/>

IFRTD considers that its actions should be evaluated according to the changes they can create in these fields:

- Attitudes and awareness – introducing new ways of thinking and ideas into debates.
- Knowledge – improving understanding of specific approaches.
- Relationships and communities – fostering new relationships of trust and an ethos of sharing.
- Capacity – ranging from research to project management and advocacy skills.
- Policy making and practice – often to achieve these changes IFRTD weaves together a strategy of advocacy, research, information sharing, capacity building and networking activities.

According to the regional coordinator, it is very difficult to measure the impact of the actions undertaken. They applied a methodology to assess the impact of the forum. This methodology was replicated from a Canadian experience that allows the mapping of changes in attitudes and not only of specific results of an activity. This method helped them see how certain actions could be transformed into policies in the long term, especially when the change of attitude comes from a key stakeholder such as a mayor or governor. In this sense, the impact could be evaluated more easily at the local level where the NFGs interact with local politicians.

On the other hand, the impact of research and case studies is evaluated according to their visibility or relevance in peer review processes such as international conferences of experts and academic discussions. Thus, the impact of these activities is aligned with the first incentive that helped create the network. The research is consolidated and then used by practitioners at the local level in a top-down strategy.

One of the major challenges that IFRTD faces in this process is to ensure that the research findings are relevant to, and are taken up by poor people and organisations working with them. The IFRTD developed a research methodology that builds ownership and communication in response to this challenge. This methodology, called networked research, –which was first used in the gender and

transport programme, Balancing the Load–gathers people from different countries or contexts to work together and build a common analytical framework.

This has demonstrated several significant impacts:

- The creation of a community of practice around a particular issue (e.g. gender, rural water transport) that encourages learning and sharing across geographical and hierarchical boundaries.
- The coordination of local knowledge, experience and latent research skills.
- National ownership of the global research theme and findings.
- The stimulation of debate at national and local level.
- The creation of opportunities for raising awareness of the issues and getting a wide range of stakeholders committed to their resolutions.
- Wider and more interactive dissemination of the research findings.

Conclusions

IFRTD is unique in the sense that it understands very well the relevance of knowledge and research to be used by practitioners at the local level in a top-down strategy. It has also developed an effective mechanism to deal with the challenge of ensuring that research findings are relevant to, and taken up by, poor people and organisations working with them.

The methodology developed by IFRTD is called “networked research” and tends to build ownership and to assure communication among all the actors that need to be taken into account when developing a policy in the transport field. From government representatives to academia, donor agencies, consultancies, technical institutions, national and international CSOs and grass roots organisations, all gather together to work and build a common analytical framework that can then influence the global and regional policy making process. By convening this variety of actors, IFRTD as-

sures that research becomes a guideline for concrete action and transforms theoretical discussions into evidence-based policy proposals.

However, it also faces the need to improve the follow-up of these proposals and the effective implementation of the research recommendations at local level. IFRTD understands that there is still work to be done at different levels to achieve this policy influence. The international research programmes seek to open new spaces and discover new components within the issue but local advocacy work needs to be carried out in order to fully change attitudes and make a real impact. There is still a need to follow-up on how certain actions could be transformed into policies, especially when the change of attitude is expected from a key stakeholder such as a mayor or governor. The international “umbrella” that IFRTD provides to local grass-roots empowers them and contributes to the effectiveness of their approaches to national politicians. However, there is still much dependence from IFRTD international representatives to help them reach key politicians or public officials in the country level.

Case Study 3: TI and the CICC (Inter American Convention Against Corruption)

.....
: Transparency International (TI) is a global network :
: that includes more than 90 locally established national :
: chapters and chapters-in-formation. These bodies fight :
: corruption in the national arena in a number of ways. :
: They bring together relevant players from government, :
: civil society, business and the media to promote trans- :
: parency in elections, public administration, procure- :
: ment and business. TI’s global network of chapters and :
: contacts also uses advocacy campaigns to lobby gov- :
: ernments to implement anti-corruption reforms. :
: TI proposes a comprehensive and pro-active approach :
: towards promoting the implementation and enforce- :
: ment of the Inter-American Convention against Cor- :
: ruption in the Americas. This programme focuses on :
: strengthening and expanding civil society campaigns :
: at national and regional levels to use the Convention as :
: a critical vehicle for change. :
:

Background

Convinced of the importance of binding international frameworks to address the corruption problem, TI has been actively engaged -since it’s founding in 1993- in promoting the development, ratification, implementation and monitoring of international anti-corruption conventions and other international instruments. In particular, TI’s national groups in the Americas have played an active role in promoting the two main anti-corruption conventions in the region:

- The 1996 OAS Inter-American Convention Against Corruption (IACC); and
- The 2003 United Nations Convention against Corruption (UN Convention).

“Corruption has been undermining countries in the Americas economically, politically and socially for decades and the anti-corruption conventions that have been introduced offer a real opportunity for change. TI’s experience in the Americas shows that civil society organisations have a key role to play in promoting anti-corruption conventions in all phases, from negotiation to follow-up reviews. Civil society groups can press their governments to give priority to convention ratification and implementation by undertaking research, analysis and advocacy work”. (Dell 2006)

With its holistic approach to corruption, TI understands that corruption is a problem with international and national dimensions, requiring both international and national responses. TI believes that by providing an “international framework of agreed rules and standards and an expression of high level of political commitment, international conventions can provide guidance and support for anti-corruption work at country level as well as facilitate international cooperation in the control and sanctioning of corruption”. (Progress Report OAS 2005-2006).

However, TI has argued that international conventions can only be effective if states commit to them and translate their commitments into actual implementation and enforcement at the national level.

With this aim, TI’s national groups in 17 countries in the Americas²⁷ worked together to institutionalise a follow-up system and the monitoring of the implementation of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption.

The Instrument: Regional Policy

The Inter-American Conventions Against Corruption

Signed in 1996, the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (IACC) provides an important and comprehensive anti-corruption framework for the Americas. By calling for the criminalisation of a range of corrupt acts, increased enforcement, enhanced judicial cooperation and stronger preventive measures, such as codes of conduct, assets disclosure and whistleblower protection, the Convention provides a critical platform for the anti-corruption agenda in the Americas. So far, the Inter-American Convention has been ratified by 33 of the 34 OAS members²⁸.

In addition to committing to the Convention, American Heads of State have dedicated to anti-corruption reforms at the Summits of the Americas since 1994. The declarations published after each of the Summits devote extensive space to fighting corruption, referring to the OAS Convention and committing to additional measures. In this sense, it is possible to speak about the existence of an Inter-American agenda against corruption that even goes beyond the OAS Convention.

Moving Towards Real Implementation of IACC and Setting Global Anti-Corruption Agenda

TI has been the only civil society organisation participating in the promotion and elaboration of regional and global conventions since 1994. Once the IACC was signed in 1996, the TILAC (network of Transparency International in Latin America and the Caribbean)²⁹ began its work primarily on raising awareness about the IACC and then played a critical role in the development of a formal monitoring mechanism. This area of work constitutes a priority of TILAC network

²⁷ Argentina, Paraguay, Chile, Brazil, Uruguay, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Mexico, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Venezuela, Bolivia, Honduras, and El Salvador.

²⁸ Barbados is still missing ratification. <http://www.oas.org/juridico/english/signs/b-58.html>

²⁹ Established in 1996, the TILAC network was founded to provide mutual support and to establish common strategies for addressing the issue of corruption. Today, the TILAC network is comprised of 15 TI National Chapters and contacts in Latin America and the Caribbean and maintains constructive partnerships with a number of organisations in the region.

and constantly nourishes as well as benefits from TI's global work on Anti-Corruption Conventions³⁰.

Civil Society Participation in the Monitoring Mechanism

TILAC network has played a leading role in the creation and design of an official monitoring mechanism for the OAS Convention and in assuring civil society participation in reviews of country performance. TILAC has presented recommendations³¹ that were considered by OAS to draft the follow-up mechanism to drive forward the implementation and enforcement of the Inter-American Convention at a country level.

The Follow-up Mechanism, as it is known today, was approved in 2001. In June 2002, the OAS General Assembly adopted the official review instrument. The mechanism, which is administered by a Committee of Experts representing each participating country, provides a process of self and peer-evaluation based on a standard questionnaire³² related to the provisions of the Convention under review. The mechanism also provides specific directions to allow civil society participation³³. The Committee of Experts has reviewed the compliance efforts of 28 countries with selected articles of the OAS Convention (phase I).³⁴ As a result of these reviews, the Committee of Experts issued reports that contain sub-

stantive recommendations to the countries with regard to the areas of weak compliance and to the ways to address them. These reports provide important road-maps for reform.

In an important step for opening the monitoring process to civil society, and after TI advocating for CSO participation, the Committee of Experts invited CSO organisations of TILAC network from the countries under review to personally present their own findings of the compliance of the countries in all the review meetings. The first meeting took place in February 2003, when four countries were evaluated: Argentina, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Colombia. This meeting was a challenge for the network: even though civil society was invited to send its own and independent reports, there was still no formal rule that allowed CSOs to present the reports personally to the experts. As a consequence of the advocacy work done by TILAC network, the organisations were finally able to participate in the meeting and that achievement set a precedent for other CSOs in the continent. TILAC continued participating in these meetings in 2004, 2005 and 2006. The Committee's final reports clearly took TILAC findings into account.

“Within the Follow-up Mechanism of the IACC, the feedback given by CSOs –both in the reports they presented and in the presentations they made to the Expert’s Committee– was of crucial importance and very useful. When analysing the performance of each country, we have taken into ac-

³⁰ http://www.transparency.org/global_priorities/international_conventions

³¹ Recommendations are available only in Spanish at http://www.transparency.org/content/download/1058/6194/file/oea_recomendaciones.pdf

³² This questionnaire was adopted by the Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism for the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption, in its second meeting, held from 20th to 24th May 2002, at OAS Headquarters, Washington D.C. To access the questionnaire visit: <http://www.oas.org/juridico/english/questionnaire.doc>

³³ OAS in compliance with provision 8 of the Report of Buenos Aires, Chapter V of the Rules of Procedure and Other Provisions defines the participation of civil society organisations in the Committee's activities. The modalities of participation of civil society organisations are the following: 1. Presentation of documents in the definition process of the methodology and questionnaire; 2. Presentation of documents with information on the implementation, in a specific State Party, of the Convention's selected provisions; 3. Presentation of proposal documents in relation with the collective interests issues; 4. Verbal presentations, in the Committee's meetings, on documents that have been previously presented on collective interests issues; 5. Informal meetings with civil society organisations within the framework of the meetings of the Committee.

³⁴ The first round of evaluations (phase I) focuses on Articles III (preventive measures), XIV (technical co-operation) and XVII (central authorities). So far, the Committee of Experts has reviewed Colombia, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Argentina (all in 2003); Uruguay, Ecuador, Chile, Panama, Costa Rica, Bolivia, Peru, Venezuela, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, Honduras, El Salvador, Dominican Republic, and The Bahamas (all in 2004); Canada, United States, Jamaica, Guatemala, Guyana, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada, Suriname, Brazil, and Belize (2005).

count CSOs' opinions and findings which had demonstrated a huge will to collaborate. The reports that they presented were of very high quality and I hope this mechanism could be replicated in other national and international venues", Néstor Baragli, Argentinean Expert before the Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism of the IACC.

As the anti-corruption agenda goes beyond the OAS' sphere, TILAC network presented recommendations and documents at Summits, CSOs fora and other regional venues.

"One of the biggest challenges of the programme was identifying relevant actors that could carry out the reforms needed. CSOs participating in the network identified which governmental offices were the ones making the decisions on anti-corruption issues. From the coordination we identified other venues, such as the Global Anti-corruption Forum in Brazil and the Regional Workshop organised by the United Nations Convention Against Corruption developed in Buenos Aires", Miguel Peñalillo, Former Coordinator Anti-Corruption Conventions Programme, Transparency International.

Developing Advocacy Tools for National Civil Society Organisations and Other Stakeholders

Once the follow-up mechanism was in place, and the network was seen as the regional network leading the convention's work in the region, TILAC decided to seek funds to further strengthen the work done at the local level.

Led by the International Secretariat in Berlin, but in consultation with all the members of the TILAC Network, the Americas department presented a proposal to seek funds in order to develop advocacy tools to support CSOs in field work. The Open Society Institute funds the Convention's programme since October, 2004. The Open Society Institute

supported this project that had the following specific objectives³⁵:

- To create and promote advocacy tools to support civil society campaigns.
- To develop a unique monitoring tool capable of providing benchmarks and measuring progress of the implementation of the OAS and UN Conventions in key areas.
- To stimulate and support TILAC members, other civil society organisations and relevant stakeholders in the region (journalists, parliamentarians, business leaders, public officials, etc.) to build anti-corruption campaigns on the data produced in order to press for compliance.
- To promote well-conducted, well-informed and transparent official country reviews on the implementation of the Inter-American Convention and use expert recommendations as a platform for pushing for reform.
- To strengthen the anti-corruption network in the region by dramatically enhancing civil society cooperation at country and regional level and engaging new partners with a common focus on good governance.

This project became an important step in the consolidation of the network, therefore it required a very specific and well organised coordination and a strong engagement of the network organisations to broaden activities and interact even more with other social actors such as the media and other CSOs.

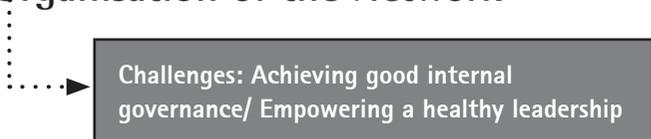
Tools for working at international conventions

Some of the tools developed by the network that can be useful for other CSO networks dealing with international conventions around the world include:

- Guide to the OAS and UN Conventions, available at: http://www.transparency.org/content/download/6978/42645/file/Guide_Conventions_Americas.pdf
- OAS/UN Convention integrated Report Card Exercise: http://www.transparency.org/regional_pages/americas/conventions/report_card

³⁵ Transparency International, *Convention Programme Proposal 2004-05*, Berlin, 2004.

Organisation of the Network



Challenges: Achieving good internal governance/ Empowering a healthy leadership

General Structure of the TILAC Network

TI chapters in Latin America have a long and successful tradition of regional co-operation. Since 2001, the TILAC network has been carrying out regional programmes on priority issues such as public contracting, political finance and the promotion of anti-corruption conventions. This structure gave the opportunity to develop activities at the OAS sphere and this intensive work done by TILAC implied a significant change of its structure: convention's work was being carried out not only by the Latin American Network but also with collaboration of the North American chapters. Currently, this network consists of National Chapters and solid contacts in all countries in Latin America³⁶, a National Chapter in Trinidad and Tobago as well as National Chapters in the US and Canada.

With this new conformation, TI in the Americas (this is with the US and Canada) established a National Chapter working group³⁷ on the OAS Convention to support and strengthen the regional strategy on the IACC.

Still, the programmes carried out by the regional network were managed by the Americas department at the TI Secretariat (TI-S) in Berlin. At the same time, all major regional programmes had a special regional co-ordinator based at a country level. This experience has proven successful as it allows a stronger regional presence and proximity, it increases ownership by the National Chapters and it ensures better flow of National Chapters experience into the programme. The overall management by the Americas department en-

sures the programme's optimal link to the global movement and secures the resources needed by National Chapters to conduct both local and regional activities.

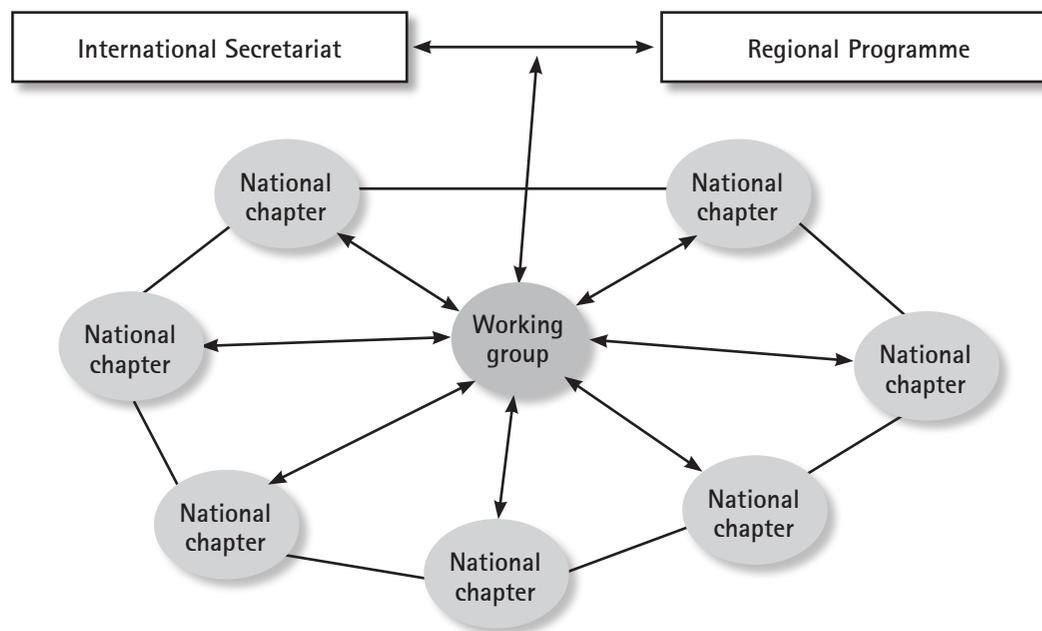
The Convention Programme at the Americas department was managed by a Programme Coordinator based at the National Chapter in Chile. In addition, a part-time person (25% of the time dedicated to this programme), based at TI-USA, served as a strategic liaison with the OAS and other international institutions based in the US.

Further on, the programme was substantially supported by:

- The Communications Officer at the Americas department who manages the TILAC communications programme. This programme started in 2003 and aims at strengthening National Chapters' communication tools and capacities.
- The Global Conventions Programme Manager, who manages the TI Conventions Programme. Established in 2003, this programme integrates TI's work on international anti-corruption conventions.

³⁶ Existing National Chapters in Argentina, Paraguay, Chile, Brazil, Uruguay, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Mexico; National Chapters in Formation in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Guatemala; contacts in Venezuela, Bolivia, Honduras, El Salvador.

³⁷ The first working group was integrated by members of the NCs of Mexico, Ecuador, Argentina and US.



Opportunities and Achievements at the Regional Political Arena

As anti-corruption was gaining a more prominent position in the Inter-American Agenda, a regional group of civil society organisations, focusing on the monitoring of the Summits of the Americas agenda, invited TILAC to lead a regional monitoring exercise on transparency. The Quito declaration that resulted from the OAS General Assembly in Ecuador in June 2004, with a special focus on anti-corruption, reinforced governments' commitment to the OAS Convention and to anti-corruption measures that go even beyond the Convention. In order to nourish this meeting, the OAS -in cooperation with TILAC- had previously hosted a hemispheric civil society forum with a strong focus

on the OAS Convention. In this sense, anti-corruption is finding its way into the agenda of a wider range of civil society organisations and networks³⁸ working on hemispheric issues, increasing the number of potential partners for a more comprehensive effort.

The new UN Convention against Corruption³⁹, which was opened for signature in December 2003 in Merida, Mexico and has been signed so far by 140 states and ratified by 70⁴⁰ powerfully reinforces and further elaborates on many aspects already contained in the OAS Convention. It also covers a range of new areas such as private sector corruption, asset recovery and political corruption. The work done at the OAS level was an important motivator for the establishment of global anti-corruption agendas and standards. A sign of this was the fact that the UN Convention was signed in a Latin American country.

³⁸ Examples of these are the Inter-American Democracy Network (IADN) and Partners of the Americas.

³⁹ http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/crime_convention_corruption.html

⁴⁰ http://www.unodc.org/unodc/crime_signatures_corruption.html

Decision Making Within the Network

Challenges: Accessing governments/ Coordinating and gluing members/ Communicating effectively within strategic relationships

The working group established within the TILAC network, played an important role in the decision making process. Most of the strategic decisions were taken within this space. This group met on several occasions and stayed in communication by e-mail and occasionally by phone. The meetings served to define the goals, strategies and main activities that the network would pursue. These decisions were informed to the other members of the network who would then make suggestions or adapt these guidelines to their own contexts. For example, one of the main questions regarding the strategy was if the report done by National Chapters should be performed independently or in collaboration with the governmental authorities. The particularities of each local context were determinant to define which strategy was finally adopted.

This group was also important to define the strategy of the lobby activities at the OAS level. In this sense, the group needed to decide what the best strategy to reach the Experts Committee was. Should the US chapter contact it personally taking advantage of its proximity in Washington? Should the network send letters to the experts? Or should these strategies be combined? The answer to these questions depended on the specific context or the kind of demand the network needed to inform the Committee but the point was that this kind of decisions was solved by the working group with the collaboration of the programme officer at TI Secretariat in Berlin.

Another important example of strategic decisions considered by the working group was the identification of local counterparts in charge of the production of the reports. In some countries the reports were produced by the National Chapters while in others civil society reports were performed by commissions or local networks of CSOs. These experiences worked as precedents for the work to be con-

ducted later in other countries. Should the working group influence other countries to follow one or the other experience? At the end and once again, even though the national context played an important role to define which was the best strategy, the working group made a more relevant contribution to guide the consideration of the feasibility and advantages of each alternative.

Last but not least, should TI support only the production of reports made by National Chapters or should it support organisations that are not members of the TILAC network? At the beginning, this decision was taken mainly by the working group with the collaboration of TI Secretariat. After the creation of the programme coordinator position based in Chile, the Americas department gained a predominant role in the definition of this kind of decisions.

Issues at the National Level

Challenges: Ensuring capacity to follow up

- **Critical mass:** There is a challenge of mobilising a broader base of citizens and stakeholders to support to the implementation of the Conventions. It is essential to raise their awareness about the potential use of the Convention for pushing forward anti-corruption interests and agendas in the countries. One of the main challenges that national members of the network face is how to continue to raise the awareness of the importance of the Convention when a country is not under the OAS evaluation.
- **Political discussion:** Another challenging situation is not only how to keep the discussion with the governments around the Convention but also how to transform political discussions into contents of the IACC. For example, in some countries the discussion about the assets declarations was more related to the compliance of local regulation than the implementation of the IACC. It seems that in those cases the reference to the IACC by

CSOs appeared as an umbrella/opportunity to demand the full implementation of the local regulation but still the IACC and its contents remained with low visibility and minor relevance for politicians.

Challenges at the Regional Level



Challenges: Nurturing participation and commitment, / Achieving good internal governance

- **Timing:** One of the challenges of the network is how to involve its members when their countries are not being evaluated. The different phases or rounds of evaluation established by the follow-up mechanism could create a differentiation between the CSOs working in the assessments of their governments and the rest of the members of the network. In this sense, the challenge is to foster the rest of the members of the network to take a more active role even when they are not being evaluated.
- **Location:** The geographic location of the members of the network and National Chapters creates differences among them. In this sense, the network needs to make a constant effort to overcome or balance the differences between members of the network, according to their geographic location and the political relevance of the countries where the National Chapters are placed. For example, the TILAC network tried to balance the active role that the US chapter played due to its location near the OAS offices, the strategic importance of the chapter, and the overall US anti-corruption policy in the global agenda. For this purpose, it tried to incorporate the US chapter to the working group with other chapters, so that there was always consultation amongst them and avoid decisions being taken by only one chapter.
- **Local and regional politics:** The IACC is a regional instrument that has implications at the local level, but the role that the countries play in the follow-up mechanism has implications in the development of activities within

the mechanism. This feedback between the countries performances and the activities that can be implemented in the mechanism, sets an important challenge for the members of the network: it is not only important to lobby for the full implementation of the IACC at the local level, but also to transform the experts into committed actors in the promotion of openness and effectiveness of the mechanism and the functioning of the Committee of Experts.

- **Lack of information & data:** Both the official as well as the civil society progress reports on the state of implementation of the Convention highlight the lack of data and reliable information as an obstacle for assessing enforcement of legislation introduced by the Convention. The generation of hard and reliable data is crucial to monitor progress and sustain or contest vague evaluations with objectively measured realities thereby pushing governments to take stronger action.

The experience of the TILAC network shows that when interacting with transnational institutions or governmental bodies, the legitimacy of the network is a key factor. TILAC could get involved and become part of the IACC process as a legitimate actor within the OAS. This legitimacy derived from the commitment of CSOs to the goals of the network (instead of solely focusing on their own organisational objectives) which helped for the network to be perceived as solid, with clear purposes and the endorsement of several CSOs in the region.

The findings, recommendations and research based on the evidence CSOs found at the local level were brought into the network and this contributed to a strong advocacy work that had many achievements.

As it was said before, networks usually facilitate the involvement of different actors with diverse positions in the discussion about concrete public issues. By acting as a bridge between actors from multiple sectors and different countries, networks can facilitate consensus building, collaborative efforts, and the development of joint proposals and agreements.

Even though TILAC lobbied for a formal space for CSOs and other networks to participate in the IACC process, they

were not successful in bringing in other actors that were not part of the TI movement. The TILAC network needs to make more efforts to include other relevant stakeholders as part of this regional process. By making this, the network could open the possibility of collaboration with other networks, bring in other actors with their own expertise and points of view and act as a bridge between voices and proposals of citizenship and the regional policy making process.

Conclusions

The experience of this network shows that the structure, strategies and activities of a network can be defined step by step according to the political context in the regional arena. One good example of that was the conversion of the TILAC into the Americas Network. TILAC had the initiative to engage in the proper implementation of the IACC by promoting the convention ratification of member countries and providing recommendations for the design of the follow-up mechanism. While the regional Latin American network discovered an opportunity for regional action, the activities developed with Canada and US Chapters in this framework influenced the creation of TI in the Americas.

It is important to stress the impressive results of this network: it contributed to the ratification of the Convention, helped in the design of the monitoring mechanism, provided assistance to National Chapters in the development of CSOs' independent reports. It also secured spaces for CSO participation in the follow-up mechanism that set a precedent for other organisations in the Americas. These achievements were accomplished through the intensive work done by each of the members of the network and the strategic assistance of TI Secretariat. The possibility to have a back up support of a pre-existent structure could have influenced the raising of funds to sustain the network and National Chapters' involvement.

These results were caused by a combination of factors:

The network was able to develop an effective coordination and organisation that made actions possible. As mentioned by many participants, the regional coordination and the assistance of TI Secretariat in Berlin was an asset. The coordination was able to distribute roles and tasks to the CSOs participating in the network. It also carried out the systematisation of the collected information and research performed. This "supervision" role of the coordination of the network was beneficial for everyone participating. When a member needed protection or assistance due to political threats or economic constraints, the possible solution was identified within the network, and other members with more expertise volunteering to help.

TILAC network was effective in understanding the importance of creating new spaces for civil society participation within the complex and disorganised policy process. It was able to nurture political sensitivity and develop new channels of communication not only with local governments –through CSOs members- but also with transnational governance structures.

Having funding secure for at least two years when beginning the network was another factor that helped reach excellent results. Actions were planned and were developed knowing that there were funds for every necessary activity, trip, and product. There was practically no improvisation. National Chapters, the Working group and the Coordination worked jointly to articulate every strategy for an effective intervention in each opportunity presented. Human and economic resources were committed from the beginning to secure an effective action and policy implementation.

Case Study 4: Trade Knowledge Network

<http://www.tradeknowledgenetwork.net/>

The Trade Knowledge Network (TKN) is the collaboration of research institutions in developed and developing countries located in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas. The Trade Knowledge Network aims at building long-term capacity to address issues of trade and sustainable development in developing country research institutions, non-governmental organisations and governments through increased awareness, knowledge and understanding of the issues. The TKN links network members and consolidates new and existing research on trade and sustainable development.

Background

The Trade Knowledge Network (TKN) understands that “knowledge networks have become important mechanisms for coordinating the efforts of civil society organisations to identify priorities for sustainable development action, to undertake joint research, and to engage other stakeholders in developing workable solutions. By combining their efforts, network members are able to have a greater impact on policy and practice than the one they would have alone.

From the perspective of decision makers in government and industry, knowledge networks simplify the tasks of seeking reliable information and advice⁴¹.

The TKN is a programme of the International Institute for Sustainable Development⁴² (IISD) in Canada, in charge of raising the necessary funds for its operations. TKN is not an independent organisation or a separate CSO, it is a network of partners working together on research on trade.

TKN is supported by the Rockefeller Foundation⁴³; the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs⁴⁴; the International Development Research Centre⁴⁵ (IDRC); the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation⁴⁶ (SDC); and the Canadian International Development Agency⁴⁷(CIDA).

The need for more solid empirical analysis that could link trade with sustainable development at the national level in developing countries was the primary incentive for the creation of TKN. They stated that “in a world of increasingly globalised economic activity, with increasing environmental degradation and income inequity, achieving sustainable development will depend critically on understanding how these forces are linked at the domestic and international levels⁴⁸.

With this in mind, TKN seeks its mission and carries out research that could help policymakers at the national level to know what economic sectors are at risk by the greening of foreign markets, and what industries might gain or maintain market share by undertaking environmental improvements. The evidence they collect is aimed at demonstrating what elements of the domestic environment are vulnerable

⁴¹ www.tradeknowledgenetwork.net

⁴² Founded in 1990, the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) is in the business of promoting change towards sustainable development. Through research and through effective communication of the findings, they engage decision makers in government, business, NGOs and other sectors to develop and implement policies that are simultaneously beneficial to the global economy, the global environment and to social well-being. <http://www.iisd.org/>

⁴³ <http://www.rockfound.org/>

⁴⁴ <http://odin.dep.no/ud/engelsk/index-b-n-a.html>

⁴⁵ http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-1-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

⁴⁶ <http://www.deza.ch/index.php?langID=1&userhash=c9025bfeff878416903f71ba3e664dbf>

⁴⁷ <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/cidaweb/acdicida.nsf/En/Home>

⁴⁸ History of the organisation: <http://www.tradeknowledgenetwork.net/about/history.asp>

to degradation from trade-induced changes so that political actors can then understand what types of policies will exploit the opportunities and avoid the threats.

The Beginnings of the Network



Challenges: Coordinating and gluing members

Since its launch in 1997, the goal of the TKN has been to foster long-term capacity to incorporate sustainable development in national, bilateral, regional and multilateral trade policy and practice.

The first phase of the TKN began in November 1997, when it started to address many issues related to trade and development. The first phase partners were selected on the basis of the following criteria:

- Broad regional representation in the final mix;
- Existing capacity for solid research, but a need for additional capacity on the issues of trade and sustainable development;
- Likelihood of a receptive audience for the project's work among policy makers, business, research institutes and CSOs; and
- The country's potential influence in the multilateral trading system and in international environmental negotiations⁴⁹.

TKN's first countries of focus were Argentina, China, El Salvador, Pakistan, South Africa and Vietnam. The network's members in these six countries produced consistent and high-quality empirical research, surveying the linkages between trade and environment in their countries. In each country, this research was used as the basis for policy workshops aimed at government public officers, CSOs, business and media.

"It is not a close network, just because we have one partner in a country doesn't mean we can't have another partner in that country too. Part of the work that the partners in the countries have to do is to reach out other organisations to bring them in. Of course part of the limitation is the funding that we can get to support these ventures. Our partners haven't been very successful in bringing in their own funding to support the network and that is a disadvantage to both -the Secretariat and the partners- but it has been us primarily raising money", David Boyer, project manager at TKN.

According to the TKN, Phase I was successful in bringing the research to the attention of domestic policy makers in the partner countries and marked the beginning of a civil society/government dialogue on the issues through the national networks.

Phase II, which began in 2000, continued and expanded the work in the original six countries and used the same criteria for adding new countries to the network. This resulted in extending TKN to include two additional countries: Bangladesh and Chile.

"We are seeking to expand the network and looking for partners that have different skills: some can be good at research but not so good at putting on policy workshops and policy engagement, partners can have communications strategies to put this research into the media and not all the partners have this. So we are trying to find network partners that have complementary skills with each other", David Boyer, project manager at TKN.

The continuation of Trade Knowledge Network activities focuses on building stronger networks at the national level and enhancing capacity at the international level for stronger voices in fora such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

⁴⁹ www.tradeknowledgenetwork.net

Internal Governance and Communications

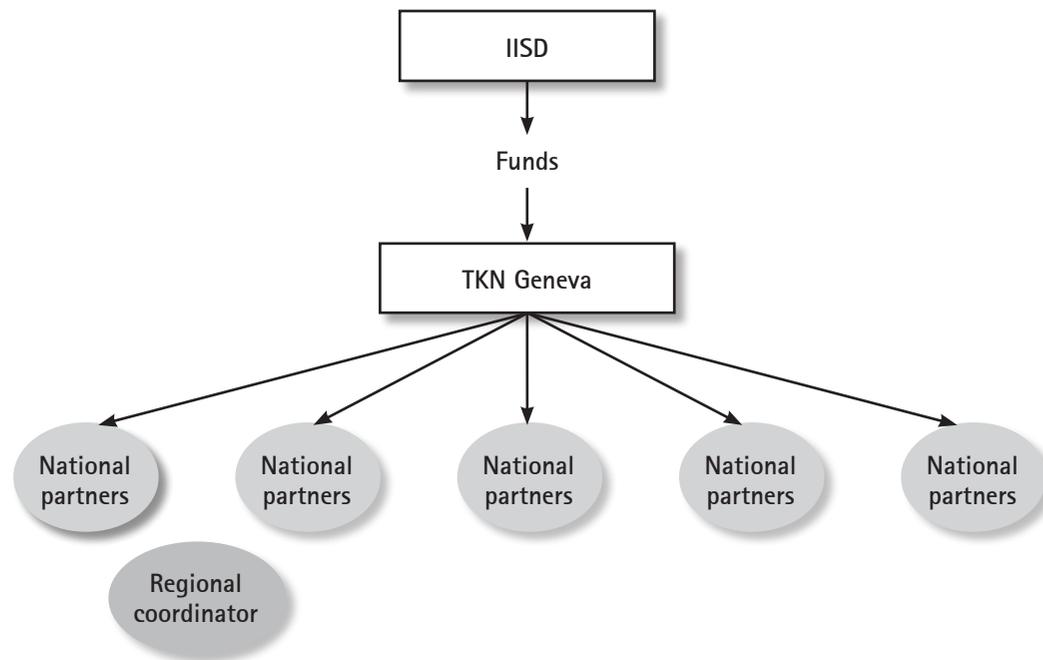


Challenges: Achieving good internal governance/ Empowering a healthy leadership

TKN is a programme of the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) in Canada. IISD manages

TKN as a platform for capacity building and research on developing countries, and national and regional priorities for trade and sustainable development. IISD also provides a Secretariat for TKN which is based in Geneva, Switzerland.

The TKN Secretariat coordinates TKN partners' activities globally. It supports regional and thematic research clusters, and offers opportunities for networking and partner expansion. The Geneva Secretariat provides a Project Manager, a Research Director and financial administration.



Based on discussion of capacity needs among the organisations, IISD works with each regional coordinating organisation to co-develop capacity building activities around communications, networking, web publishing and strategies that tend to increase their capacity to reach key audiences through research and policy engagement. The coordinating

organisation also helps increase IISD's capacity to broaden TKN policy reach and media input beyond North America and Europe⁵⁰. TKN regional coordinating organisations decide the themes that the region is willing to focus on and submit funding proposals to TKN Secretariat. Local organisations can also act beyond the regional coordination.

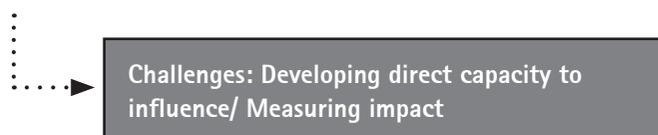
⁵⁰ www.iisd.org

TKN partners communicate with each other primarily through the network's electronic mailing list. Partner institutions are the ones that select the TKN research topics based on what is most relevant for their specific countries and regions.

“Since 2002 we involved our regional partners in the decision making process but it is an informal governance system. The partners determine the key issues to research in each region, and conduct the research. Then, at IISD we develop methodologies, approaches, and recommend which stakeholders to contact”, David Boyer, project manager at TKN.

However, to promote a stronger sense of ownership among members in the global network they face a significant challenge: the prevailing virtual reality of the network implies that many people in different countries have to replace face-to-face interaction with trust and intensive communication. TKN acknowledges that, especially when people with different cultures are working together, “virtuality” can be a problem. Therefore, TKN holds a meeting every year where they try to bring everyone together.

Assessing Influence on Policymakers



It is not easy to ascertain the impact of research networks in terms of their programmes and policies. The TKN acknowledges that it is very difficult to measure the influence that a research paper or an expert discussion could have over the creation of certain policies.

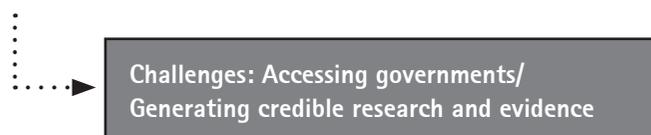
TKN believes that a possible strategy to move from “papers to policies” is to approach networking not just to strengthen knowledge sharing among organisations, but to focus on the engagement of decision-makers who are the

targets and recipients of the work. In this sense, TKN seeks to establish the linkage with policy processes, in order to foster change in the course of action to support sustainable development. However, this goal is often difficult to achieve. As stated below:

“Very rarely if one reads a research paper does one say ‘Oh, I have it right, let’s change the policy!’ It is actually a number of different inputs that influence it. Maybe in advocacy work it is like that, but policy influence from research is a little subtler. We are questioning ourselves all the time on how we are going to measure the impact because donors are also asking about how our work has created change”, David Boyer, project manager at TKN.

Trying to be a valid interlocutor for global, regional and national fora is one of the objectives that TKN sets as part of the process of influencing trade policies. Bringing on board different stakeholders –from government officials to industrial leaders and key businessmen- and working with them in order to create a relationship based on trust and expertise is also a means that TKN uses to influence different spaces where a policy could be designed.

Raising Interest From Policymakers



TKN believes that research provides important capacity building opportunities that enable decision-makers and policymakers to incorporate sustainable development issues into national trade and development policy.

“We are not an advocating network, we do research and we pretend to take this research to the decision-makers. It is more a subtle approach, to try to influence policy through research. Each paper developed by our partners

is performed in consultation with other stakeholders, like governments officials, industries, CSOs, to determine the topic. Once there is a draft of that research, they hold a stakeholders meeting to draft and get comments and when it is finished we take it to different fora, like the WTO, or they present it to the WTO delegates in the regions, or in ministerial meetings. Thus, their influence is mainly the influence of stakeholders. We do participate in global venues specifically related with trade”, David Boyer, project manager at TKN.

Partners that have been involved since the beginning of the network have evidence that they are now attracting interest from their governments to do research for them, so they have become a reliable source for specific issues. TKN partners are doing more direct work with policymakers and that is pointed out as an asset: they are now influencing concrete policy through their research. Partners are also getting more contracts with, for example, the World Bank and other international institutions to do research. This achievement is aligned with the main recommendations made by partners of the network in the evaluation of Phase I. This assessment pointed out several key areas of need:

- it was taken as a fact that more capacity building was needed so that government policymakers become aware of the importance of more integrated trade policymaking;
- it was pointed out that these policymakers would benefit from more prominently featured policy recommendations;
- it was noted that more work was needed to establish strong networks, in each country, of organisations interested in the similar issues⁵¹.

Once TKN partners become a reliable source in terms of its research, governments seek for their feedback in specific areas. TKN partners developed a methodology of holding

workshops and inviting different stakeholders to discuss research findings or recommendations for public policies. All the actors working on a specific topic very well received this methodology.

“In Chile they have recently written a paper on tourism and sustainable development, trade and tourism and services. They held a workshop with the members of the government dealing with tourism and some industries and tourism companies and that has resulted in the creation of a national committee trying to look at the tourism sector in a more sustainable way”, David Boyer, project manager at TKN.

Fishing the Goal: a Story of Policy Impact at the National Level



Challenges: Communicating effectively within strategic relationships

TKN has shown the advantages of knowledge networking as a necessary and effective tool for sustainable development through IISD’s intervention in the discussion about aquaculture in Vietnam.

Fishing is the fastest growing economic sector in Vietnam. Nevertheless, it has become difficult for the offshore fishing industry to obtain satisfactory catches due to overfishing and destructive fishing methods in the near shore. Governmental authorities have promoted aquaculture as an alternative source of income in the poorest rural areas and have encouraged offshore fishing, but they have been facing constraints such as environment harsh conditions hampering the food and alimentary production or the health of population subjected to bad weather that need to be attended firstly.

⁵¹ <http://www.tradeknowledgenetwork.net/about/history.asp>

to network members and such, but that is not really happening... it is us feeding information, developing research that we want to nourish the network, but it is not a self-replicating network that goes on its own without us pushing out along”, David Boyer, project manager at TKN.

Regional Perspective

The regional approach, however, helps to create ownership of the network but not all regions can function this way. Pakistan, Nepal, and Bangladesh have similar market issues around agriculture and seafood, and that is why partners have developed research, not only with a national focus but also with a regional perspective. This regional approach was important for influencing WTO delegates in the meeting in Hong Kong in 2005. TKN partner in Nepal made a joint presentation as the South Asian region, with each of the countries perspective.

TKN felt that this new approach was the right path to follow and now they are trying to establish links between research and regional opportunities so that partners can work together and that will help strengthen the network.

Networks as Capacity Providers

Local TKN partners acknowledge many incentives that are important to be part of the network.

One, of course, is the financial support. TKN supports research in innovative areas where it is more difficult to find other donors that compromise their resources. TKN understands that in research-related work, it is easier to get funds for top academics or professors than for young researchers: that is why they support these emerging researchers who do not have the same opportunities to do research that can get to a global arena.

The second important benefit of belonging to the network is the ability to participate in global fora. TKN usually supports the participation of around 7 to 8 TKN partners from all over the world to go to the WTO meetings. There is always a preparation for these meetings and usually TKN provides with contacts and introduces key people at these

meetings to the partners. TKN understands this as a part of the capacity building work the Secretariat carries out and that it is very beneficial for partners to come a little closer to influencing global policies and practices.

“IISD reputation served at the beginning to get into the global fora. In the first meeting, partners were very nervous about being engaged with the WTO delegate. They had never done such a thing, but that served as a capacity building opportunity because now they are really willing to contact their national delegates and are much more comfortable in going to international fora and engaging with people from other countries and other governments. So TKN is about capacity building, capacity to do good policy research, capacity to get in contact with policymakers and to be able to get engaged with context from national to regional and international”, David Boyer, project manager at TKN.

Looking Towards Sustainability



Challenges: Securing funding and sustainability

TKN has developed several mechanisms to fund partners. IISD seeks for funds and then TKN opens a call for proposals or determines key issues that partners can develop, and asks them to submit proposals. This second mechanism tends to engage different stakeholders from the beginning of the project.

Even when financial resources could vary (from USD 500.000 in 1997 to USD 250.000 in 2006) it is always difficult to get enough funds for all the projects.

“Donors tend to look at the next new thing. They like a programme for 2 years and then they want to fund something new. Getting core funding is very difficult. As we have more members we need more funding but this has been quite challenging.” David Boyer, project manager at TKN.

By participating in different fora and by communicating with the donor community, TKN is in the process of explaining that there is a need for more sustainable actions taken towards research in the development field. The regional approach and the interrelation between research around the world is an aspect that TKN is considering to emphasize in order to attract the donor community. However, this is an ongoing process and there is no evidence of this approach to be more effective.

Conclusions

TKN is unique in the sense that it allows its partners to become a reliable source of research on specific themes up to the point of attracting interest from governments and other international organisations. It has developed a very effective mechanism to influence concrete public policy through their research that is developed in consultation with different stakeholders, such as government officials, industries and CSOs.

At the same time, TKN was successful in supporting research in innovative areas where it is more difficult to find donors to commit resources. This ground-breaking methodology allows TKN to get involved in the latest emerging research and attempt to put these challenging ideas into practice.

However, TKN still needs to promote a stronger sense of ownership among their members. Global networks that base their work on virtual communication have to learn how to replace face-to-face interaction with more trust and intensive engagement. TKN tries to overcome this weakness by encouraging a strong leadership from the central Secretariat to strengthen the linkages among national partners.

On the other hand, TKN faces the need to overcome the primary role that the Secretariat assumes in the financial dimension of the network. Partners haven't been successful in bringing in their own funds to support activities and research, and this makes them dependent of the financial capacity of the Secretariat in seeking for new donors and resources.

clusion of traditionally excluded voices and groups within the network. For instance, when one of the main reasons to join the network is to promote open and inclusive participatory policy processes, the emphasis given to the process might respond to a conviction on the need to work on how the influence takes place. Clear governance agreements on how to achieve an equilibrium between what to do and how to do it will play a key role in how the network operates to achieve its goals.

Exercise 1: Why are we trying to influence a policy?

One helpful exercise to jointly reach an agreement on the goals of the network is to conduct a virtual or face-to-face discussion on the reasons that ground the participation of CSOs through the network in a very specific policymaking process. Proponents of this discussion need to make serious and conscious efforts to ensure that all members have the opportunity to participate in this process of establishing goals. If the exercise is more inclusive, there are larger chances that the different members will align their activities and resources and achieve synergy of efforts.

Participants may use the following list (Why Network? A List), a heuristic to express their own reasons in order to detect those that most of them share.

Why Network: A List

- **Defend public interest issues.** For example: Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization - GAVI (www.gavialliance.org)
- **Facilitate that voices of excluded groups are heard.** For example: Huairou Commission (www.huairou.org)
- **Monitor governmental agreements.** For example: the International Network Health Policy & Reform (www.healthpolicymonitor.org)
- **Promote more open, inclusive and democratic decision making processes.** For example: Trust Net in Action - TIA (www.trustnetinaction.com)

- **Inform policies with research and evidence.** For example: Trade Knowledge Network - TKN (www.tradeknowledgenetwork.net)
- **Increase awareness of specific transnational issues.** For example: Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century - REN21 (www.ren21.net)

If networks are a mechanism to seek policy influence or societal change, then potential network participants need to be clear as to what kind of influence or change can be realistically achieved.

Exercise 2: Problem Tree Analysis: What are we trying to solve?

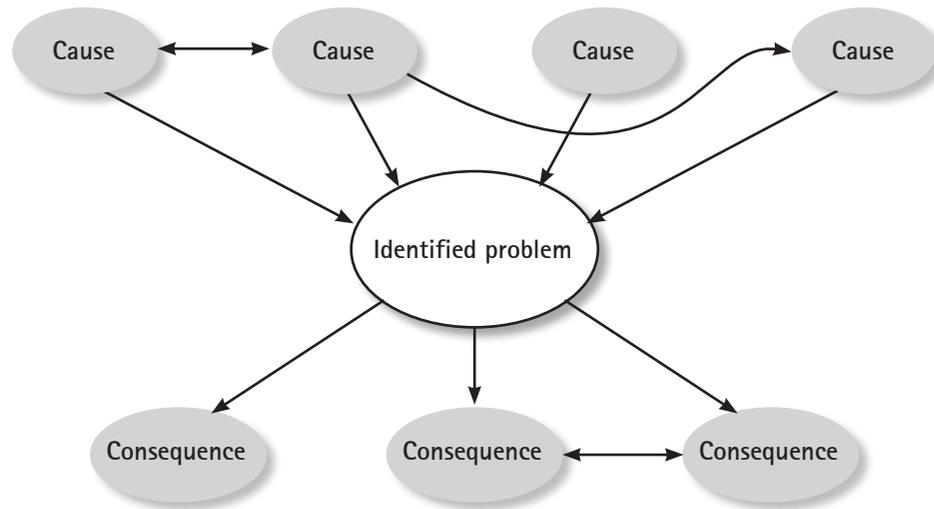
The first exercise allows members to more explicitly state those ruling principles that will guide their efforts and motivate future actions. However, those principles are generally applied to a specific political, economic or social field. Most regional and global networks are issue-driven: CSOs gather to promote changes in specific areas, be it HIV/AIDS, environment, or corporate responsibility.

At the same time, global and regional policies are proposed courses of action that also aim at solving certain problems or addressing specific needs perceived by governments, business and civil society. When a network intends to influence existing policies or promote new ones, it should clearly bind its proposal to a problem or set of problems that are recognised by diverse groups. The link between the proposal of the network and the problem/s it would help solve needs to be clearly articulated. This requires a process of consensus building within the network about the problem/s, causes and consequences. One useful tool to make this happen is the Problem Tree Analysis.

According to Start and Hovland (2004), 'Problem tree analysis (also called Situational analysis or just Problem analysis) helps to find solutions by mapping out the anatomy of cause and effect around an issue in a similar way to a Mind map, but with more structure. Problem tree analysis is best carried out in a small focus group of about six to eight

people using flip chart paper or an overhead transparency. It is important that factors can be added as the conversation

progresses. The first step is to discuss and agree the problem or issue to be analysed.



Why conduct a Problem Tree Analysis?

- The problem can be broken down into manageable and definable chunks. This enables a clearer prioritisation of factors and helps focus objectives;
- There is more understanding of the problem and its often interconnected and even contradictory causes. This is often the first step in finding win-win solutions;
- It identifies the constituent issues and arguments, and can help refine who and what the political actors and processes are at each stage;
- It can help establish whether further information, evidence or resources are needed to make a strong case, or build a convincing solution;
- Present issues – rather than apparent, future or past issues – are dealt with and identified;
- The process of analysis often helps build a shared sense of understanding, purpose and action.'

Do not worry if it seems like a broad topic because the problem tree will help break it down. The problem or issue is written in the centre of the flip chart and becomes the 'trunk' of the tree. This becomes the 'focal problem'. The wording does not need to be exact as the roots and branches will further define it, but it should describe an actual issue that everyone feels passionately about.

Next, the group identifies the causes of the focal problem – these become the roots – and then identify the consequences, which become the branches. These causes and consequences can be created on post-it notes or cards, perhaps individually or in pairs, so that they can be arranged in a cause-and-effect logic.

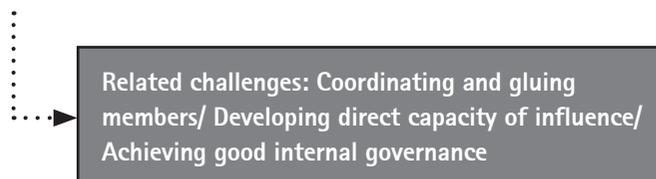
The heart of the exercise is the discussion, debate and dialogue that is generated as factors are arranged and re-arranged, often forming sub-dividing roots and branches (like a Mind map). Take time to allow people to explain their feelings and reasoning, and record related ideas and points that come up on separate flip chart paper under titles such as solutions, concerns and decisions.

Discussion questions might include:

- Does this represent the reality? Are the economic, political and socio-cultural dimensions to the problem considered?
- Which causes and consequences are getting better, which are getting worse, and which are staying the same?
- What are the most serious consequences? Which are of most concern? What criteria are important to us in thinking about a way forward?
- Which causes are easiest / most difficult to address? What possible solutions or options might there be? Where could a policy change help address a cause or consequence, or create a solution?
- What decisions have we made, and what actions have we agreed?

As a result of this process, the network may decide to focus short and mid-term efforts in a specific cause, or to avoid a particular consequence of the selected problem instead as steps towards solving a general and enormous global problem. For example, a network that proposes to promote fair trade throughout the world might decide to first concentrate efforts in generating awareness among consumers in specific developed countries of their responsibility when they consume goods that have been produced by workers underpaid or exploited.

2. What are we trying to specifically influence?



A clear picture of common grounds for joint work can facilitate the second phase of the exercise which consists of

a brainstorming about what members of the network think that can be done to address the problem and/or its causes in a much more concrete and specific way: the network can now define its policy influence goal.

To ease this process we present below a table with a variety of policy objectives that might help networks better assess where they stand regarding their strategic intentions.

What do we desire? (Types of policy goals)

- Establish an issue in the policy agenda
- Increase the use of research and evidence in decision making processes
- Reframe or enlighten the analysis and debates on specific policy issues
- Increase CSO participation in policy processes
- Promote a new policy
- Inform policy formulation with options and proposals
- Advocate for reforms in existing policies
- Help implement policies
- Monitor policies
- Evaluate policies

Goals will vary depending on the problem or aspect of the problem that has been previously selected through the Problem Tree Analysis. The goals can be further refined and specified according to the following variables:

1. **Issues:** should the network narrow its thematic scope, for instance, focus in monitoring a specific MDG (Millennium Development Goal) instead of trying to influence pro-poor policy?
2. **Time:** should the network concentrate its efforts in specific events, roundtables or summits, that is, advocating for the inclusion of governmental commitment to include CSO participation through formal and explicit mechanisms in the 2007 Community of Democracies Conference in Bamako, Mali?

3. **Type of change:** should the network try to influence in a specific policy, or should it direct efforts to an aspect of this influence such promoting changes in attitudes and behaviors of policymakers? Is it a policy, institutional or cultural change?
4. **Policy agents:** should the network address its proposals to specific groups of policymakers, for example, GCAP (Global Call against Poverty) and the G8?

Finally, as suggested by McKinley and Baltazar (2005), besides establishing the main goal/s, the network could also establish secondary objectives, both internal and external, that can be achieved simultaneously or regardless the success or failure of the primary goal. Secondary objectives can include, among others:

- Establishing new alliances with relevant actors such as media.
- Increasing awareness of policymakers of the value of the network.
- Enlarging participation of traditionally excluded groups in the policymaking process (women, indigenous, poor farmers, young people, etc.).
- Gain experience in interacting with the state and with International Organisations.
- Engaging new groups of citizens in policy debates
- Enriching the stock of knowledge of how a certain policy space or policy agency operates.

Exercise 3: Force field analysis: Is the policy influence goal viable?

Force field analysis

Once the network has agreed upon and refined the main policy goal/s, it should move further into assessing the distance between intended goals and what can be achieved in the short term according to contextual forces and internal resources available to work upon these forces.

Evaluating the viability of the stated goals can help networks refine them in order to enhance the investment of their resources. As forces change, this exercise should be repeated more than once throughout the policy influence process in order to ensure that the necessary decisions are made on time and that the windows of opportunity that may arise are effectively seized.

According to Start and Hovland (2004) 'Force Field Analysis is widely used to inform decision-making, particularly in planning and implementing change management programmes in organisations.

It is a powerful method for gaining a comprehensive overview of the different forces acting on a potential policy issue, and for assessing their source and strength.

Detailed outline of the process

Force Field Analysis is best carried out in small group of about six to eight people using flip chart paper or overhead transparencies so that everyone can see what is going on. The first step is to agree the area of change to be discussed. This might be written as a desired policy goal or objective. All the forces in support of the change are then listed in a column to the left (driving the change forward) while all forces working against the change are listed in a column to the right (holding it back). The driving and restraining forces should be sorted around common themes and should then be scored according to their 'magnitude', ranging from one (weak) to five (strong). The score may well not balance on either side. Throughout the process rich discussion, debate and dialogue should emerge. This is an important part of the exercise and key issues should be allowed time. Findings and ideas may well come up to do with concerns, problems, symptoms and solutions. It is useful to record these and review where there is a consensus on an action or a way forward. In influencing policy, the aim is to find ways to reduce the restraining forces and to capitalise on the driving forces.

Force Field Analysis is natural follow-on from Problem Tree Analysis that can often help to identify objectives for policy change. A useful next step on from Force Field Analysis is Stakeholder Analysis in which the specific stakeholders for and against a change are identified, together with their power, influence and interests.

Example: CSOs and their reports on the Inter American Convention against Corruption (see Case Study 2, for more details)

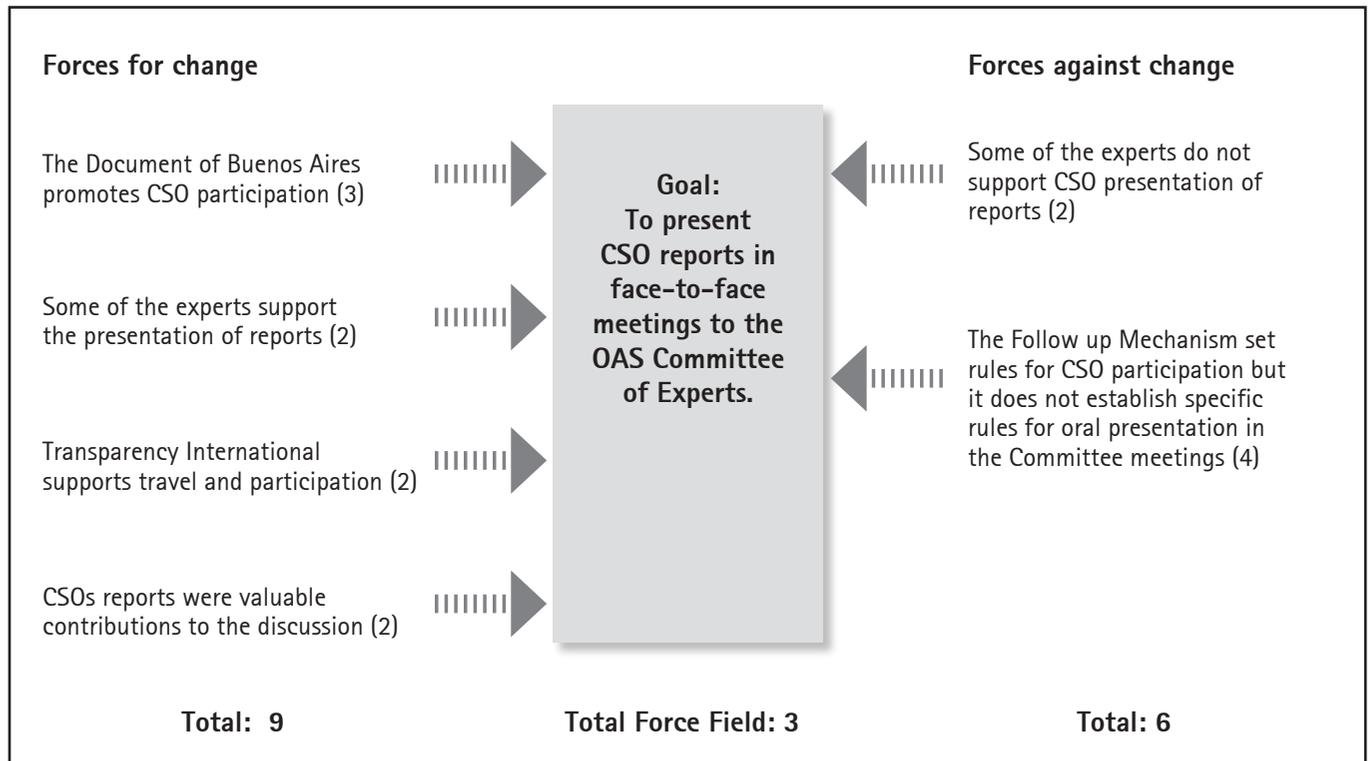
In 1996 the OAS member countries adopted the Inter American Convention against Corruption. “The Convention, which was the first international legal instrument to address this issue, specifically includes in its rationale the recognition of the international importance of corruption and the need for an instrument to promote and facilitate inter-country cooperation to combat it. Consequently, with that motivation, it set forth two goals:

- First, to promote and strengthen the development by each of the states parties, of the mechanisms needed to prevent, detect, punish, and eradicate corruption.
- Second, to promote, facilitate, and regulate cooperation among the states parties to ensure the effectiveness of measures and actions to prevent, detect, punish, and eradicate corruption in the performance of public functions and acts of corruption specifically related to such performance.”¹

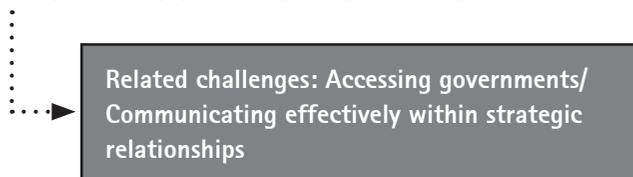
The implementation of the Inter American Convention Against Corruption (IACC) at the national level is monitored by representatives of every country in the region (known as experts) elected by the governments to present the official country reports. The experts of each of the member countries form the Committee of Experts, which is in charge of evaluating the national accomplishment of the IACC through a peer-review process.

During the first round of country evaluations, in February 2003, an active group of CSOs advocating for the effective implementation of the regional policy decided to produce their own reports on the status of implementation at the national level. Their goal was to gather evidence to complement the official documents to be presented to the OAS Committee of Experts. CSOs across the region were very interested in presenting their independent reports through a personal meeting with the Committee to allow further interaction and influence. Their chances to attain this goal could have been analysed by considering the following diverse forces:

¹ Extracted from <http://www.oas.org/main/main.asp?sLang=E&Link=http://www.oas.org/juridico/english/fightcur.html>



3. Recognising interdependence: Whom should we work with?



Exercise 4: Stakeholder Analysis: Whom should we work with?

Once the policy goal has been defined, refined and endorsed by the network members, it will serve as the guiding line for conducting a Stakeholder Analysis. This exercise consists of clearly identifying all stakeholders that have an interest and/or resource that can affect or can be affected

by the change implied in the policy goal. As analysed in the Introduction, multiple actors intervene throughout the policy processes for different reasons, and using diverse means. Interdependence is more present when governmental agencies, business companies or CSOs think about how to achieve their missions and goals. Therefore, a network should try to identify who could become relevant actors that could either help or hinder efforts to achieve the goal to later define what strategies to follow with each stakeholder. This will feed into the communications strategy.

Usually, influence at the global level implies the complexity of working throughout a multilevel process that combines national, regional and global actors. Thus, a complete stakeholder analysis should involve a thorough detection of relevant stakeholders at each of these levels. The building of this map can be enhanced if the process for its production involves some external representatives

of the diverse stakeholders that trust and are trusted by the network in order to ensure that it captures all the relevant actors, interests and resources.

Additionally, the Stakeholder Analysis reflects the degree of power of each stakeholder that derives from the control of resources that are needed or respond to the interests of other stakeholders. Following Mintzberg (1992), sources of power can be very diverse (...) but they become stronger as they are more essential for another stakeholder.

This means that power increases when a certain actor uniquely possesses more resources that are strongly needed by other actors. However, to understand the degree of power we should also consider the willingness and political ability of each stakeholder to invest energy in using their resources to participate in specific policies.

We present below an imaginary and very simple Stakeholder Analysis that could be built by a CSO network interested in pressuring governments to invest health care budget in HIV prevention training among young people:

How can a Stakeholder Analysis help the network?

- Prioritise which stakeholders are most crucial to involve in different ways so that they facilitate or at least do not hinder the efforts to achieve the intended policy goal.
- Further refine the policy goal should additional forces for and against change be detected when exploring interests and resources of stakeholders.
- Begin to understand the relationships between the different actors in order to devise strategies and activities that build upon those connections.
- Identification of needs can help the network refine arguments and contents of its value proposal.

POLICY GOAL: TO PROMOTE BUDGET ALLOCATION TO HIV PREVENTION TRAININGS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE				
LEVEL	STAKEHOLDER	INTEREST/NEED	RESOURCES	POWER
Global	International organisations UNICEF UNAIDS	National governments' engagement the rights of every child are realized Convince governments to implement global AIDS responses for HIV prevention CSO engagement in monitoring policies	Budget (cosponsors) Reputation and public recognition Links with CSOs and policy-makers at the national level Knowledge Access to policymakers	High
Regional	African network of researchers involved in HIV prevention	Promote the use of evidence in policies for HIV prevention	Knowledge about HIV prevention strategies in the region Capacity to convene African policymakers Credibility	Medium

	Asian advocacy network focused on promoting children rights	Ensure fulfillment of children rights Visibility of the HIV-AIDS threat for youth	Alliances with a wide array of local CSOs Reputation Access to most important national media	Medium
Local	Executive Power	Gain more votes among youth population	Budget	High
	Parliament	Gain more votes among youth population	Officially in charge of budget approval, but with low actual role	Medium
	National Ministry of Health	Increase budget Prevent wide HIV dissemination	Local knowledge Staff specialised in delivering courses on the topic Good access to Executive Power	High
	National Ministry of Education	Increase budget Implement youth targeted policies	Local knowledge Access to schools Relative access to Executive Power	Medium
	CSOs fighting against HIV-AIDS	Strengthen prevention activities Influence local policy-makers	Access to community based organisations, schools and health care centers	Low
	CSOs promoting young people's rights	Strengthen promotion of youth rights Influence local policy-makers	Access to national media Credibility	Low

4. What are we proposing?

Related challenges: Coordinating and gluing members/ Accessing governments/ Generating credible research and evidence/ Communicating effectively/ Developing direct capacity of influence

The proposal

The Stakeholder and Problem Tree analysis serve as a platform to discuss and devise what needs to be done in order to achieve the intended policy impact. However, there are many answers regarding which strategies and actions

are more appropriate: members may coincide in the ends, but not in the means for those ends. A precise and detailed proposal that links means and ends will help the network gain a better insight of how it will contribute to the policy-making process. A proposal can be a proposition, a recommendation or a specific initiative that can be implemented to contribute to solving a specific problem or ameliorating negative consequences of a problem.

The proposal will also enable the network to build more legitimacy for its participation in the policymaking processes both among its members as well as among external stakeholders. Therefore, the network needs to work on a specific value proposal that: 1) responds to the selected problem or one of its main causes or consequences; 2) provides content to the specific policy goal that has been established; 3) builds on interests and degree of power of main stakeholders that should be somehow engaged in the influence process.

Even though building consensus about a specific proposal can become a long and sometimes even tiresome process, a network can benefit enormously from new perspectives that are brought to negotiating tables by a range of other actors. In other words, intangible attributes are important to the coherence and effectiveness of networks:

- Serendipity and creativity
- Solidarity and socialisation
- Political weight and relevance
- Laboratories for citizenship and democratic practices

The formulation of a good proposal is of vital importance for the planning of the influence process. Therefore, the network should invest some considerable time in devising a proposal on which it can sustain its interventions. Leadership appears as a key factor in this exercise; members with consensus building and facilitating skills will probably be the most suitable to play a leading role.

One useful way to build the proposal is to first conduct a brainstorming session around the selected problem or aspects of a problem and propose potential solutions to it. This can be done by circulating the Problem Tree Analysis and asking members of the network to attach their own

Basic contents of a proposal:

- What is the problem.
- What is the proposed solution.
- What is the evidence or research to support the solution.
- What can be achieved in a measurable way through the solution.
- How can this be achieved (mechanisms and strategies).
- What are the decision making instances like: timing, formal vs informal, scheduled vs unpredictable, etc.

proposed solutions that would help achieve the policy goal. It is here important to request members to clearly build a link between proposed solutions and the evidence gathered from research to back up the proposal. This should also help the network detect whether there is still more research or data or evidence needed to build a solid proposal.



IFRTD and its mechanism to ensure research relevance

One of the major challenges that IFRTD faces in this process is to ensure that the research findings are relevant to, and are taken up by poor people and organisations working with them. The IFRTD developed a research methodology that builds ownership and communication in response to this challenge. This methodology, called networked research, -which was first used in the gender and transport programme, Balancing the Load- gathers people from different countries or contexts to work together and build a common analytical framework.

To further enrich this first set of solutions, the network could also decide to launch a larger consultation process, including policymakers, media, grassroots organisations, academics, specialists, and all other relevant groups that could be affected by the problem and the possible actions to be taken.

It is essential that the proposal takes into account the current and potential spaces and instances of general formal and informal decision-making processes that could take place and which could be seized to achieve the intended policy goal: is there a regional or global roundtable that is taking place in the near future? Do the most important decision-makers meet frequently in certain spaces, for instance, the UN Assembly, MERCOSUR Summit, or EU Parliament? These spaces and instances will be more concretely analysed and used in the production of the communications and engagement plan.

Next, in order to facilitate the subsequent process of comparison among the possible paths to follow, the facilitator could propose a specific format for participants to follow to present their proposals, as well as to anticipate the criteria that will be applied to evaluate and select one solution.

Clear rules about how the selection will be made will help strengthen trust among members and consequently nurture future commitment and participation. In this sense, agreeing upon the criteria for selecting the solution beforehand is one possible way to foster more open and transparent processes within the network.

Exercise 5: Applying criteria to select and refine a proposal

The following table of questions taken from McKinley and Baltazar (2005) can help members of the network select a specific proposal according to a set of criteria. As mentioned above, these criteria should be discussed and accepted by all members before proceeding to the selection process. The idea is for members to assign points for each criteria in a scale from 1-5 for each proposal. Additionally, members could also assign different weight to the criteria by adding a column that multiplies scores according to the relative importance of each factor (i.e.: 3 very important, 2 important, 1 relatively important)

CRITERIA	PROPOSAL # 1	PROPOSAL # 2	PROPOSAL # 3	SCORE	IMPORTANCE
It generates favourable public opinion					
There are data and evidence that emerge from credible research that support the proposal					
It can be achieved in the short/mid term (3 to 18 months)					
There are identified policymakers that can make a decision on the proposal					
It is politically plausible					
It is technically feasible (the Government should have the real capacity to execute it)					

It is economically feasible (the necessary public resources should be available for its implementation)					
It includes a realistic time-table according to the established procedure within the decision-making environment					
It motivates members of the network					
It contributes to the formation or strengthening of alliances or coalitions					
It stimulates stakeholders' mobilisation					
TOTAL SCORE					

Adapted from McKinley and Baltazar (2005)

It is also important to highlight that group decision making is usually a difficult task. Below are some guidelines that can help reach agreement proposed in the Policy Project 'Networking for Policy Change: An Advocacy Training Manual' (1999):

- Make sure that everyone who wants to speak is heard and feels that his/her position has been considered.
- Talk through the issue under discussion until reaching an agreement that everyone can support.
- Understand that agreement may not mean that all members of the network agree 100 percent; however, everyone should support the decision in principle.
- Encourage members not to give in to reach agreement but rather to express differences of opinion.
- Ask questions and make sure everyone's opinion is considered before reaching a decision.

5. How are we going to do it? What do we need?

Related challenges: Securing funding/
Achieving good internal governance/
Empowering a healthy leadership

5.1 Strategy and activities

Having reached consensus about the proposal to be promoted, a team should be formed to conduct the next step of the process: the design of a strategy that will allow the network to promote engagement of other stakeholders in order to move forward its proposal. To design an overall strategy that will be used as a platform to decide what activities to conduct and for the communications plan, the team should take into account the information and decisions made in the previous steps such as:

1. SWOT analysis: besides the general SWOT produced for the network, (see page 18) this might be a good opportunity to conduct a new SWOT that is directly related to the specific policy goal
2. Stakeholder Analysis: interests and needs, resources and degree of power of most important actors.

The strategy –though led by a core team- should also be performed through a consultation process among members. It should follow from the nature of the proposal and members would probably need to decide:

- Specific policy spaces or policy moments to participate in,
- Most relevant stakeholders to be influenced, especially evaluating the power structures than can be observed in the Stakeholder Analysis,
- Whether to work mostly focused on direct interaction with policymakers or prioritise public engagement,
- Duration and scope of the strategy.

Below are some of the most frequently used strategies which are sometimes combined; a multilevel or complementary approach that combines types of interventions probably increases the opportunities to actively detect and respond to the changing policy context. However, some networks may be constrained by the resources available to implement the strategy, so focusing efforts in one type of strategy might be a better decision. As we will see below in the engagement and communications plans, each strategy implies a universe of relationships that are developed and maintained. Relationships are dynamic and interactive: when effectively developed, relationships provide the network with an opportunity to constantly readapt this strategy in order to gain more consensus and a more precise assessment of how achievable is its goal.

Are partners needed to move that change forward, and if so, why? Will they contribute knowledge, or legitimacy, or access to decisionmakers, or access to funding?

Frequent global network strategies

- **Stakeholder mobilisation** (Make Poverty History Campaign)
- **Public demonstrations** (GCAP and the Live 8 Concerts, See Case Study 1, page 33)
- **Education and sensibilisation** (IFRTD and its Improving Mobility Workshop Series, <http://www.ifrtd.org/>)
- **Coalitions** (the International Campaign to Ban Landmines , <http://www.icbl.org/campaign/history>)
- **Wide media coverage** (WWF, <http://www.wwf.org/>)
- **Participation at governmental committees, or working groups** (Partnership Africa Canada and its participation in the Kimberly Process working groups on statistics, monitoring and membership, <http://blooddiamond.pacweb.org/whatpacisdoing/>)
- **Direct lobby to policymakers** (TKN and its participation in the WTO, see Case Study 4, page 59)
- **Networking in policy spaces** (REN 21 targeting relevant political processes such as CSD 14 and 15, meetings of the G8, UNFCCC, and the MDG review by the UN General Assembly, <http://www.ren21.net/ren21/goals/policy.asp.>)
- **Agreements with governments** (GAVI Alliance, http://www.gavialliance.org/Support_to_Country/index.php)
- **Partnerships with international organisations** (the Huairou commission with UNIFEM and UN-HABITAT, <http://www.huairou.org/who/history.html>)
- **Cultivating the 'Next Generation' of Policy Leaders** (see Evian Group below at 6.1.)

Once the strategy has been devised, the working group could ask each member how they can contribute with ideas of specific activities that they can carry out at the national level, and also how they can contribute to joint activities at the regional or global levels. At this stage, members should be able to commit some resources (staff, communications

tools, contacts, expertise, etc.) that would allow the working team to have a closer picture of what can be done based on existing resources, and assess what needs to be secured to implement the whole strategy. Members should be required to provide a detail of these activities: 1) human resources: who in the organisation would be responsible for conducting each of them and liaising with the coordinating group (Secretariat or any mechanism that centralises and coordinates action and information), 2) financial resources: if the organisation would be willing to allocate some funds to support the proposed activities, 3) time schedule: detail of when the activities would take place, and 4) contacts and relationships: who would the organisation work with, or try to engage throughout the activities.

When building this map of activities based on contributions made by the diverse constituencies, the working team would be able to detect whether there are other activities that need to be conducted and that would require additional commitment from members or outsourcing these to other potential partners. By drawing the big picture, the team can also detect the gap between existing resources and those needed to fully implement the strategy. Finally, the team can identify synergies, as well as potential lack of coordination among members. Therefore, after consulting with members who would need to change some aspects of its proposed activities it should come up with a draft of a work plan as an outcome on this process. This work plan should provide details about the activities and resources available for them, as well as the timing for all these to happen so that other teams can refine it by further developing: the communications plan, and later defining how human resources will be coordinated and secured, and how funds will be raised.

More to read:

If interested in learning about specific activities and questions that can guide the planning process, we recommend Creech and Willard, at http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2001/networks_strategic_intentions.pdf, pages 127-147.

5.2 The engagement and communications plan

Once the consensus has been reached on the proposal as well as on the strategy and activities to push it forward, the network should dedicate strong efforts to discuss and decide how it will involve relevant stakeholders to achieve their consensus or at least avoid conflicts that could hinder the implementation of the proposal. Throughout interviews and surveys to CSOs that participate in networks, key success or failure factors have been strongly related to the ability of the network to build effective relationships among its members and with all the actors that can affect or can be affected by the proposed change. Factors such as trust, credibility and reputation, informal relationships with policymakers, access to media and coherence of messages between national and global levels depend from a strategic approach to communications.

Therefore, building a dissemination plan of the proposal would fall short if the network wants to effect policy change. Instead, the network should approach this stage by going back to the initial Stakeholders Analysis and revising it according to the specific proposal in order to further refine interests and resources. This would allow the network to classify stakeholders and establish engagement goals, strategies and actions for each relevant actor.

A communications plan is useful to:

- Ensure a certain level of commitment among members, especially regarding human and financial resources.
- Build consensus on goals, priorities, responsibilities and expected outcomes.
- Foster internal coordination, consistence and coherence throughout communications with the diverse stakeholders, both internal and external.

And it serves as a basis for:

- Decision-making: it guides work teams in order to align their decisions; it is a useful tool to evaluate costs of diversions.
- Prioritising and ranking actions and to optimise the investment of time and resources.
- Internal and external evaluation.

Besides targeted objectives and activities, there will be some common strategies that address diverse stakeholders at the same time, and which are related to the public image and reputation of the network. This means that a complete and integrated engagement and communications plan will also include aspects of institutional communications, which should involve considerations about how to deal with some recurring weaknesses such as lack of legitimacy or accountability.

Taking advantage of complementation among members, the production of this plan should be in charge of a special and select group that involves communications specialists, as well as those members that have more knowledge and experience about how to access to and work with policymakers. This group should design the plan to be proposed to the rest of the members, who can add suggestions and offer resources (contacts, expertise, communications tools, etc.) according to the proposed activities.

It is important to highlight that the communications plan will become a changing platform to be revisited due to the dynamic nature of relationships and public issues. For example, the network may convince one national government to promote the proposal in a regional summit, but governmental representatives may decide to drop it throughout negotiations if they find this a resource to obtain other benefits. A regional economic crisis connected to the proposal can also be used as a window of opportunity to promote it as a solution in the political agenda.

Exercise 6: Checklist before writing the plan

Before starting to build the plan, the working team could meet and discuss the planning process so that the final product becomes more effective and viable. The following aspects are usually linked to the potential of a plan to be executed:

ASPECTS TO BE CONSIDERED	WHAT TO DO
Agreement about the process itself	The process to formulate the plan needs to be approved by members and any other form of governance that rules in the network (Secretariat, Coordinating Unit, etc.)
Participation	Levels of participation and responsibilities within the process should be also defined.
Validation criteria	The working team should resort to previous plans, meetings and work done in this aspect, it should also do some competitive intelligence on the communications of similar networks, and formulate maximal and minimal hypothesis of work.
Alignment and coordination	Gather information about plans and potential contributions or limits of other network teams: research, management, fundraising, administration, etc.
Unpredictable threats and opportunities	Free some resources (money, time, expertise) for unpredictable events.

A proposed structure for the plan

The proposed structure is only one possible way of organising the engagement strategies and activities that the network could implement; the contents can be adapted and modified according to needs and priorities of the network and based on its own coordination and decision-making processes.

We then present some specific tools and guidelines for the most relevant sections of plan due to their strong links with the SWOT and challenges of regional and global networks. By providing some concrete tools we aim at moving away from a generic communications plan that can be found in corporate communications literature to a plan that is more adjusted to the organisational reality of networks and their contexts.

ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Useful inputs to build the plan (if available):

- Strategic plan for the network
- SWOT Analysis
- Communications assessment (interviews with leaders and coordinators, analysis of existing communications tools, media clipping, etc.)

Structure of the plan

1. Overview
 - a. Relevant information about the policymaking context
 - b. Brief description of the network and its proposal
2. Communications goals
3. Communications strategies
Detail of the strategies that will guide the selection of communications tools and actions
4. Map of stakeholders
 - a. Profile of each stakeholder: demographics, reference groups, interests, resources, communicational habits, etc.
 - b. Prioritisation of stakeholders, if applicable
 - c. Classification of stakeholders, if appropriate
5. Key messages
Build consensus about what are the key positions and proposals that the network will communicate. Decide whether there should be, besides a general message, different messages for diverse stakeholders, or national settings, etc.
6. Recommended communications policies, activities and tools
 - a. Organised according to the stakeholders
 - b. Detection of synergies with other initiatives and projects of the network and what network members are doing
7. Work schedule (includes who is responsible for implementing each proposed activity)
8. Budget
9. Evaluation

1. Overview

a. Relevant information about the policymaking context

Deciphering the policymaking process

1. In which space does the decision take place?
2. Who will decide about the proposal?
3. Are there any formal or informal mechanisms to make this type of decisions?
4. Is there a moment in the decision-making process in which external stakeholders can bring forward evidence and proposals?
5. Are there any formal or informal channels to communicate decisions?
6. Are there any established or specific times to discuss and decide about the policy?

Understanding the spaces and instances for decision-making is a pre-requisite to effectively reach policymakers with the right message in the right format and at the right time. Therefore, there should be an intensive research on the characteristics of these processes: usual participants, places where they take place, mechanisms used by policymakers to publish information about the decisions, mechanisms for CSO participation (if any), etc.

Besides knowing the formal and informal processes, part of the challenge is to detect the governmental agency or agencies, and within it the person/s in charge of making the decisions. Sometimes this is a hard task because there might be a gap between formal and informal power and authority. Mapping out who influences whom (filling positions with name and face) is key to detect the flow of communications, and also how to frame the proposal in order to gradually gain acceptance or mitigate rejection.

Tool 1: Influence mapping²

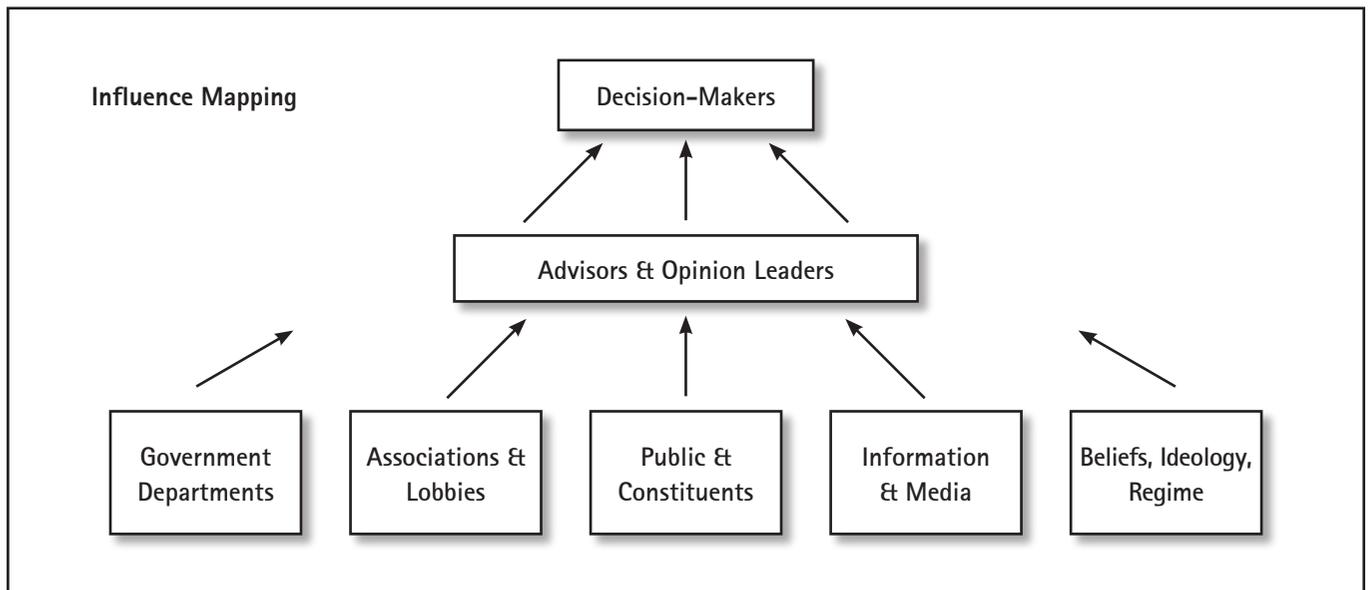
Influence mapping identifies the individuals and groups with the power to effect a key decision. It further investigates the position and motives of each player and the best channels through which to communicate with them. The approach is also known as Stakeholder influence mapping, Power mapping or the Arena of influence. In the business sector it is similar to Market segmentation which analyses the structure of the market and details consumer interests and behaviours. By its careful application, think tanks and CSOs can tune their messages and arguments to different audiences, and better understand how to channel their efforts.

Detailed Outline of the Process

Influence mapping builds naturally on Stakeholder analysis (and, to a degree, has similarities with the drivers

or influences identified in Force field analysis). Be clear over the policy issue or change being analysed and single out those in high positions of power. First, differentiate between the decision-makers who have the actual responsibility to make the decisions in a specific policy area, and their opinion-leaders who can influence them or lead their opinion, and who are generally more accessible. Remember, absolute power is a myth. Every executive depends on a group of advisors without whom they cannot operate. They are accountable to a wide group of interest groups, constituencies and lobbies. Further they may be influenced by the nature of the information and research they receive, how it is reported in the media, the political regime, not to mention their own beliefs and ideologies. It is often helpful to map the information as a pyramid of actors and influences (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Influence mapping



² Extracted from Start and Hovland (2004)

The construction of this interest map or 'pyramid' usually brings about rich discussion. The distance from the bottom represents how influential the factor is and, critically, the route by which this influence reaches the decision-maker. It is worth trying to detail the key individuals and institutions that carry the influence –whether they be specific people, newspapers, churches or so forth. This allows the group to analyse possible 'influence channels'– entry points to effect change.

Once key channels have been identified the group should analyse their position on the topic, their key motives and their accessibility. Are they a supporter, an ally or an uncommitted 'fence sitter'? Sometimes they can have a different status on different issues. What are their interests and motives for a particular position on the issue? What is their agenda, either stated or implicit? What drives them to take this position, and what constraints do they face that might make it difficult for them to move from this position? This may be ideological or personal (e.g. a belief in the primacy of the market), it could be cultural or social (e.g. the belief that alcohol is bad and should not be legal), it might be financial (e.g. for monetary gain) or it may be political, based on the views of their interest groups, supporters, patrons and voters, the constituents who give them their position of power. Finally, the group assesses how easy it will be to gain access and present the evidence or case to policymakers.



Steering Committee: how to improve and diversify the channels of influence

REN 21's Steering Committee places the network closer to most relevant policymakers since several of its members belong to the government (such as the Danish Energy Authority and the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development of Uganda). These can have direct impact in those who make decisions about renewable energy policies.

Representatives of intergovernmental organisations like the GEF (Global Environment Facility) and the UNDP Energy and Environment Group are also among the Steering Committee's members. These can play the role of advisors and opinion leaders influencing policymakers.

(See http://www.ren21.net/ren21/structure/steering_committee.asp)

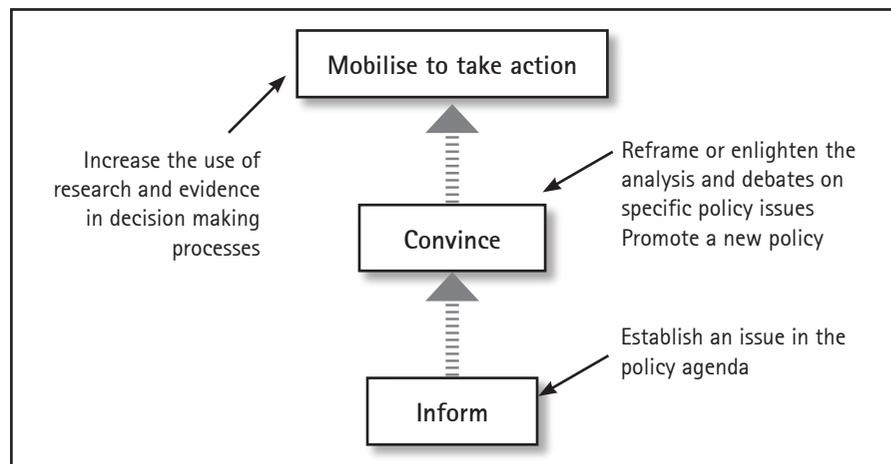
2. Communications goals

Communications objectives should be clearly aligned with the policy influence goal. We present below some of the most frequent policy goals and relate them with three basic communications goals:



More to read:

Further tools to assess the political context are available at http://odi.org.uk/rapid/publications/Tools_Political_Context.html



Besides thinking about which type of communications goals are more linked to the diverse kinds of policy goals, the team should also consider establishing objectives for three main levels of communications:

- Institutional communications (communications about the network per se),
- Proposal communications (communications to promote the specific proposals related to the policy goals), and
- Internal communications (to ensure coordination, engagement and participation of its diverse members).

2.1 Institutional communications

The way the network is perceived by the different stakeholders may influence its potential to convince them about the value and relevance of its proposals. The image and reputation of the network work as an umbrella that will influence how other actors understand its messages. In this sense, networks, similarly to CSOs, face three challenges that affect their credibility and capacity to generate consensus: legitimacy and accountability (both linked with the challenge of representativeness).

Legitimacy

As Stone explains, “the authority and legitimacy for non-governmental public action in global affairs is not naturally given but has to be cultivated and groomed through various management practices and intellectual activities.” Communications also contributes to convince actors about the legitimacy of network participation in global policymaking.

For that purpose, networks need to be aware of the diverse sources of legitimacy (Brown 2001, Stone 2005:89–105), which each network could use and strengthen:

- **Legal legitimacy:** if network is established as a non-profit organisation or charity by law, it may resort to this legal status to claim participation in policymaking processes that have regulated mechanisms for CSO participation.

(For example: Transparency International and its more than 90 locally established national chapters)

- **Moral legitimacy:** networks that work to defend or promote basic human values such as peace, access to education for all, or other ethical principles. (For example: GCAP and its fight against poverty; the Open Society Institute and its promotion of ‘open society’ values such as tolerance, freedom of speech and democratic governance, see <http://www.soros.org/about>).
- **Knowledge legitimacy:** this type of legitimacy includes traditional knowledge networks (see Introduction, page 10) that share consensual knowledge generated from common causal methods or professional judgement and common notions of validity, to networks composed by CSOs with relevant field experience or expertise, such as monitoring access to information. (For example: the International Network Health Policy & Reform composed by highly qualified teams of researchers, specialised observers or advisers of the health policy making process).
- **Democratic legitimacy:** many networks claim participation in the policy processes based on their ability to demonstrate that they have clear processes and mechanisms that ensure representation, transparency and accountability towards those stakeholders in name of which the network speaks or acts. (For example: the Huairou Commission and its members that are networks made up of grassroots women’s organisations, or work with grassroots organisations to support and highlight their work, see <http://www.huairou.org/who/networks.html>).
- **Political legitimacy:** Some networks benefit from the patronage of governments and /or international organisations which need the support of networks in implementing or monitoring their programs or providing expert advice and analysis. (For example: ASEAN-ISIS is a network of institutes of security studies who played an influential role as government supported ‘informal diplomats’ in the post cold War context developing a new structure of governmental security cooperation in the region. See http://www.isis.org.my/html/affils/af-fils_asean-isis.htm).



GAVI and its diverse sources of legitimacy

Some networks count with different sources to be perceived as legitimate actors. GAVI has:

Legal legitimacy, which lies in its tripartite network structure and formal agreements between governments, foundations and corporate pharmaceuticals.

Moral legitimacy, that derives from delivering a public good of immunisation for poor communities, especially children.

Knowledge legitimacy, because of its strong focus in investigating and accelerating the development and introduction of vaccines against two diseases, rotavirus and pneumococcus.

These different sources of legitimacy can be in conflict. For example, the 'insider' status for a network that comes with political legitimacy and close contact with government can detract from democratic legitimacy of a network.

Accountability

As mentioned in the SWOT analysis (see page 21) the lack of accountability towards other social groups frequently undermines the network's potential to become a recognised and legitimate voice in global policy processes. In fact, those who are in charge of managing institutional communications need to foster transparency and clear procedures regarding how the network will inform to its diverse stakeholder what it stands for, how decisions are made and resources invested, as well as the outcomes of its work.

The horizontal nature of networks –making it sometimes very difficult to assess who is responsible for what- implies the need to devise innovative and diverse mechanisms to ensure that accountability is effectively addressed. We could therefore refer to Benner, T., Reinicke, W. and Witte's (2003b) idea of "a pluralistic system of accountability in networks [that] would rely on checks and balances between different actors and different mechanisms of accountability".

Legitimacy: elitism vs social inclusion

Representativeness is a key source of legitimacy and contributes to work on one of the main strengths that networks can use as a source of influence: political weight (see Chapter 1, page 20). Generally speaking, the larger the number of members, the greater the political weight. However, this political relevance can also be attained if members are socially recognised voices for those groups affected by the policy or issue under question.

One effective mechanism to promote more inclusion and avoid being perceived as an elitist network is to put into place some policies of consultation to include those groups that can either decide upon or be affected by the policies. According to Benner (2002), a recent survey commissioned by the United Nations General Assembly emphasises the need to "undertake consultations and to spend time at the outset of a cooperative initiative, despite the transaction costs incurred, in order to understand the different organisational motives, time frames, objectives, styles, cultures, languages and stakeholders of each partner. Agreeing on a mechanism for communication and dispute resolution was also considered to be important."

COMMUNICATING TO ENHANCE ACCOUNTABILITY		
DIMENSION	DESCRIPTION	MECHANISMS
Actors	Networks can only be as legitimate as the actors involved. If the actors in networks do not live up to basic criteria of accountability and transparency, the network itself cannot either.	<p>Internal procedures and structures have to be open to scrutiny.</p> <p>Easy to access information on the internal division of responsibilities, voting rules and procedures and most of all on funding (sources and spending patterns) widely disseminated (i.e. through Internet).</p> <p>Developing and publicising certification, self-regulation and codes of conduct.</p>
Processes	Networks are process-oriented forms of governance. Therefore, thinking about the accountability of networks also requires a thorough examination of their process dimension. Again transparency is key for the mechanisms of reputational, financial and peer accountability to work. The selection process needs to be transparent.	<p>Criteria for identifying and selecting participants (e.g. competence, representation) should be openly communicated and consistently applied.</p> <p>Incorporate reputational accountability for the selection of participants.</p> <p>These consultations should be open and transparent and the results should be made available to the public.</p> <p>Sources and uses of funding in networks need to clearly documented and available to the public.</p>

Source: Benner, T.; Reinicke, W. and Witte's (2004)

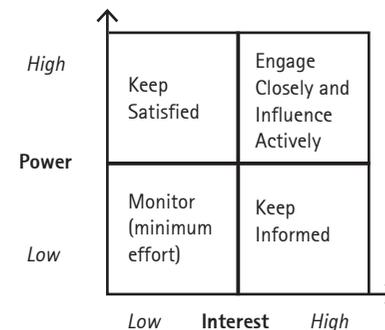
The authors also clarify that there can be no one-size-fits-all accountability system. Different types of networks might choose different systems of accountability, placing differential weights on individual elements and mechanisms of accountability.



A valuable example of how to present results of initiatives is the following document produced by the coalition Make Poverty History as part of the GCAP, 'Looking Back on 2005: The Year of MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY', available at <http://www.makepoverty-history.org/docs/mph-lookback05.doc>.

2.2 Proposal communications

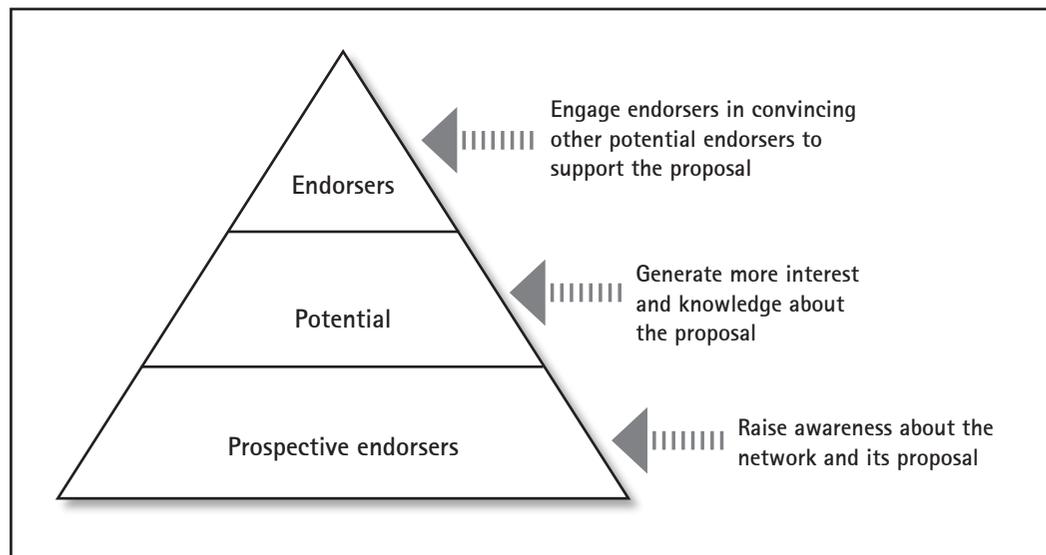
Communications of the proposal should target the diverse stakeholders based on their power and interests which have been explored in the Stakeholder Analysis. Therefore communications about the proposal itself would require different levels of intensity as shown in the figure below:



It is important to complement this approach with a clear detection of those stakeholders that could strongly oppose to the proposal which are related to the forces against change that have been detected previously in the Stakeholder Analysis. Specific communications goals should be established regarding these groups in order to minimise their potential opposition and block to the network's proposals.

Exercise 7: Communicating to endorsers

Another effective way to think about levels of communications and their corresponding tools is to segment potential stakeholders according to their potential to become endorsers or champions of the policy proposal. The idea is that those at the base of the pyramid can be moved to the top through diverse engagement strategies. Thus, each level of would require diverse communications tools that are more appropriate to reach the different goals.



A good example of a high profile and very effective 'endorser' of a global network was the recruitment in the 1990s of Princess Diana to the Anti Landmines Campaign.

The GCAP Case Study (see page 33) also shows the power of convincing celebrities to endorse the Make Poverty History Campaign, including Nelson Mandela and Dalai Lama, and artists participating in the LIVE 8 Concerts including U2, Robbie Williams, Scissor Sisters alongside legends Sir Elton John and Sir Paul McCartney.

2.3 Internal communications

Building trust

Both institutional and proposal communications are tightly related to the way members and leaders communicate within the network. One key factor that enables effective internal communications so that participants can align and integrate their actions is trust. In fact, when consciously managed, internal communications can even help build and strengthen internal trust.

Church et al. (2002) proposes that part of that trust-building work is done by the coordination function, in a constantly engaged process of knowing the members, facil-

itating their interaction, helping them to be in connection with one another. This work needs to be recognised as an explicit outcome of a network operating effectively.

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 cooperate 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 honored

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



Annual meetings to promote face-to-face interaction

Personal interaction is frequently pointed out as a key factor to generate more trust. TKN acknowledges that, especially when people with different cultures are working together, "virtuality" can be problem. Therefore, TKN holds a meeting every year where they try to bring everyone together.

Nurturing participation

Another challenge regarding internal communications is related to nurturing participation of the diverse members, which is strongly related to their perceptions about and expectations from the network. We present below a table produced by Creech and Willard (2001) which reflects in a concise manner the diverse actions that a communications team might want to consider to strengthen internal communications.

SUMMARY, FORMING RELATIONSHIPS	
ACTION	COMMENTS
Allocate time to seek out appropriate partners and begin to build relationships.	Networks fail or under perform because relationships are not built in advance. Is it better to have a small number of dedicated working partners rather than dozens of marginally committed partners.
Explore common interests that will hold the network together in the longer term.	Expectations for the network should be driven by whether the organisations are a good fit with each other and support a common agenda, not by the dividing up of financial resources raised for the network.
Learn how prospective partner organisations work.	Build foundation of trust based on realistic expectations of partner performance in the network; mitigate transaction costs of co-managing projects.
Look at research and communications capacity in prospective partners.	All partners need to contribute capacity to share network findings through their own spheres of influence in order to lever engagement strategies.
Develop and apply criteria for membership.	Justification for the invitation of each member to the network, and transparency to those not invited; awareness of strengths and limitations can mitigate obstacles to performance.
Extend relationships beyond core membership.	Keep donors actively informed; donors may wish to learn by doing; networks should not work in a vacuum; innovation can come from others outside of immediate membership: engage target audiences in work of the network.
Move relationships beyond "hub and spokes" approach.	More collaborative models support sharing and creation of new knowledge, better linkages to policy processes, improved capacity development across the network.

3. Communications strategies

It is important to discuss and decide which strategies will help attain the communications goals, as well as guide the selection of the specific communications tools and actions. Strategies work as an overarching scheme that can guide members to develop new tools and to detect new opportunities and threats regarding communications.

Typical tensions when deciding the strategies:

- Should communications be organised nationally or globally?
- Should formal or informal, communications styles prevail?
- Should communications become a decentralised (e.g. depending from members) or centralised function (e.g. depending from the Secretariat?)
- Should communications be implemented in a participatory way or should it be clearly delegated to some network leaders?
- Should more efforts be done for public or private communications?
- Should we emphasise tools that imply more credibility (e.g. press coverage or mouth to mouth), or those that allow more control of the content (e.g. policy briefs, written documents, etc.)?
- Should we prioritise frequency (many repeated communications to more focused groups) or reach (wide or massive audiences that receive less frequent communications)?
- What balance given to communicating technical analysis and policy research versus developing emotive style advocacy and policy stories?



An example of an emotional advocacy story is very effectively used by IFRTD (see case study, page 43):

“Let me tell you a story: when you go to the theatre, for example, you can see that in the interval people go to the restrooms. And when the interval is finished, men are back in the room and women are still queuing to go to the toilet. Have you thought of the reason for this? Simple: architects and engineers didn’t take into account that women cannot go to the toilette in 30 seconds as men can, but take 3 minutes instead. If they had taken this into account they would have built more women restrooms, instead of following aesthetic or symmetric needs. This is very graphic: urban and rural planners do not take women’s needs into account”

(Interview with Ana Bravo, Latin American IFRTD Coordinator, October 17th, 2006)

6. What do we need?



Related challenges: Securing funding/
Empowering a healthy leadership/
Nurturing participation and commitment

6.1 Human resources: the importance of leadership and coordination

As one of the strengths of a network, complementary work can lead to an amalgamation of diverse and specific talents, capacities, skills and expertise from different members. To build on this strength, recognised leaders within the network can encourage and motivate other members to bring their skills into the table.

As stated in ‘Networking for Policy Change: An Advocacy Training Manual’ (1999) although effective networks often

engage in a form of participatory leadership, they recognise that the role of the leader is that of a facilitator who:

- Listens carefully,
- Creates a climate of trust,
- Eliminates fear,
- Acts as a role model,
- Delegates tasks,
- Shares information readily,
- Motivates and empowers members,
- Deals promptly with conflict,
- Keeps network on track, and
- Runs meetings effectively and efficiently.

To ensure an effective implementation of strategies and activities, members will probably need to decide whether it wants the responsibilities of the implementation be shared through task forces or special committees, or if a coordinating group or steering committee would be more appropriate. This will probably depend from the existing mechanisms to make decisions and coordinate them in the network.

At this instance, the working team that has prepared the draft should also provide advice on the human resources needed to conduct all the agreed upon activities, both regarding profiles (communications specialists, lobbyists, researchers, etc) and degree of time commitment. This should feed into the fundraising team to secure that funds are not only raised for direct costs of activities but also to afford the expertise needed by the network.

Another important consideration in networks, is cultivating new cohorts of policy experts and activists. Leadership renewal and the injection of new ideas is essential to the ‘life’ and on-going energy of networks. For instance, the Evian Group set up a next generation group within its network, now known as ‘Young Evian - Open World Initiative’. “The creation of OWI is to ensure the progressive renewal and rejuvenation of the Evian Group, its long-term sustainability, the need to communicate more effectively with younger generations, as a means to gain greater understanding and commitment for the multilateral rules-based system of global economic governance, to provide

support to the next generation of leaders and to gain insights and inputs from younger members to the core Evian Group activities”.³

Out of the box thinking: the role of young professionals in knowledge networks

Sometimes committed young professionals who want to gain experience in the public and policy realm may become an additional contribution to the network by volunteering for certain activities.

According to Creech and Willard (2001) one of the key components of sustainable development is a conscious consideration of the needs of future generations. Young people will ultimately bear the responsibility for implementing the policies and programs necessary for sustainable development. It is essential that we begin to incorporate their skills, knowledge and ideas into current strategies, as well as develop their capacity to become leaders in the years ahead.

We learned that networks benefit from the inclusion of young professionals in three ways:

1. Supporting, strengthening and ensuring the continuity of the research;
2. Strengthening internal network processes and interactions; and
3. Strengthening the use of communications technologies within the network.

6.2 Fundraising

The importance of funding cannot be undermined when developing a plan to influence a policy, especially because of the costs implied in working at the regional or global levels. Even though ICTs have helped members to coordinate activities and share knowledge throughout these processes, most of the practitioners emphasise the need to complement virtual work with face-to-face interaction. In addition, participation of representatives of the network in policymaking spaces is key but costly. Influence processes are long-term and often unpredictable and non-linear: this requires availability of core or institutional funds (versus project-related support) that enable networks to respond to emerging windows of opportunity, consistently generate high quality evidence to back up debates and proposals, as well as be able to monitor decisions and commitments after these have been made in order to ensure a good policy implementation.

Due to the link between funding and public perceptions about the degree of independence of the network, there are certain aspects related to how fundraising is done that require previous discussions and agreements among members.

³ <http://www.eviangroup.org/events/young.php>

ASPECTS TO BE CONSIDERED	DECISIONS
Funding strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much global, regional and national fundraising needs to be done • Roles of Secretariat or coordinating group and of members • If a fundraising team should be created
Types of support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project-tied vs core or discretionary funds • Whether attract sponsors or support for specific activities or look for larger support for general network activities • In-kind contributions: which type of these would be most valuable (supplies, free advertising space, celebrity endorsement, travel, ICTs, etc.)
Sources of funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether support from governmental sources and/or private companies are to be accepted • How diversified should they be • Whether to develop a policy about how to decide if a source of funding is acceptable to the network
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who will be in charge of receiving the funds and presenting financial reports to supporters • How to ensure that the rest of the members can easily access to information regarding how resources are spent • How to communicate to the general public about sources and amounts of funding, and how these are used

The GCAP case study (see page 33) also provides some useful insights on the scope of funding needed to launch a global campaign and innovative ways to find additional resources from, for example, world-known celebrities.

7. How do we adapt and adjust?

Related challenges: Coordinating and gluing members/ Achieving good internal governance/ Ensuring capacity to follow up/ Communicating effectively within strategic relationships

Due to the dynamic and changing nature of both the network and the policy processes, there is a need to think about specific mechanisms that will allow members to adjust activities and strategy as they learn throughout the influence process.

To this purpose, the selected coordinating structure should be able to inform members constantly about new opportunities or threats, or unexpected events that might arise during the process that would require the revision of some aspects of the planned operations. This ensures that

the coordination structure is guaranteeing synergy among members, helping towards making the right decisions at the right time, and overseeing that the network is consistent throughout its diverse interventions at the different levels and with various stakeholders.

In fact, the two-way communications flow with different actors implies that messages and communications tools will evolve as feedback is obtained through these relationships. Thus, the coordinating group should make sure that it sets aside time and space on an ongoing basis to evaluate the implementation of the policy influence plan.

In addition, adaptation may be needed if a policy decision is made earlier than expected. The network might decide to reallocate resources to monitor the implementation of this policy –even if the final decision did not incorporate its proposals–. Monitoring a policy becomes a source for generating evidence for further influence regarding evaluation and modifications to the original policy.

In order to streamline adaptation that might require too many small adjustments, it would be useful if members first agree on the room for manoeuvre allowed to each subgroup or working team to decide some changes on their own. This would mean that certain type of changes would be the responsibility of each group while other changes (e.g. budget

reallocation, change of some main message at a country or regional level, delay in the production of a policy document, etc.) should be decided in collective way (consultation with other affected subgroups, or with the coordinating structure).

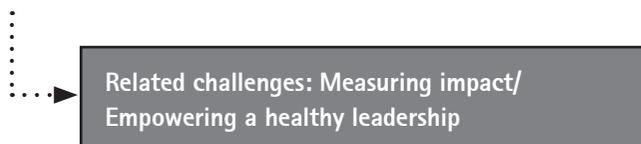
Internal communications could help develop the capacity to follow up on advances to achieve the intended policy goal. 'The technology that facilitates this communications plays a pivotal role: email groups are great for communication but not always the best way to collaborate virtually and a portal or a dedicated collaborative technology can sometimes prove to be more effective for the later'. (UNDP 2006)

A formalised follow up mechanism could also help members keep updated about each other's progress, and maximises the benefits of working at the global, sub-thematic and regional levels. 'For example, after each lobby activity, after a mobilisation, in response to changes in the context, etc [adjustments may be necessary]. (...) It is important to evaluate each activity within the plan in terms of achievement and outcomes, by always trying to identify the concrete causes or factors that contribute to the success or failure, and by proposing changes that enhance practice and strengthen the initiative for policy influence.' The next table can become a useful tool for this task:

Activity	Expected results	Obtained results	Reasons or factors that contributed	Needed adjustments
Considerations				

McKinley and Baltazar (2005)

8. When and how will we evaluate our work?



Meagre concrete results are frequently pointed out as one of the networks' main weaknesses. As mentioned in Chapter 2 (page 22) transnational activity can mean uneven and variegated impact. In consequence, several policymakers feel that the networks' potential contribution to their work is diffuse and unclear.

This is not only a problem regarding external stakeholders, Members may have diverse and even confronting views about

the role and need for evaluation of impact. While some members privilege the process of working together (by promoting participation, consultation and inclusion of traditionally excluded voices and groups), others emphasise outcomes (guaranteeing direct, concrete and quick results) as the priority.

Leadership should take these potential conflicting views into account to decide which mechanisms will allow the network to discuss about what has been and has not been achieved, and why. In this sense, evaluation of the policy influence plan could focus at two levels: 1) its contribution to the network and each of its members; and 2) the achievement of the intended policy goal/s. Additionally, the network could also include in its evaluation the achievement of secondary objectives (see page 71) such establishing new alliances, gaining experience in interacting with the state, engaging new social groups in the debate, etc.

Finally, networks may also face difficulties regarding evaluation due to the lack of resources that a complete evaluation process may require. In this sense, evaluation reports required by the donors can become valuable inputs of systematised information. These reports can be on large grants provided by one or more donors, and/or on specific projects carried out individually by members but related to the network's influence plan.

Evaluation of contribution of policy influence plan to the network

Church et al. (2002) proposes some specific evaluation tools that can be adapted to measure how the policy influence process has enriched and benefited the network and its members.

- 1) **Contributions Assessment:** the network can attempt to understand the level of commitment and contribution that its participants have offered throughout the process. This tool would enable coordinators and leaders to better assess where the resources lie in the network and which degree of complementation is possible for future policy initiatives (For a full description of this exercise, please visit <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/dpu/publications/working%20papers%20pdf/WP121.pdf>, page 28).
- 2) **Circles or Channels of participation:** they aim at capturing how people have participated and how that participation changed and moved over time. Often the discussion or debate about participation centres around how to manage 'types of membership'. In the case of evaluating the planning and implementation of the policy influence initiative, results of this assessment will enable members to better define roles and responsibilities in future work, as well as (For a full description of this exercise, please visit <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/dpu/publications/working%20papers%20pdf/WP121.pdf>, page 31).
- 3) **Check-list for Networks:** this gives an overview of how a network works, with suggested evaluation questions such as:

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 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 of 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?

Some useful indicators:

- Size or number of actors that participate in the network
- Amount and type of interests involved
- Cohesion: ratio between existing relationships and potential relationships
- Consensus: degree of acceptance of the internal rules of the network
- Intensity: frequency and volume of exchanges
- Stability or persistence of relationships
- Autonomy or degree of permeability of the network to other external stakeholders

Source: Omella (2005)

Evaluating policy influence

Influence is a problematic term. As mentioned in Chapter 2, complexity of interactions between multiple actors throughout unpredictable policy processes makes it hard for networks to demonstrate specific ways of impact. For instance, literature on policy research institutions (PRIs, which are organisations that also seek to influence policy) has widely discussed about the different criteria and indicators to assess their real degree of impact (Dror 1980; Stone 1996; Krastev 2000; Abelson 2002).

According to Stone (1996: 109), “a reason for the different perceptions of think-tank effectiveness lies in varying conceptions of influence. A narrow interpretation posits that only direct impact –affecting the course of legislation or persuading decision-makers of a particular course of action–warrants the description of influence. Accordingly, the notion that think-tanks wield political influence is easily criticised.”

However, similarly to global or regional networks, numerous PRIs do not limit their goals to direct policy change, but also aim at improving the quality of public debate, or changing dominating paradigms. This related to the secondary objectives presented in page 71.

Hence, we here define influence in a broad way that may include the diverse types of impact presented by Court and Pollard (2005: 6), including:

- Influencing agenda setting, which includes establishing an issue in the public and/or political agendas and stimulating public debate as well as influencing the frame used to analyse this issue and make decisions (enlightenment).
- Influencing the formulation of policy, by presenting evidence and proposals based on research results. This not only includes fostering the creation of a new policy and influencing its contents but also convincing policymakers about specific changes on existing policies.
- Influencing the implementation of policy, by presenting evidence that is critical to improving the effectiveness of the regulation, program or practice.
- Influencing the monitoring and evaluation of policy, to ensure that the policy is well implemented and to assess its results in order to propose required refinements.

However, we need to acknowledge that there is still a problem with attribution. Rarely is there a one-to-one correspondence between a policy brief (or any other activity such as a public campaign) developed by a network, and a particular policy change or the generation of a new public opinion climate. There are several and significantly diverse intervening forces that come between any cause and effect

relationship that may exist between networks and governmental global or regional decision-making. Hence, proof of influence is frequently elusive and, at best, anecdotal.

According to Church et al. (2002) evaluating lobbying and advocacy work must try and understand the added-value that linking and coordinating bring to advocacy. Therefore, evaluation regarding the policy influence capacity could include:

- The improved quality and sophistication of joint analysis that underpins the advocacy;
- The extended reach to key actors in key contexts through which that improved analysis can be channelled;
- The capacity to act simultaneously, with shared ideas, in many places at once;

- The space for competing views to be discussed and consensus positions achieved;
- The opportunity for those with few other avenues to powerful decision makers to gain access through the networked relationships.

Exercise 7: Measuring different types of outcomes

In order to capture the complexity of influence, McKinley and Baltazar (2005) propose the following table that covers a wide range of evaluation criteria. Members can be requested to value the degree to which these criteria have been met.

	Criteria	To a minor extent	To a large extent
Resolution of the problem through public policies	Approval of the proposal		
	Application or implementation of the proposal		
	Public debate on the issue		
	Establishment of the issue in the public agenda		
	Incorporation of affected stakeholders in the governmental plans		
	Achievements in the resolution of the approached problem		
Transformation of power relationships towards more democracy	Establishment of new mechanisms for state-civil society interaction		
	Generation of mechanisms for accountability		
	Sensibilisation of public servants		
	Increase of local power		
	More clarity about the functioning of institutions		
	Identification of governmental allies		
	Exercise of citizenship rights		
	Strengthening of the role of state institutions		

Strengthening and empowerment of civil society	Legalisation of the group or coalition		
	More knowledge about how the state works		
	Capacity to generate proposals		
	Identification of new non traditional allies		
	Constitution of the group as a social control group		
	Larger credibility		
	Awareness of the issue		
	Formation of sustainable alliances		
	Strengthening of local power		
	Participation of poorly represented groups		

Court and Perkins (2005) also provide a valuable table that can serve as a guiding platform to assess the impact of the networks on policy processes. They propose that rather than follow the usual approach and focus on types of net-

work themselves, policy processes should be taken as the starting point. In each stage of the policy process, there are a number of ways in which networks can help which are summarised below:

Stage of the policy process	Key objectives for actors aiming to influence policy	How networks can help
Agenda setting	Convince policymakers that the issue does indeed require attention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marshall evidence to enhance credibility of the argument <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - facilitate vertical and horizontal communications - provide a mechanism for knowledge sharing and feedback across global boundaries between North and South • Extend an advocacy campaign <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - strength in numbers - sustain a campaign over time and across geographical areas • Foster links among researchers, CSOs and policymakers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - create a 'boomerang pattern' whereby CSOs use international partners to pressurise unresponsive local governments - capitalise upon key individuals in the network to communicate evidence - bypass formal barriers to dialogue
Formulation	Inform policymakers of the options and build a consensus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collate good-quality representative evidence and act as 'resource bank' • Channel international resources and expertise into the policy process • Build long-term collaborative relationships with policymakers • Bypass formal barriers to consensus
Implementation	Complement government capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the sustainability and reach of the policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provide an effective means of grassroots service-delivery on behalf of government - enhance sustainability by: sharing workload; cutting down inefficiency; providing solidarity; mobilising funding; entrenching grassroots representation • Act as dynamic platforms for action

Evaluation	Collate quality evidence and channel it into the policy process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide good-quality representative evidence and feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - refine the evidence through the input of multiple actors (for both research and grassroots advocacy networks) - access and channel feedback from grassroots communities - provide a forum for peer evaluation amongst implementing agencies • Link policymakers to policy end-users <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - make use of diverse links and powerful individuals to bridge vertical divides - provide a mechanism to mediate among diverse actors
All stages (underlying)	Capacity building for CSOs aiming to influence policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster communication • Provide a dynamic environment for knowledge sharing and collaborative action • Provide support and encouragement • Coordinate member evaluations • Provide a means of global political representation



IFRTD and measuring changes in attitudes

Based on their awareness of the complexity of measuring impact, IFRTD applied a new methodology to assess the impact of the forum. This methodology was replicated from a Canadian experience that allows the mapping of changes in attitudes and not only of specific result of an activity. This method helped them see how certain actions could be transformed into policies in the long term, especially when the change of attitude comes from a key stakeholder such as a mayor or governor. In this sense, the impact could be evaluated more easily at the local level where the NFs interact with local politicians.

CHAPTER 4: Emerging networks, issues and policy spaces in the Americas

“2004 was the region’s best economic year in over two decades, and 2005 and 2006 also have favourable prospects, despite the problems caused by high oil prices. We have democratic governments throughout the Hemisphere and many countries, among them all those that have undergone crises of governance, are preparing to hold democratic elections in the coming months to elect their officials once again. Still, we feel a palpable sense of uncertainty, which is natural after the crises we faced in the first years of the decade. From the people’s point of view, there are two key questions: First, will we be able, this time, to maintain a pace of growth that will prevent our region from continuing to lose standing in the world economy, in the face of other developing regions that, in recent decades, have had much higher rates of growth? And, this time, will the benefits of our growth and our democracy actually benefit the more than 200 million poor, half of them destitute, living in our region today?”

Jose Miguel Insulza, Secretary General of OAS
Speech by at the inaugural
Session of the Fourth Summit of the Americas
November 4th, 2005 - Mar de Plata, Argentina.

The case studies in Chapter 2 have illustrated how the connection between regional and global issues is sometimes a challenge for global networks. Even though there is a trend to discuss public policy with a global perspective due to the increasing awareness of some global issues that require common responses, the global approach can sometimes lose sight of regional aspects that require a distinct type of non governmental action. Regions have common issues and

problems, sometimes they share language, culture and more often they are affected by regional trade regulations.

In this chapter we have decided to explore how regional networks are currently trying to influence regional policies. Because a network of CSOs has already been created in Latin America, under ODI’s Civil Society Partnership Programme¹, we have chosen to do this work in this region. We aim at illustrating how, simultaneously with events at the global space, there are different issues, networks and policy spaces that CSOs in this region can consider and analyse when thinking about forming or joining a network to influence specific policies.

In this region, there is an increasing awareness among certain governmental and non governmental actors of the importance of citizen participation to strengthen democracy. In 2004 the UNDP presented the Report on Democracy in Latin America² where “full citizen participation” is understood as an “easy access to their civic, social, economic and cultural rights”³. However, the Report also argues that there are still serious deficiencies regarding the control that citizens are able to exercise over the state actions. The region is in a period of crisis, thus, it is a period of change that can be also seen as an opportunity to broaden citizen participation in the political process.

In order to make this political participation happen, there is a need to advance a type of politics that provides options for placing citizen’s voice in the regional agenda. In this sense, the Report proposes alternative forms of representation that complement and strengthen traditional ones without replacing them.

During the 90’s public policy agendas in Latin America have been focusing in themes such as strengthening of democracy, political crisis, state reforms, economic structural

¹ As mentioned in the Introduction, ODI’s 7 year DFID-funded Civil Society Partnerships Programme aims to strengthen the voice of Civil Society to use research-based evidence to promote pro-poor development policy. It will do this by establishing a worldwide network community of practice for think-tanks, policy research institutes and similar organisations working in international development. For more information, see <http://www.odi.org.uk/CSPP/Index.html>.

² United Nations Development Programme, *Democracy in Latin America: towards a citizen’s democracy.*- Latin American Edition. - Buenos Aires, Aguilar, Altea, Taurus, Alfaguara, 2005.

³ Idem pp. 26-27.

reforms and the impact of globalisation. Although these debates were part of the state agenda, there was still little participation of civil society in some of the discussions.

We will try to describe and analyse some of the regional political venues that are fostering the debate on these topics and we will try to identify opportunities for CSO participation in the policy making process which are clear spaces for networks to focus their policy efforts.

A region of challenges

Challenge is the best word to define the current situation of Latin America. Most of the advances registered in the last decades unfortunately still have their counterparts in terms of high levels of poverty and exclusion. A large number of Latin Americans are poor—some 222 million or 43% of the total population, of whom 96 million (or 18.6% of the total) live in extreme poverty, according to the UN.

Freedom House (2006) describes the general situation of Latin America as follows: “Yet even as the countries of Latin America have registered impressive gains for democracy and the region itself has come to enjoy an unprecedented level of freedom, old problems remain while new concerns have arisen. Some of these problems can be traced to a persistence of widespread poverty and increased inequality. For many in Latin America and the Caribbean, the anticipated pay-off in an enhanced quality of life has not materialised with the onset of democracy. The result has been a decline in public faith in democracy, the collapse of many of the traditional political parties, and the rise of populist political leaders who preach a message that is critical of the United States and of free market economics. A number of countries in the hemisphere have also experienced an alarming increase in violent crime and an accompanying deterioration in the institutions of law enforcement. Corruption, a longstanding regional problem, also persists at a high level.”⁴

The Secretary General of OAS stated “If we are to improve public policy in the Hemisphere, we must first of all expand and strengthen freedom in the Americas. Overcoming unemployment and poverty presupposes freer societies, in which all people are fully able to speak out and participate, with more justice, transparency, greater freedom of expression and association, and full respect for gender equality, and with respect for the diversity of original peoples, compatriots of African descent, the most vulnerable groups, and the millions of migrants and displaced people. By the same token, we must ensure greater security in the face of natural disasters, AIDS and pandemics, drug trafficking and organised crime, the spread of gangs, and terrorism. Only then can we have the full support of our peoples for the objectives we have set for ourselves.” (Insulza 2005)

Countries in Latin America face common development problems. These problems should be addressed by politicians, but civil society organisations can also make an important contribution by producing information and advocating for better institutions, income distribution and poverty alleviation.

Regional institutions: spaces for networking

In this section will review and describe some visible and concrete spaces for civil society participation in policies that seek to foster economic integration and regional development.

It is very important to stress that many of the institutions described in this chapter not only work in Latin America but in the entire American continent. The Summit of the Americas and the OAS are continental institutions that due to their scope and history have become one of the main arenas of regional debate and reform for Latin America. The Summit of the Americas has a defining role

⁴ http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/special_report/37.pdf

for the agenda setting and governmental decision-making in different topics that affect the region as a whole, such as gender, sustainable development, indigenous people and the struggle against corruption. Regional networks have developed expertise in these topics and are being invited to “parallel” CSO Summits to present their findings to the Heads of State. The OAS is the institutional framework for policymaking and implementation of the decisions taken within the Summits in every theme. Most of the fora and venues at the regional level take into account and base their discussion upon the political will expressed in the Summit’s mandates and in the OAS General Assembly resolutions.

The list of institutions and regional fora described below is certainly not exhaustive and does not try to cover all of the existing spaces in the region. Our goal is to present some of these spaces to help networks more clearly detect the diverse institutional frameworks and spaces that currently exist to engage civil society participation in policymaking processes in the region. We have detected that there is significant space for further research in the region regarding how many networks exist, on which topics, what type of CSOs are more prone to engage in networks, lessons learned from experiences so far, etc.

Thus, we intend to provide a brief overview of some existing spaces to allow readers to assess where new opportunities may emerge, and detect best practices or lessons regarding CSO participation in regional policies that could be further explored to apply in their own areas of work.

Organisation of American States

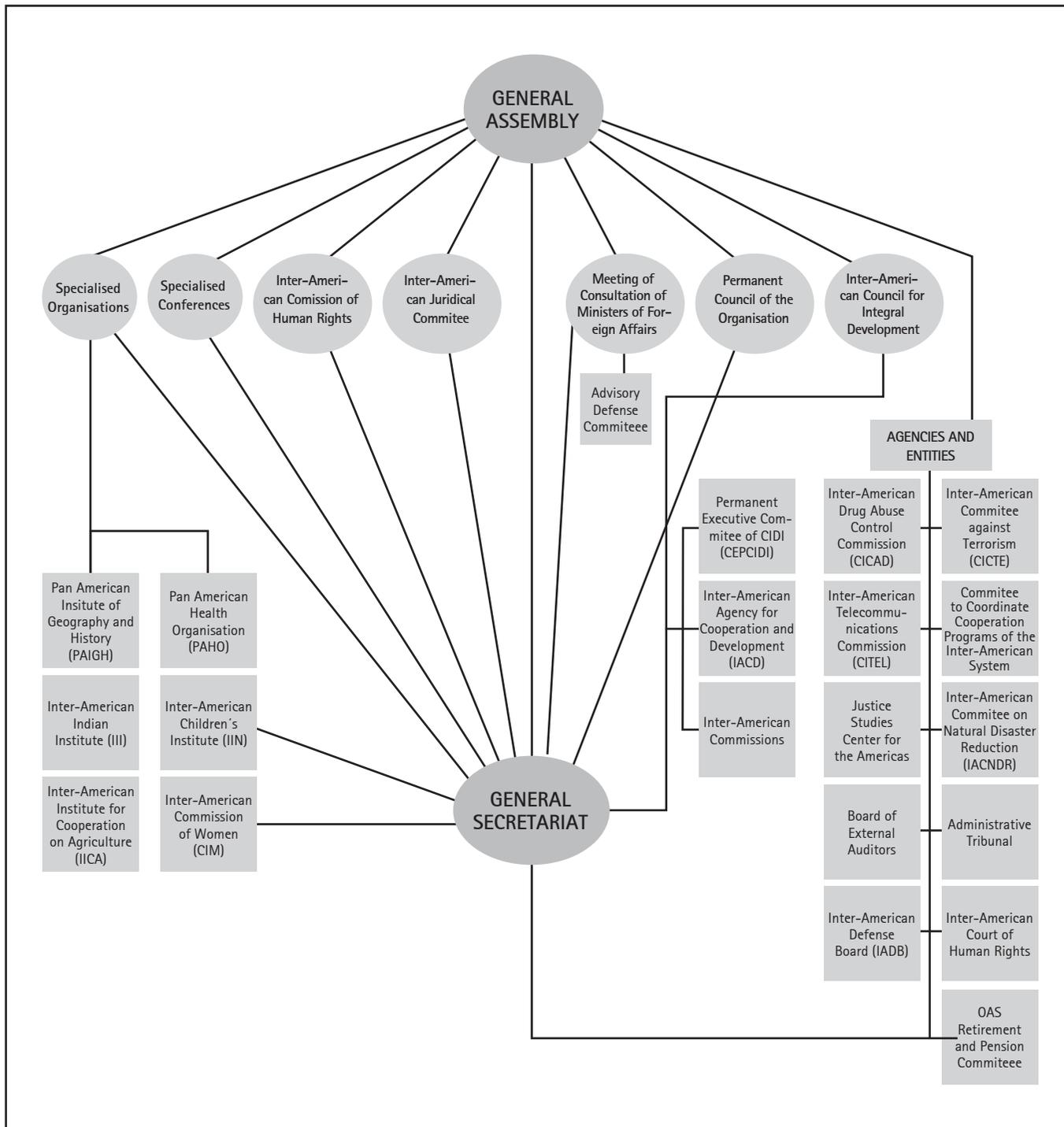
The Organisation of American States (OAS) brings together the nations of the American Hemisphere to strengthen cooperation on democratic values, defend common interests and debate the major issues facing the region and the world. The OAS is the region’s main multilateral forum for strengthening democracy, promoting human rights, and confronting shared problems such as poverty, terrorism, illegal drugs and corruption. It plays a leading role in carrying out mandates established by the hemisphere’s leaders through the General Assemblies.

Regarding membership of the OAS, its webpage establishes that “it is made up of 35 member states: the independent nations of North, Central and South America and the Caribbean. The government of Cuba, a member state, has been suspended from participation since 1962; thus only 34 countries participate actively. Nations from other parts of the world participate as permanent observers, which allow them to closely follow the issues that are critical to the Americas” .

The member countries set major policies and goals through the General Assembly, which gathers the hemisphere’s ministers of foreign affairs once a year in regular session. Ongoing actions are guided by the Permanent Council, made up of ambassadors appointed by the member states.⁵

The OAS General Secretariat carries out the programs and policies set by the political bodies. The structure of the OAS is better described in the following organisational chart:

⁵ http://www.oas.org/main/main.asp?sLang=E&tsLink=http://www.oas.org/key_issues/eng



As mentioned above, the OAS intends to reflect priority issues of the region that have been set in consultation not only with its members (governments) but also with other actors in the Americas. The last appointed Secretary General, José Miguel Insulza (Chile), restructured the General Secretariat in an intention of covering the main regional issues pointed out by these actors. Under the new structure, four specialised secretariats were created⁶:

- Secretariat for Multidimensional Security⁷ – Coordinates OAS actions against terrorism, illegal drugs and other threats to public security.
- Secretariat for Political Affairs⁸– Directs efforts to promote democracy, strengthen democratic governance and prevent democratic crises.
- Executive Secretariat for Integral Development⁹– Includes departments that promote social development, sustainable development, trade and tourism, and education, culture, science and technology. Also handles follow-up to the region’s ministerial meetings.
- Department of International Legal Affairs¹⁰– Promotes legal cooperation among the member states by helping to develop and implement international treaties.

These four institutionalised secretariats can be used by CSO networks to find opportunities for participation, to ask for technical assistance or to establish some kind of rela-

tionship with the OAS body, when the national state is not willing to provide information on these issues in the home country. For example, the Secretariat for Political Affairs was in charge of the OAS observer team who monitored the electoral process for representatives to the Constituent Assembly and to vote in a National Binding Referendum in Bolivia in July 2006. During this visit, observers met with representatives from the Executive and Legislative powers, electoral organisations (National Electoral Court and Departmental Electoral Courts), candidates from the different political parties, members of the press and civil society organisations. For CSO networks working on gender issues, indigenous people and poverty alleviation it was a significant opportunity to express their concerns on different matters and to establish a dialogue with regional institutions that are looking at the country’s performance.

Other offices and agencies – such as the inter-American human rights bodies¹⁰ and the Summits of the Americas Department¹², the secretariats of the Inter-American Commission of Women¹³, the Inter-American Children’s Institute¹⁴, the Inter-American Committee on Ports¹⁵ and the Inter-American Telecommunication Commission¹⁶– were created in response to key issues identified both by governments and civil society actors throughout OAS history.

An example of civil society influence in the creation of special thematic commissions can be found in creation of the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM). In 1928 women

⁶ http://www.oas.org/key_issues/eng/KeyIssue_Detail.asp?kis_sec=20

⁷ <http://www.cicte.oas.org/>

⁸ <http://www.sap.oas.org/main.htm>

⁹ http://www.oas.org/udse/index_ingles.html

¹⁰ <http://www.oas.org/dil/>

¹¹ <http://www.oas.org/main/main.asp?sLang=E&tsLink=http://www.oas.org/OASpage/humanrights.htm>

¹² <http://www.summit-americas.org/>

¹³ <http://www.oas.org/cim/English/History2.htm>

¹⁴ http://www.iin.oea.org/default_ingles.htm

¹⁵ <http://www.oas.org/cip/defaulte.asp>

¹⁶ <http://www.citel.oas.org/>

from many countries in the region gathered in La Habana, Cuba, demanding participation in the Sixth International Conference of American States and the ratification of an Equal Rights Treaty by members of the conference. Representatives of twenty-one member nations argued that women were only allowed to speak on the floor and that the meeting's agenda had no room for discussion of a treaty on equal rights. After a month of protests and active campaigning, women were finally allowed a voice at the conference. For the first time women officially spoke at a plenary and public session of a Pan American conference. Although the Treaty for Equal Rights was not ratified, a decision was taken to create the CIM and to charge it with the conduction of a study of the legal status of women in the Americas, which was presented in the following International Conference of American States.

Civil Society and OAS

“Increased participation by citizens, communities, and civil society will contribute to ensuring that the benefits of democracy are shared by society as a whole.”

Declaration of Mar del Plata, Fourth Summit of the Americas
(Mar del Plata, Argentina, November 2005)

Civil society has played an active role in contributing ideas and recommendations to the Summits of the Americas process, to hemisphere-wide ministerial meetings and to the OAS General Assembly. Today, more than 170 nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) are registered to take part in OAS activities¹⁷.

The Summit Process has given an important stimulus to the involvement of civil society in the OAS. The Special Committee on Inter-American Summits Management and the Committee on Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities were created in order to establish clear, transparent and

modern procedures for interactions between CSOs and the political organs of the OAS.

In 2002, after the XXXII General Assembly in Bridgetown, Barbados, the Permanent Council decided to unify the Special Committee on Inter-American Summits Management and the Committee on Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities. These organs were merged into the Committee on Inter-American Summits Management and Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities (CISC).

The Chair of this Committee is Ambassador Marina Valere, Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago and the activities of this department are set by the OAS General Assembly each year¹⁸. The most important step in the recognition of the importance of CSOs participation is the Permanent Council Resolution CP/RES 759. (1217/99) “Guidelines for the Participation of Civil Society Organisations in OAS Activities,” which defines the scope of participation of CSOs in the activities of the OAS and its political bodies, including attending meetings of these bodies. This resolution defines the principles governing the participation of CSOs, the responsibilities of the organs, agencies, and entities of the inter-American system in relation to CSOs, and the requirements that CSOs must meet in the event that they express their desire to be registered.

In March 2003, building on this momentum, the Permanent Council approved CP/RES. 840 (1361/03) “Strategies for Increasing and Strengthening Participation by Civil Society Organisations in OAS Activities,” which called for a more active promotion of the registration process and participation of civil society organisations. By this mandate, the OAS must hold virtual consultations with CSOs and promote broad use of the OAS website as a primary tool of information and participation. Registered CSOs now have the opportunity to comment on draft General Assembly resolutions.

Numerous organisations from the Americas have come together -sometimes in an informal but influential way- and

¹⁷ To consult the complete list of registered organisations visit <http://www.oas.org/main/main.asp?sLang=Esp&Link=http://www.oas.org/documents/eng/structure.asp>

¹⁸ The work plan for this year could be consulted in http://scm.oas.org/doc_public/FRENCH/HIST_06/CP17001F09.doc

had formed coalitions to collectively push their issues into the OAS' agenda. Human rights and gender networks are among the most active ones. For example, the Coalition of International NGOs against Torture (CINAT)¹⁹ works on prevention, and direct action in response to violations or rehabilitation of victims of torture. It advocates for preventing torture and ill-treatment through the OAS by lobbying for the issue to remain on the political agenda. This is done, in particular, through the resolution that is adopted annually by the General Assembly, on the Rights and the Care of Persons under any Form of Detention or Imprisonment²⁰. The resolution includes consideration of a draft Inter-American Declaration Governing the Rights and Care of Persons Deprived of Liberty²¹.

On gender related issues, for example, the regional Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW) was invited by the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM)²² -a specialised organisation of the OAS-, to participate in the examination of the Follow up Mechanism on Implementation of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women, "Convention of Belém do Pará".²³ Together with other CSOs and networks they also reviewed the hemispheric efforts to combat human trafficking and governments' compliance of measures to ensure parity and women's political participation in decision making.

The XXXIII General Assembly of the OAS that took place in Santiago, Chile approved Resolution AG/RES. 1915 (XXXIII-O/03) "Increasing and Strengthening Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities." In this Resolution the General Assembly ratified the mentioned Strategies and included the Informal Dialogue as a regular activity within the framework of the General Assembly.

Furthermore, the host country, in coordination with the General Secretariat, through the Office for the Summit

Process, offers their support to the registered civil society organisations in order to hold the Informal Dialogue.

The Office for the Summit Process elaborated in fulfilment of resolution AG/RES. 1915/03 (XXXIII-O/03), "Increasing and Strengthening Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities" the document CP/CISC-106/04, "Review of the Rules of Procedure for Civil Society Participation With the Organisation of American States" which consolidates the existing norms contained in all current provisions of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the Permanent Council, the Inter-American Council for Integral Development, the specialised conferences, and other organs and agencies that allow the participation of civil society organisations in OAS activities.

Finally in the XXXIV General Assembly of the OAS that was held in Quito, Ecuador, resolution AG/RES. 1991/04 "Increasing and Strengthening Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities" was approved. This resolution invited Member States to contribute to the Specific Fund to Support the Participation of Civil Society Organisations in OAS Activities and in the Summits of the American Process, including the dialogue between Heads of Delegations with civil society representatives.

Through the OAS, civil society representatives have also developed policy recommendations to present at ministerial meetings, such as those on education, labour, culture, and science and technology. In addition, indigenous representatives from around the hemisphere have met regularly with government delegates at the OAS to advance the draft American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Inter-American Democratic Charter was developed taking into account opinions offered by NGOs and individuals during the drafting process. Civil society organisations

¹⁹ <http://www.apc.ch/cinat.htm>

²⁰ http://www.oas.org/juridico/english/ga05/agres_2125.htm

²¹ <http://www.oas.org/consejo/CAJP/docs/cp09540e07.doc>

²² <http://www.oas.org/CIM/English/About.htm>

²³ <http://www.oas.org/CIM/Documentos/MESECVI/Violencia-%20MESECVI.%20ProyectoMecanismo.ING.doc>

have also participated in follow-up work on hemispheric treaties against corruption and terrorism²⁴.

One of the networks participating in the OAS process is The Alliance of Pan American Round Tables (AMRP)²⁵. Currently composed by more than 200 active Tables in 19 countries of the continent (more than 7000 members), AMRP is a non-profit organisation for women and its members work in a volunteer manner on behalf of culture, peace and education in the Americas. Since its registration in 2001, AMRP has been participating in OAS activities, such as General Assemblies, Hemispheric Forums and other regional conferences and forums. In 2005 AMRP participated in the IV Summit of the Americas during the Dialogue with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the OAS Secretary General where it made a presentation of proposals that the network had discussed previously by e-mail. As they stated in the report²⁶, done by the two delegates who participated in the Summit, this was a big opportunity for the network:

“It is no secret that there were some disturbances and extreme security during the Summit. However, these measures and events did not affect our work nor the enthusiasm with which all civil society delegates interacted. It was well worth to exchange ideas with colleagues from various countries and we can ensure that our Alliance has definitely moved forward, as far as reputation and respect are concerned”, Norma R. de Flores and Helena T.M. Richards, Delegates.

Another network participating in the OAS sphere is the Ibero-American Network of Organisations Working in Drug Addiction²⁷ (RIOD, in Spanish). RIOD is a non-profit organi-

sation that works for the reduction of drug demand, prevention and treatment. It is composed by 57 CSOs in Latin America and Spain, and actively interacts with the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission of the Organisation of American States (CICAD-OAS)²⁸. RIOD develops action to favour the incorporation of its members in the “Advisory Councils” or in participatory processes in regional bodies to contribute with its mission. It has been very active in putting drug-reducing issues in the inter-American agenda. It has been accepted by CICAD as member representing the civil society vision and in the 28th Regular Session of CICAD in 2000, RIOD presented a document²⁹ where it strengthened its position to interact with governmental bodies in order to act coherently towards public policies on drug issues:

“RIOD considers of maximum interest the feedback and the strengthening of institutional relationships between governmental instances aiming at achieving greater consensus between CSOs and governments in the design, development and implementation of drugs policies in the region”, *Bartomeu Catala, President of RIOD*

The complete list of networks and CSOs registered at the OAS could be consulted at http://www.civil-society.oas.org/Pages/Registry_ENG.htm

Summit of the Americas³⁰

The Summit of the Americas brings together the Heads of State and Government of the Americas to discuss com-

²⁴ All the information regarding the OAS was extracted from its website <http://www.oas.org/main/main.asp?sLang=Esp&Link=http://www.civil-society.oas.org>

²⁵ <http://www.alianzamp.org/iQuienes.php>

²⁶ <http://www.alianzamp.org/NORMA/Report%20on%20IV%20Summit.doc>

²⁷ <http://www.riod.org/asps/navegacion.asp?n=2&tp=8>

²⁸ <http://www.cicad.oas.org/>

²⁹ <http://www.riod.org/dataP/1/20/TextoReunionEnTrinidad.html> (only in Spanish)

³⁰ The information regarding the Summit of the Americas was extracted from its website <http://www.summit-americas.org/eng-2002/summit-process.htm>

mon problems and concerns, seek solutions and develop a shared vision for their future progress of the region.

The process is guided by shared political principles and established institutional mechanisms. The political principles of the process dictate that the process shall include the 34 democratic nations of the Americas, who operate with free market economies, conduct multilateral international negotiations and who reach decisions by consensus. The institutional mechanisms are the bodies in charge of leading the process, decision making, implementation and follow-up.

Civil Society Engagement

“Civil society is important, as both ally and critic, in the implementation of programs of cooperation between governments and regional and international organisations.”

Manual for Civil Society participation in the OAS and in the Summit of the Americas Process³¹.

In all the Summits, OAS members recognised the vital role that civil society plays in the promotion of Summit mandates and their follow up. Civil society organisations have the chance not only to participate in Summits but also to present recommendations at the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG), ministerial meetings, and specialised conferences. In this context, CSOs have the possibility to act both at regional and national level: while a Summit is held or the SIRG is meeting, CSOs can present their recommendations and act regionally; in the intervals between one Summit and another, CSOs can work in the implementation of the mandates at their countries in order to contribute to the accomplishment of the regional agenda.

The participation of CSOs at the Summits is vast but all the mechanisms were formalised and set by the OAS institutions and instances. These mechanisms will be reviewed in the next section.

However, there are some parallel activities and advocacy work done by civil society networks that are not formally represented in the Summit’s process. It is widely known that the “Contra-Cumbre” (a sort of anti-summit meeting of CSOs and individuals demonstrating against some country’s policies and usually against the US intervention in Latin America) has been more and more popular throughout the years and indeed, the last “Contra-Cumbre” in Buenos Aires was attended by President Hugo Chávez from Venezuela and had a huge media and political coverage. These civil society demonstrations usually see the Summit’s as an excuse to adopt the Free Trade Area of the Americas, something that has been opposed by many CSOs in Latin America (especially from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil and Venezuela) and has not yet arrived to an agreement within the Heads of state.

In the section focused in regional integration we will further develop the process of demonstration against some of the Summit’s mandates.

Main networks and CSOs involved in the Summit process

All the organisations registered at the OAS are able to participate in the Summit of the Americas process as defined and established in its Manual (2006). However, other non-registered organisations can participate in the Summit’s related fora such as the SIRG meetings and even the Summits.

For the first time, in 2003, the SIRG was opened to civil society organisations in order to promote discussion and information exchange on the Summit of the Americas, education, hemispheric security, and good governance.

The list of organisation registered at the OAS can be consulted at http://civil-society.oas.org/Pages/Registry_ESP.htm.

³¹ <http://www.civil-society.oas.org/documents/Manual%20para%20la%20Participacion%20de%20la%20Sociedad%20Civil%20en%20las%20Cumbres%20y%20en%20la%20OEA%20-%20English%20-%20June%202022,%202006.pdf>

Examples of network participation within the Summit's process

The Latin American Forum on Fair Trade and "Economy of Solidarity"

During the IV Summit of the Americas in Mar del Plata, Argentina, in November 2005, different organisations³² working on fair trade issues in the region called for the Latin American Forum on Fair Trade and "Economía Solidaria". The Forum lasted 3 days, in parallel with the Heads of State Summit and developed several panels to discuss issues related to the situation and challenges of the movement on fair trade and responsible consumption. Different objectives related to the coordination and impact of the regional network of organisations working with these issues were set and there was a call for a "South-South" cooperation in terms of trade. Once the actions to be taken were established, one representative of the Forum was chosen to participate in the Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, the OAS Secretary General and Civil Society Representatives at the Summit. Ana Maria Condori, Bolivia, represented the Forum and presented its conclusions and petitions³³.

On gender issues, the Latin American and Caribbean Committee for the Defence of Women's Rights (CLADEM), a women's organisations network³⁴, prepared two position papers to present in the civil society spaces developed by the Summit. One report was a position document on economic,

social and cultural rights and the effect on globalisation and it was presented before the 4th Summit of the Americas and the 3rd Summit of the Peoples, Mar del Plata, in November 2005³⁵. But they also participated in the Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, the OAS Secretary General and Civil Society Representatives at the Summit, where a representative from CLADEM submitted a report to the Chancellors pointing out the importance of establishing a clear mechanism for civil society participation within the framework of the Summit of the Americas³⁶.

Nevertheless, some networks and CSOs identified several difficulties in the process of participation. The negative effect in these types of regional fora is that commitments or action plans tend to be formulised as a declaration of broad principles.

"The extensive Action Plan that was annexed to the President's Declaration in the IV Summit of the Americas does not seem to have the characteristics of an instrument of implementation. It has a lack of goals and objectives, terms and indicators that could give precise instructions to the Governments to act, and offer conditions for CSOs to perform an adequate follow-up of the commitments", Gustavo Gamallo, Executive Director (2003-2005) of the Inter-American Network for Democracy³⁷.

As many of the meetings where CSOs are invited are attended by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, the danger of being "used" politically is always latent. Usually, the follow

³² Mesa de Coordinación Latinoamericana de Comercio Justo, RIPES-Región Andina, GRESP, RENACC La Paz, Cooperativa Comercio Justo de Chile, ICECOR, Foro Social Mundial En Argentina- Mesa Nacional de Promoción y Articulación, Comité de Movilización Bs. As. del Foro Social Mundial en Argentina, Foro Social Córdoba, Comité de Movilización Santafesino, del Foro Social Mundial en Argentina, Foro Social del Paraná Medio, Comité de Movilización Oeste Gran Bs As. Del Foro Social Mundial en Argentina, Comité de Movilización Paraná, del Foro Social Mundial en Argentina, Foro Social Mendoza, del Foro Social Mundial en Argentina, Cooperativa Río Paraná - Movimiento Agrario Misionero, Cooperativa Chico Méndez, Gestar, Cooperativa La Asamblearia.

³³ <http://www.mrecic.gov.ar/seree/1.pdf>, (only in Spanish)

³⁴ <http://www.cladem.org/english/>

³⁵ http://www.cladem.org/ESPANOL/regionales/desc_globalizacion/Docs/posicionclademCumbreamericas05.asp(only in Spanish)

³⁶ <http://www.mrecic.gov.ar/seree/>

³⁷ <http://www.redinter.org/InfoRID/En-Foco/Notas-Expertos/45734> (only in Spanish)

up of action plans is not carried out because these Ministries are not the governmental agencies directly responsible of delivering the commitments made at the regional fora in their own countries since these commitments imply a diverse set of governmental bodies. Also, CSOs are somehow in state of “alert” when government officials are not very precise about their follow up plans but have a very flattering discourse on civil society participation.

In addition, there is another political angle to be taken into account when participating in inter-governmental fora. Usually, the relationship with the host government of the Summit is crucial. Depending of the government’s tradition or current conviction about engaging civil society in the policy processes, networks can make an impact, or be diffused, or co-opted by governments. The regional network of Transparency International in Latin America and the Caribbean (TILAC) experience in the IV Summit is a good example of how to respond to governmental changes:

During the IV Summit of the Americas in 2005, the Argentinean government chose “Creating jobs” as the theme of the Summit. The regional network TILAC was invited to participate in the civil society meeting with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs. Two days before the meeting -and with the network representatives in the venue- the Argentinean Chancellor made some remarks to a national newspaper and said that he was wondering why “it is important to discuss corruption (...) in a country where 37 percent of the population has economic problems”³⁸. TILAC network had been lobbying for the inclusion of the fight against corruption in the final declaration of the Presidents, and felt this was a threat to take away the issue of corruption from the general discussion. Through a quick communications manoeuvre, TILAC made a public response to the Chancellor and reinstated corruption in the agenda³⁹.

³⁸ La Nación, 29 October 2005 “Tenemos un lema fuerte para producir un debate fuerte”.

³⁹ http://www.transparency.org/news_room/in_focus/2005/summit_of_the_americas#response

⁴⁰ <http://www.civil-society.oas.org/Events/IV%20SUMMIT/CSO/Intervenciones%20-%20CSO%20Dialogue%20-%20Fourth%20Summit%20-%20esp-eng.doc>

In the preparation for each regional space of participation hemispheric networks have always done a deep analysis to unify the message that each thematic network is going to present. There have been in every Summit documents prepared by networks presenting a unified position to the governments in representation of a wider number of CSOs members. However, the themes addressed by the Summits are too numerous and spaces for interaction are few. It was identified by different participants in the CS meetings that CSOs and networks participating in the Summit process should better coordinate efforts to be able to maximise the impact of the messages. For example, by identifying cross-cutting themes (such as human rights, education and democracy) they can deliver a stronger message, than if each thematic network promoted the same principles but circumscribed to a specific topic.

In terms of co-option, there is always the fear that if there isn’t enough funding to be independent and networks have to depend on governmental money to participate in the Summit process, the state can compel to force or persuade networks to discuss issues of the governmental agenda or interest; or to influence their messages and reports they make to the Ministers. Seeking for funds from sources different from governments is thus crucial.

The list of the organisations that participated in the last Summit and the papers that they have presented can be checked in the Summits web-page.⁴⁰

Economic integration

There are several institutions and organisations in Latin America that are dealing with trade and economic integration. In the next section we will review some of the regional spaces dealing with these issues. We will evidence that most of them are very efficient in the engagement of states in the process of developing policies and agreements, but not all have been successful in engaging with civil society.

Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA)

The effort to unite the economies of the Americas into a single free trade area began in the 1st Summit of the Americas in 1994 in Miami. The Heads of State agreed to construct a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) in which trade and investment barriers will be progressively eliminated. They agreed to complete negotiations towards this agreement by the year 2005 and to achieve substantial progress toward building the FTAA by 2000. The Heads of State and Government further directed their Ministries responsible for trade to take a series of concrete initial steps to achieve the FTAA.

During the preparatory phase (1994-1998), the 34 trade responsible Ministries established twelve working groups to identify and examine existing trade-related measures in each area, in order to identify possible approaches to negotiations. The results of the preparatory work of the groups were made available to the public.

The FTAA negotiations were formally launched in April 1998 at the Second Summit of the Americas in Santiago de Chile. The Heads of State and Government agreed that the FTAA Agreement will be balanced, comprehensive, WTO-consistent, and will constitute a single undertaking.

At the sixth Ministerial meeting, held in Buenos Aires in April 2001, a number of key decisions were made regarding the FTAA negotiations. Ministers received from the Negotiating Groups draft text of the FTAA Agreement, and, in an unprecedented movement designed to increase the transparency of the process, agreed to make this text publicly available. The Technical Committee of Institutional Issues was created to consider the overall architecture of an FTAA Agreement (general and institutional matters).

Civil Society Engagement in FTAA

“We recognize and welcome the interests and concerns that different sectors of society have expressed in relation to the FTAA. Business and other sectors of production, labour, environmental and academic groups have been particularly active in this matter. We encourage these and other sectors of civil societies to present their views...”

Ministers Responsible for Trade in the FTAA participating countries, San José, Costa Rica, March 1998.

At the sixth Ministerial meeting, ministers highlighted the need to foster dialogue with civil society, and directed the Committee of Government Representatives on the Participation of Civil Society to forward to the Negotiating Groups the Civil Society submissions in response to the open invitation, which refer to their respective issue areas, and those related to the FTAA process in general. Ministers reiterated the importance of the provision of technical assistance to smaller economies in order to facilitate their participation in the FTAA.

The Fourth Report of the Committee of Government Representatives on the Participation of Civil Society (SOC), which describes the activities of the SOC as well as the range of contributions received from civil society during this phase, was received. Ministers also welcomed receipt of the report on Best Practices and Illustrative Examples of Consultations with Civil Society at the National/Regional Level that was prepared by the SOC and instructed the SOC to make recommendations to the TNC on the means to broaden the mechanisms for disseminating information on the discussions, drawing upon the experiences of countries for distributing information to their civil societies.

Ministers also recognised the decision to hold meetings with civil society, in conjunction with the regular meetings of the SOC, focusing on issues that are topics of discussion in these negotiations and including a broad representation of FTAA government officials and civil society including business, labour, agricultural producers, NGOs, academics, rural and indigenous groups.

But apart from the formal spaces that the FTAA has established for civil society participation, it is widely known that the Free Trade Area is rejected by many social actors

in Latin America. During the FTAA Summit in 2002 not only several civil society organisations and networks, but also individuals from different sectors, gathered to protest against its implementation.

Protest and advocacy have been the main strategies utilised by civil society. From the uprising in Chiapas in 1995 that coincided with NAFTA's entry into force in Mexico to the protests against WTO in Seattle in 1999, from Brazilians voting against Brazilian access to FTAA in 2001 to demonstrations against it in Ecuador in 2002, civil society is making a push against further trade liberalisation.

As these public events demonstrate, civil society opposition to the FTAA has been moderately effective in raising public awareness of the FTAA, but it is not clear if the movement has had real influence in changing policymakers' opinions. The superficial inclusion of civil society recommendations into the FTAA draft text is an evidence of this:

"After travelling 900 kilometres, over mountains, through cities and communities, I remember that we entered, with green pennants and rainbow flags (the symbol of the indigenous and campesino, or small farmer, movements). We also carried a resplendent sun across which was written "No to the FTAA! Another America is Possible!" and a giant letter more than 200 meters in length, which contained proposals and alternatives to free trade, written by the Indians and campesinos of Southern Ecuador. We shouted, we sang, we ran. Not our lips, but our hearts chanted, "We don't want to be a North American colony! And we DO want to be Latin America, sovereign and free!". From the podium we spoke, the small farmers and indigenous people of the continent. We told them: "You were born in cradles of gold and you steal the peoples' wealth, and so you don't feel our suffering. We shouted at them, "With the FTAA will come more pain for our children and the children of our children"⁴¹", says a letter written by a farmer who participated in the FTAA Summit in Ecuador.

One of the turning points in the discussion of the FTAA was the impossibility of arriving to an agreement by the President's Declaration on this issue during the IV Summit of the Americas in 2005 in Argentina. While in the street demonstrations were occurring to protest against FTAA and the US participation in the Summit, the President of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez, was participating in the parallel "People's Summit". At the same time, the Heads of States gathered in the Summit's venue to prepare a final declaration that did not include an agreement on FTAA.

"Some member States maintain that we should take into account the difficulties that the process of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) negotiations has faced, and that we recognize the significant contribution that the processes of economic integration and trade liberalization in the Americas can and should make to the achievement of the Summit objectives to create jobs to fight poverty and strengthen democratic governance. Therefore, we remain committed to the achievement of a balanced and comprehensive FTAA Agreement that aims at expanding trade flows and, at the global level, trade free from subsidies and trade-distorting practices, with concrete and substantive benefits for all, taking into account the differences in the size and the levels of development of the participating economies and the special needs and special and differential treatment of the smaller and vulnerable economies. We will actively participate to ensure a significant outcome of the Doha Round that will reflect the measures and proposals mentioned in the previous paragraph. We shall continue to promote the established practices and activities in the FTAA process that provide transparency and encourage participation of civil society" said the Final Declaration.

However, there are also other networks and CSOs that engage in the FTAA process through research and then lobbying for their findings to be taken into account. In 2006, a large

⁴¹ <http://www.rso.cornell.edu/cuslar/newsletter/winter02/FTAA.htm>

group of regional networks⁴² addressed a letter to the Chair of the Trade Negotiations Committee expressing their concern about the secrecy of the negotiation of a FTAA and urging for the publication of the its negotiating texts. Most of these networks are focused on development issues but there are also research centres that investigate topics in this area.

Based on these approaches, we can identify two main ways of engaging in the FTAA process. One consists of protests and demonstrations that usually take place in parallel to a Summit. These have helped to install the issue in the public agenda.

The other is the participation of networks and CSOs in the official mechanisms available to channel civil society participation, which is the Committee of Government Representatives on the Participation of Civil Society. But even networks participating in the formal mechanism agree that this has not proven effective. In the letter address to the Chair of the Negotiations Committee they expressed the following:

“Many of us have submitted documents to the Committee of Government Representatives on the Participation of Civil Society, but it is an inadequate mechanism. Even if all submissions were accurately and completely transmitted to the ministers, the result is not the participation of civil society in this process but simply a one-way

communication. It is impossible for us to engage in a serious dialogue on the FTAA when we do not know the actual content of the negotiations”⁴³.

Latin American Integration Association (ALADI)⁴⁴

ALADI is an intergovernmental organisation, which continues the process started by the ALALC⁴⁵ in 1960 by promoting the integration of the region. Its main objective is the establishment of a common market, in order to grant the economic and social development of the region. It is the largest Latin-American group of integration and has twelve member countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela, totalling 20 million sq km and more than 493 million people.

The 1980 Montevideo Treaty⁴⁶ (TM80) is the global legal framework that constitutes and rules the ALADI and was signed on August 12th 1980. It establishes the following general principles: pluralism, convergence, flexibility, differential treatment and multiplicity.

Either regional or partial scope agreements may cover tariff relief and trade promotion; economic complementation; agricultural trade; financial, fiscal, customs and health cooperation; environment preservation; scientific and tech-

⁴² Agencia Latinoamericana de Información – ALAI; Asociación de Agencias Nacionales de Desarrollo – ANDA; Asociación de Economistas de América Latina y el Caribe – AEALC; Asociación de Organizaciones Campesinas Centroamericanas para la Cooperación del Desarrollo – ASOCODE; Asociación Latinoamericana de Educación Radiofónica – ALER; Asociación Latinoamericana de Organismos de Promoción – ALOP; Asociación Regional para las Migraciones Forzadas – ARMIF; CCC-CA; Centroamérica Solidaria; Coalición Pro Justicia en las Maquiladoras; Concertación Centroamericana de Organismos de Desarrollo – CCOOD; Confederación de Trabajadores de Centroamérica – CTCA; Consejo Indígena de Centro América – CICA; Consejo para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos de Centro América – CODEHUCA; Coordinadora Centroamericana de Trabajadores – COCENTRA; Coordinadora Latinoamericana de Organizaciones del Campo – CLOC; Coordinadora Regional de Investigaciones Económicas y Sociales – CRIES; Federación Sindical de Trabajadores de Universidades de C.A, México y el Caribe – FESITRAUCAM; FITCM; Foro de Mujeres para la Integración Centroamericana; Frente Continental de Organizaciones Comunales Capitulo Centroamericano – FCOC; Frente Solidario; Iniciativa Civil sobre la Integración Centroamericana – ICIC; Organismo Cristiano de Desarrollo – ALFALIT; Organización Negra de Centro América – ONECA; Organización Regional Interamericana de Trabajadores – ORIT; Plataforma Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, Democracia y Desarrollo; Public Services International - Interamerican Region; SAPRIN - Centro Regional Latinoamericana

⁴³ Servicio Paz y Justicia-América Latina; Unión de Pequeños y Medianos Productores de Café a México, Centroamérica y el Caribe – UPROCAFE

⁴⁴ http://www.art-us.org/liberate_text

⁴⁵ <http://www.aladi.org>

⁴⁶ http://www.aladi.org/nsfaladi/textacdos.nsf/Inicio2004i?OpenFrameSet&Frame=basefrm&Src=_o5tn76pj1dhgm8q9fehingt31cdi6uspedppmcbrccls7-8ob3chnn6qbectm6aspi60a38fqfe1imsk31ctiicgblehncsj1dlim80_

nological cooperation, tourism promotion; technical standards and many other fields.

As the TM80 is a “frame treaty”, by subscribing it, the Governments of the member countries authorise its Representatives to legislate through agreements on the most important economical subjects for each country.

However, today state members of ALADI are not very active. There are other hemispheric processes that have become more relevant and governments prefer to interact in those which have more public visibility.

There is no formal mechanism of civil society participation in activities or consultation.

Nevertheless, ALADI did establish more formal relationships with the academia through specific programmes that tend to identify research related to economic integration. ALADI has gives an award for the best thesis in economic integration and provides funds to the selected institution. This could become an opportunity for networks performing research on the topic.

ALADI has also developed the “Latin American Seminar for Integration”, where CSOs representatives from the region are invited to participate in different workshops. Also, in 2003 regional networks were invited to present their findings on risk control in environmental issues in the workshop “The role of integration process in environmental risk”.

Different networks oriented to regional integration, such as the Economic and Social Forum of MERCOSUR, participated in different panels and discussions but haven’t been able to establish a formal mechanism that could take civil society perspective into account in ALADI’s processes.

On the other hand, these networks have been very actively engaged with the academia and with donors. Developing publications and position papers with universities and think tanks was a strategy to try to influence

ALADI’s members. And the donor support –such as the one that the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung is giving to CSOs in the Southern Cone- was a way of making their voice heard through alternative channels.

A speech pronounced by ALADI Secretary General, Dr. Didier Operti, in August 2005 stated their vision about the role that civil society has in this process:

“There is also the ALADI related with civil society. Today one speaks of civil society, sometimes as a reaction against the political society, as if the political society was not also civil. We belong to a species that thinks that the activity in civil society is mostly not official, while in the political society, which is also civil, the main activity is official. Therefore, we see both as complementary and not opposed, we consider them as able to reach consensus and not divided; we see them as a speech in which its unity is an outcome of the complementation of the actions and goals of each other. ALADI works with the civil society. Yesterday, for example, at a Working Group developed within the ALADI – Productive Forces – we had the chance of examining the production’s actors, both, entrepreneurs and workers. ALADI must pay special attention to both, the workers and the entrepreneurs”.

MERCOSUR

MERCOSUR (Common South Market) is a custom's union between Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, created by the Asuncion's Treaty in March, 1991. Today, there are also associated members to MERCOSUR: Bolivia (since 1997), Chile (1996), Colombia (2004), Ecuador (2004), Peru (2003) and Venezuela (2004).

The four Member States share common values such as democracy, pluralism, promotion of fundamental and human rights, protection of the environment and sustainable development of societies. They also commit to the consolidation of democracy, the rule of law, the fight against poverty and economic and social development with equity.

The main objective of the Treaty is the integration of Member States through the free circulation of goods, services and productive factors, the establishment of a common external tariff and the adoption of a commercial common policy, as well as the coordination of macroeconomic policies and the harmonisation of legislation in pertinent areas to strengthen the process of integration.

However, MERCOSUR has not yet gone beyond negotiations regarding free circulation of goods. Services and productive factors and other coordination of common economic policies have still to go through further discussion to reach an agreement.

Civil Society Engagement in MERCOSUR

MERCOSUR articulates different mechanisms of citizen participation through the following spaces:

- Social Economic Forum: this space was created through the Ouro Preto Protocol to institutionalise representation of different civil society sectors with interest of the State Parties.
- Working Sub-groups (SGTs in Spanish): these sub-groups are divided in different thematic and the specific mission is to make recommendations to the Formal Working Group. It also has the mandate to create special commissions for civil society participation in MERCOSUR.
- Social-labour commission: this organ deals with the implementation of the MERCOSUR Social-labour Declaration⁴⁷. Its principal actors are governments, employers and employees and it is conceived as a space for decision-making for these three actors. It is characterised as an “indirect” mechanism of participation for civil society actors.

In 1996 a group of 18 CSOs⁴⁸ in MERCOSUR countries that were already working in development processes created a network to push forward proposals tending to strengthen civil society participation in the economic integration of the region. This group developed a programme⁴⁹ called “MERCOSUR Social y Solidario” with the goal of promoting active citizenship and incorporating a social dimension in the proc-

⁴⁷ http://www.aladi.org/nsfaladi/textacdos.nsf/Inicio2004i?OpenFrameSet&Frame=basefrm&Src=_o5tn76pj1dhgm8q9fethingt31cdi6uspedppmcbrccls7-8ob3chnn6qbectm6aspi60o38fqfe1imsk31ctiicgblehncsj1dlim80_

⁴⁸ <http://www.observatorio.net/pdfroot/dsl/dsl.pdf>

From Argentina: Acción Educativa, Acción Educativa para la Educación Popular; CANOA, Cooperativa de Trabajo Interdisciplinario; Centro de Estudios Populares para el Desarrollo (CENEPP), Centro Nueva Tierra, Fundación Ecueménica de Cuyo (FEC), Instituto del Desarrollo del Estado y la Participación (IDEP), Instituto de Cultura Popular (INCUPO) and Indeso Mujer, Instituto de Estudios Jurídicos Sociales de la Mujer. From Brazil: Centro de Ação Comunitária (Cedac), Centro de Ação Cultural (Centrac) and Instituto de Estudos, Formação e Assessoria em Políticas Sociais (Polis); from Chile: Educación y Comunicaciones (Eco) and Programa de Economía y Trabajo (Pet); from Paraguay: Centro de Documentación y Estudios (CDE), Decidamos and Servicio Ecumenico de Promoción Alternativa (Sepa) and from Uruguay: Centro Cooperativista Uruguayo (CCU) and Centro de Participación Popular (CPP). To know more about these organisations, visit: <http://www.mercosursocialsolidario.org/www/index.php?lang=es>

⁴⁹ With financial support from the and the Comité Catholique contre la Faim et pour le Développement (CCFD) of France.

ess of regional integration. They participate in different fora such as the Summit of the Americas, the Regional Meetings of Social Organisations, and the World Social Forum. They publish the magazine “Voces del Sur”⁵⁰ and host conferences, seminars, informal meetings and workshops for social organisations in MERCOSUR countries.

Another regional network participating in the MERCOSUR process is the Human Rights Public Policies Observatory⁵¹. Civil society organisations from Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay⁵², are part of this network. Its mission is to monitor and advocate for the effective implementation of human rights in those countries. It was created in 2004 in Argentina but has a regional approach. The observatory works for the adoption of public policies, which secure respect for the Rule of Law, guarantee access to justice, freedom of expression and access to information, and lobbies for the construction of a collective memory on human rights abuse during dictatorships in the region. The Observatory wants to set recommendations and standards on human rights policies with an integral view of the matter and with a regional perspective.

During the IV Meeting of High Commissioners on Human Rights and Ministers of Foreign Affairs of MERCOSUR, in June 2006 in Buenos Aires, the Observatory presented a report with recommendations on strengthening civil society participation in these meetings, and how to adopt regional legislation on environmental issues such as the establishment of industries with high risk of contamination. Thanks to this report and to the intense advocacy work done at national levels, the Authorities adopted a mechanism where civil society organisations can participate as observers in the sessions and be part of the working groups. The Observatory has a

permanent Assembly formed by all the CSOs of the network and an Executive Director designated by the Assembly.

Andean Group (Comunidad Andina)

The signing of the “Declaration of Bogotá” by the Presidents of Colombia, Chile and Venezuela and the personal delegates of the Presidents of Ecuador and Peru in the Colombian capital on August 16, 1966, was the first step taken toward creating the Andean Group. In their Declaration, the Presidents underscored the need to “further joint action aimed at ensuring the adoption, within the Latin American Free Trade Agreement (LAFTA)⁵³, of practical formulas to expedite to the utmost the progress of relatively less economically developed countries and countries with insufficient markets”.

After an intensive negotiation process that came to an end in the Colombian city of Cartagena, the Bolivian, Chilean, Colombian, Ecuadorian and Peruvian plenipotentiaries reached a definitive agreement that materialised when the delegates of those five countries signed the Sub-regional Integration Agreement on May 26, 1969 in Bogotá.

The Andean Group started operating formally on November 21, 1969, when the Agreement’s highest-level body, the Commission, was installed. That body approved six Decisions at its First Regular Meeting, among them those giving the name of “Cartagena Agreement” to the document signed on May 26 of that year in Bogotá, appointing the three Members of the Board, and approving the Commission’s Regulations.

On November 24, 1969, the Foreign Ministers of Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador and Peru, meeting in the Peruvian capital, made Lima the permanent headquarters of the Board of the Carta-

⁵⁰ http://www.decidamos.org.py/pmss/publicaciones/voces_del_sur_nov_2006.pdf

⁵¹ <http://www.observatorio-mercosur.org.uy/es/index.php>

⁵² From Argentina: Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS), Servicio Argentino de Derechos Humanos (SADH) and Centro de Derechos Humanos y Ambiente (CEDHA); from Brazil: Instituto Sou da Paz, Themis- Assessoria Jurídica e Estudos de Gênero and Conectas Direitos Humanos; from Paraguay: Instituto Paraguayo de Derechos Humanos (IPDH), Comité de Iglesias Para Ayuda de Emergencia (CIPAE) and Raíces para el fortalecimiento y el desarrollo; from Uruguay: Servicio Paz y Justicia (SERPAJ), Instituto Solidaridad y Desarrollo (ISODE) and Instituto de Estudios Legales y Sociales de Uruguay (IELSUR).

⁵³ The Latin American Free Trade Agreement (LAFTA/ALALC) was founded in the early 1960s, and the LAFTA eventually embraced all the South American countries, plus Mexico.

gena Agreement. On February 13, 1973, Venezuela acceded to the Agreement and on October 30, 1976, Chile withdrew.

Several mechanisms were used to accomplish the objectives set out in the Cartagena Agreement; particularly joint industrial programming that placed special emphasis on the model prevailing at that time, which was the import substitution model.

The Presidents of the Andean Community countries decided in 1989, in the Galapagos, to adopt an open model of integration and, setting aside the development agenda, centered their efforts on trade liberalisation.

As a result, the free trade area was formed and began to operate in 1993, and a common external tariff was adopted in 1995. The various different modes of transportation were also liberalised.

The Andean Community is facing new challenges in the current phase of globalisation that are both internal (poverty, exclusion, inequality and social cohesion) and external (international negotiations, multilateralism and multipolarity) and has approved a new strategic design to meet them.

This new strategic design encompasses the consensus reached by the Presidents at the Quirama (2003), Quito (2004) and Lima Summits (2005) that have made it possible to give Andean integration a multidimensional agenda that goes beyond trading matters and that has brought back socially inclusive development issues for the Community project.

At the same time, new debates and differences have arisen among the countries over the development model that offers the best treatment of social needs and the type of international participation that is required to meet these objectives.

With this situation as a backdrop, Venezuela withdrew from the CAN in April 2006 and Chile joined the Community as an Associate Member Country in September of that same year. A process of reflection about regional integration has also been put into play and, therefore, a search for better means to make integration an instrument for closing the historic social gap created by poverty, exclusion and inequality

and, at the same time, a dynamic platform for the region's participation in the globalised world arena.

Civil Society Organisations and participation within the Andean Group

As the Andean Group states in their website "civil society plays an organised role in the Andean integration process through the formulation and statement of opinions and viewpoints⁵⁴".

CSOs can participate in three formal spaces created by the Andean Group:

- 1) the Andean Business and Labor Advisory Councils
- 2) the Working Group on the Rights of Indigenous People and
- 3) the Working Group on the Promotion and Protection of Consumer Rights

Citizen participation in the Andean Group

"Andean integration agenda in debate"

The Andean Group is nowadays focused in a debate process that tends to formulate a new integration agenda and that tends to constitute a plan for action for the next years. The aim of this process is to put together the integration efforts in relevant areas for development and to allow Member States to face together challenges and opportunities of globalisation. The Andean Group understands that such endeavour is not only responsibility of governments and integration institutions but also needs that the private sector, students, the academia and civil society engages with the whole process.

In October 2006 the Andean Group established a virtual forum for civil society participation in the

⁵⁴ <http://www.comunidadandina.org/ingles/society.htm>

debate process of priorities for a new Andean integration agenda⁵⁵. The question that the Andean Group seeks to respond in the following: “which ones should be the priorities and objectives of this new agenda?” 31 comments from diverse representatives have been posted so far.

However, since the discussions around the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) raised, civil society participation in the spaces created by the Andean Group diminished. Due to this, the member countries of the Andean Group recognised the need to foster civil society participation in formal spaces and developed a Seminar in 2002 in Lima, Peru (with support from the Inter-American Development Bank) for civil society of the Andean countries. The Seminar focused in the negotiating process of the Group and in the ways civil society could engage on the decision making process.

Association of Caribbean States (ACS)⁵⁶

The Convention Establishing the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) was signed on 24 July 1994 in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia⁵⁷, aiming at promoting consultation, cooperation and concerted action among all the countries of the Caribbean, comprising 25 Member States⁵⁸ and Associate Members⁵⁹. The objectives of the ACS are: the strengthening of the regional co-operation and integration process with the perspective of creating an enhanced economic space in the region; preserving the environmental integrity of the Caribbean Sea which is regarded as the common pat-

rimony of the peoples of the region; and promoting the sustainable development of the Greater Caribbean.

Civil Society Engagement in ACS

ACS establishes a group of “Founding Observers” inspired in the recognition of the unique role that the Convention gives to sub-regional integration organisations in the fulfilment of the purposes and functions of the Association. Activities have been developed with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Latin American Economic System (SELA), the Central American Integration System (SICA), the Permanent Secretariat of the General Agreement on Central American Economic Integration (SIECA) and the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO) to facilitate their participation in the works of the Ministerial Council and the Special Committees of ACS. At the same time, ACS created partnerships with other CSOs in the region: these participation of “Social Partners” contributes effectively to the accomplishment of the goals set forth in the Plan of Action adopted at the Summit of Heads of State and Government in Port of Spain, as well as those contained in the Work Programme of the Association, pertinent decisions of the Ministerial Council, and the activities outlined in the Work Programmes of the Special Committees.

The Social Partners of the ACS are: the Antilles-French Guiana Regional Centre of the National Institute of Agronomical Research (CRAG/INRA), Association of Caribbean Universities and Research Institutes (UNICA), Association of Caribbean University, Research and Institutional Libraries (ACURIL), Caribbean Association of Industry and Commerce (CAIC), Caribbean Conservation Association (CCA),

⁵⁵ <http://www.comunidadandina.org/foro/default.html> (only in Spanish)

⁵⁶ <http://www.acs-aec.org/about.htm>

⁵⁷ http://www.acs-aec.org/About/ACS_convention/convention.htm

⁵⁸ Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Venezuela.

⁵⁹ Aruba, France (on behalf of French Guiana, Guadeloupe and Martinique), the Netherlands Antilles and Turks and Caicos.

Caribbean Medical Association (AMECA), Caribbean Shipping Association (CSA) and the Regional Economic and Social Research Coordinator (CRIES).

Civil Society participation in regional policy-making processes

Why have state elites in the Americas made a priority of the promotion of civil society participation in region-wide political initiatives such as the Summits of the Americas? In contrast, why have governments and multilateral agencies been much more resistant to civil society participation in debates on economic issues such as the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) negotiations?

According to Korzeniewicz and Smith (2003), “trans-border movements find enhanced opportunities for participation when states have an incentive to delegate limited authority to societal groups and when states have an incentive to encourage national NGOs and advocacy groups to “go transnational” and to engage in *self-regulation* and *monitoring* with regard to innovation and implementation in specific policy domains”

But sometimes these spaces are not enough or are just a place for networking with other CSOs, rather than a space to influence and change real global policies.

Based on the interviews and literature on the topic, we observe that many CSO activists agree that “globalisation is a fact”, that more and more, international politics and transnational groups are standing out in the global decision-making process, but CSO lacks of many formal spaces for their voice to be heard. The decision of a CSO to “go transnational” is not an easy one and –apart of the formal spaces and the advocacy work that is to be done in the global arena- there is an investment of resources and a willingness to face the shifting of topics and methodologies (from national to transnational) that not every CSO in the region is capable of doing. Regional networks can help CSOs in different countries to make the decision of bridging national themes into global impact. To facilitate this decision, CSOs can recur to the list of questions in Chapter 1, connected to the SWOT analysis (see page 18).

Regional networks can help CSO broaden the impact of their work by engaging in regional institutional spaces, and gaining access to policymakers, or to new research and evidence, or political weight by joining others. The OAS and the Summit experiences demonstrate that civil society can better influence policy when acting as a coordinated group pushing for the same interest. Social representation is important for governments when deciding on a specific policy, regional networks can assure representation from vast sectors in a wide region.

Every regional network also implies work at the national level. This is why CSOs should also concentrate in local policies. However, by engaging with a credible and recognised regional network, CSOs can back up actions, petitions, recommendations or protests, that otherwise may not be taken into account by governments.

Engagement demand and supply: how CSO engagement is increasing

Official governmental discourse in many countries in the region regularly emphasises the promotion of civil society participation in hemispheric negotiations. The World Bank, the Organisation for American States (OAS), and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), have all created special bureaucracies to promote region-wide civil society participation. In part this is to promote their own legitimacy.

In the 1990s, regional networking was stimulated by the events in Chiapas, the anti-NAFTA mobilisations in the US, Canada, and Mexico, and, particularly, by the UN summit on the environment held in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro.

According to Howell and Pearce (2001), the Zapatista movement in Mexico challenged the Mexican government and its suppression of the indigenous people in Chiapas but, at the same time, was mobilising against the process of capitalist globalisation itself. It was the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) the venue chosen to launch the rebellion in the name of civil society left behind by global economy.

For example, activists mobilised in Quebec against the Summit of the Americas or the participants in the World So-

cial Forum represent the incipient formation of a transnational social movement. “However, all these new transnational actors—networks, coalitions, and social movements—face significant obstacles to their participation and capacity to achieve their goals. On the other hand, the absence of opportunities for direct engagement between local civil society organisations and national states might also serve to promote the organisation of networks”. (Falk and Strauss 2001)

Regional Themes for Regional Networks

As explained previously, the Summit of the Americas guides most of the regional themes that CSOs that want to engage in public policy must follow. The Summits are setting the agenda for issues that go from governance and anti-corruption to environment and oil and gas industry. Trade, because of its importance for development and integration of the region, is one of the cross-cutting themes surrounding CSOs engagement with public policy.

We list some of the issues in which existing regional networks are already working:

Transparency and Anti-corruption, governance and political accountability

Transparency International Corruption Perception Index (CPI) was applied in 2006 to 163 countries in a scale from 0 to 10, where 10 is the most transparent and 0 the most corrupt.

Out of 30 countries in the Americas in this year’s CPI, the great majority (25 countries) score below 5, which indicates serious perceived levels of domestic corruption. More than a third (11 countries) scored below 3, which indicates a perception of rampant corruption. These include Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Venezuela. Clientelism and the abuse of dis-

cretionary power by leadership in these countries are prevalent, making public resources subject to private interests. The regional average is 3.8, a low grade for an effective control of corruption.⁶⁰

This common scenario opens opportunities for a collective action among CSOs in the region. The activities conducted to undermine corruption were primarily lead by these regional networks⁶¹:

- Transparency International in the Americas: http://www.transparency.org/regional_pages/americas
- Inter American Network for Democracy (RID): www.redinter.org
- Partners of the Americas http://www.partners.net/partners/Default_EN.asp
- Acuerdo de Lima <http://www.acuerdodelima.org/>
- Participación Ciudadana en la Cumbre de las Américas <http://www.sociedadcivil.net>

Access to public information

Access to public information is a key area of work especially if we consider this human right not only as a fundamental tool in the fight against corruption but also as vital instrument for the exercise of other human rights. The inclusion of this right in the regional treaties set a common background and standard for its national recognition and fully implementation.

There are many networks working in the promotion of the right of access to public information such as:

- Press and Society Institute (IPYS) (<http://www.ipys.org/>)
- FOIANet (<http://www.foiadvocates.net/>) This is a global network but its regional members use it to discuss their own issues and exchange experiences
- Transparency International in the Americas (http://www.transparency.org/regional_pages/americas)

⁶⁰ http://www.transparency.org/content/download/10848/93128/version/1/file/CPI%202006_regional_highlights_Americas.pdf

⁶¹ Note that here we are only listing the networks working on these issues. There are many CSOs working in transparency and anti-corruption that act together in specific contexts but they do not form a formal network.

- Access Initiative in Latin America (www.iniciativadeacceso.org)
- Article 19 (<http://www.article19.org/>). It is an international human rights organisation which defends and promotes freedom of expression and freedom of information all over the world and has a regional office in Latin America.

Environment

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) is one of the world's largest conservation organisations, with almost 5 million supporters and a global network active in more than 100 countries. They conduct research in Latin America and they describe the region as embracing almost half of the world's diversity of plant and animal species and half of the world's tropical forests. Yet the rate of destruction of freshwater, marine and especially forest habitat could seriously impact both biodiversity and forest cover. Climate change is another serious challenge to the sustainability and development in Latin America and the Caribbean. CSOs Networks in the region have participated actively in the efforts of the international community to shape new approaches to meet this global threat.

- Amazon Watch (www.amazonwatch.org)
- Gender and Environment (<http://www.generoyambiente.org/noticias/noticia.php?id=13>)
- Sustainable Development and Environment Network (<http://www.redesma.org/acercade.php>)
- Inter-American Water Resources Network (<http://www.iwrn.net/?lang=es&tpg=main>)
- Gender and Water Alliance (GWA) (<http://www.genderandwater.org/>)

Indigenous People

According to the World Bank⁶² and to the *Instituto Indigenista Interamericano* (Mexico) there are around 34 million

indigenous people in Latin America and the Caribbean. The majority of Latin America's indigenous people live in Bolivia, Guatemala, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru (roughly 90% of the total of the region). During the 1990s there was some progress made in terms of recognising right to indigenous people. The concept of "multiethnic" nation, and the adoption of bilingual education in most Latin American States, is a step forward in the participation of every inhabitant of a country in public policies. The Zapatista movement could give voice to the claims that had been there for many centuries.

- Mapuche International Link (www.mapuche-nation.org)
- Indigenous people in Latin America (www.aymaranet.org)
- Indigenous Information Network (<http://www.laneta.apc.org/rci/documentos/quienes.html>)
- Indigenous Forum (<http://www.fondoindigena.org/sipi.shtml>)
- Continental Network of Indigenous Women (http://enlacemujeresindigenas.org/ing/cacportal.asp?Page=35&Poll_ID=5&tp=ASP\Pg35.asp)
- The South and Meso American Indian Rights Center (SAIIC) (<http://saiic.nativeweb.org/index.html>)
- Asociación de Organizaciones Campesinas Centroamericanas para la Cooperación del Desarrollo (<http://www.gloobal.info/iepala/gloobal/fichas/ficha.php?entidad=Agentes&tid=13707>)

Poverty and development

Latin American and the Caribbean still have to make significant progress to reduce poverty in the region. According to the Inter American Development Bank, the proportion of poor has been falling in the last decade; the absolute number has risen to 180-200 million. The economic crises experienced by the region as well as by increases in wage and income inequality in many countries are not helping to change the picture. Poverty alleviation is one

⁶² www.worldbank.org/lacindigenous

of the hot topics that the region is facing, hence, there are many CSOs networks trying to cope with this problem and the donor community is also a big supporter when poverty issues arise. A big push to this regional theme has been done by the global campaign against poverty that many international organisations are calling for. Nevertheless, regional poverty fighters are seen as the ones leading with the day to day problem and have accomplished many achievements. Some of these networks are:

- Social Network <http://www.redsocial.org/>
- Network on Inequality and Poverty of the Latin American Economic Association <http://www.lacea.org/>
- Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development <http://www.cnird.org/>
- Hemispheric Social Alliance (is a network of labour organisations and citizens' coalitions representing more than 45 million people from throughout the Americas) <http://www.asc-hsa.org/>

Gender

In 1981 the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) entered into force. The Convention emphasises the eradication of all forms of discrimination against women. Latin America and the Caribbean is the first and only region in the world in which all countries have ratified (CEDAW). However, many countries have not yet translated the Convention and its recommendations into legislation. There is still much to be done to implement policies and adopt positive actions to eliminate discrimination towards women. Gender networks were very successful in incorporating the gender perspective in every important topic that regional public policy was debating. They didn't limit the scope of action to discrimination or domestic violence but they developed work in other fields such as trade, anticorruption, governance, transport, poverty and development.

- Latin American and Caribbean Committee for the Defence of Women's Rights (<http://www.cladem.org/english/>)

- Women's Development Network (<http://www.redmujeres.org/>)
- Red Latinoamericana de Mujeres Transformando la Economía (<http://www.remte.org/>)
- Red Feminista Latinoamericana y del Caribe contra la Violencia Doméstica y Sexual (<http://www.redfem.cl/>)
- Women Against Corruption (http://www.mujeresenigualdad.org.ar/otros_Foro1.htm)
- Women's Forum for the Integration in Central America (<http://www.grupoese.com.ni/2001/bn/bm/ed62/foro62.htm>)

Human rights

Violation of human rights is something the region has in its recent history. During the 1970 and for almost two decades, Latin American dictatorships threatened the entire Southern Cone. As countries were recovering democracy and were sweeping away the fear to exercise human, civil, political and social rights, the Inter American system strengthened the approach in these matters. Today, the OAS has two autonomous bodies for the promotion and protection of human rights in the region: the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

The Commission provides recourse to individuals who have suffered violations of their rights and works with states to help strengthen the laws and institutions that provide human rights protections. The Court applies and interprets the American Convention on Human Rights. Within the OAS there are other institutions addressing human rights issues, these are: the Inter American Commission of Women; the Inter American Children's Institute; the Inter American Indian Institute and the Inter American Institute of Human Rights.

- The Latin America Working Group (<http://www.lawg.org/about/AboutLAWG.htm>)
- The Inter-American Centre for Human Rights (<http://www.interamericancenter.org/>)
- The Human Rights Public Policies Observatory (<http://www.observatorio-mercosur.org.uy/es/index.php>)

- International Coalition of Organisations for Human Rights in the Americas (http://www.dd-rd.ca/site/_PDF/publications/es/oea/coalicionpronunjunio2005.pdf)
- Servicio Paz y Justicia-América Latina (<http://www.gloobal.info/iepala/gloobal/fichas/ficha.php?entidad=Agentes&tid=9001>)

Conclusions

This chapter attempted to analyse some of the existing formal spaces available for CSO participation that regional networks can seize. As it was described, the Summit of the Americas plays a leading role in the political agenda setting, while the OAS transform its mandates into specific contents for its various department and satellite institutions. This Inter American institutional framework conform the main area of interest of regional CSOs networks, basically because the decisions taken at this level influences the general development of the different issues in the region.

The civil society participation is a key area of interest of the OAS and the recognition of its importance is expressed in the existence of an entire department to promote civic engagement in OAS activities. The Committee on Inter-American Summits Management and Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities (CISC) and the Permanent Council Resolution N° 759 are strong indicators of the importance of this issue at the OAS and a background upon which networks can develop their advocacy activities.

But what came first? Civil society's interest in participating in this arena or OAS recognition of its importance? Are these institutions an impressive achievement of the work done by civil society networks or a space to promote more engagement for regional citizens?

Of course there are many other sub-regional frameworks where regional networks can make a difference. But basically the regional networks' agenda moves from advocacy

work done at the OAS-Summit of the Americas system, to exchange of experiences with its members at the national level.

There is long way to go to enhance the impact, the strategies and the coordination of the regional networks. Notwithstanding, they have shown very important achievements by contributing towards the creation and strengthening of some regional spaces, and by bringing new opportunities for other networks and CSOs in the region.

As stated by many network members, the public policy making process in Latin America is strongly dominated by the governments. This is why the participation in regional spaces opened by these governments or other inter-governmental institutions, is crucial if civil society intends to get involved in the agenda setting, policy formation and evaluation of public policies, rather than to only be consulted at the stage of implementation and monitoring.

Most of the countries in Latin America have laws or resolutions that allow CSOs participation in the national policy processes. However, the actual dialogue between national governments and CSOs networks is a new phenomenon and not all the countries are willing to strengthen these spaces. Thus, the regional spaces that have a longer tradition and recognition work as a better advocacy venue to present national discussions and proposals to regional bodies.

As seen in the FTAA and in the Andean Group processes, a greater institutionalisation of the existing civil society's participatory mechanisms and the creation of new ones is needed. By addressing to the Committee in charge of civil society consultation at the FTAA, the network called the attention not only among governmental officials but also raised awareness on the issue among citizenship. Every time there is a commitment for action, networks have an opportunity to create a space to monitoring commitments. Also, new spaces have been created by the pressure, lobbying and political engagement of civil society.

Many interviewees agreed that there is still a need for further training of staff to engage in regional and global networks. Resources and guidance are needed to accomplish the task of influencing a transnational public policy space. Those organisations that have already developed this expertise can become leading voices in the process of engaging more CSOs and the governmental bodies. However, a greater understanding of the political spaces for participation, further training on research and collecting evidence to address inter-governmental meetings is needed to make a stronger impact. Communication between the members of the network and a strong secretariat were also pointed out as key elements when deciding to join a regional network.

Strengthening the network, with higher standards and clear objectives, with commitment and communication between members, with a good long-term advocacy strategy, is the other side of the coin of influencing transnational policy processes. Engagement with the inter-governmental bodies is crucial but the network has to develop expertise and professionalism to make a difference and meet the goals.

CHAPTER 5: Resources

CHALLENGE 1: SECURING FUNDING FOR SUSTAINABILITY		
ORGANISATION	NAME AND LINK	COMMENT
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)	Work the Net: a Management Guide for Formal Networks. Author: U. K. Egger. http://www2.gtz.de/dokumente/bib/06-0342.pdf	This guide addresses networking practitioners, as well as other professionals wishing to set up a network, but also established networkers will find some useful tips. This hands-on guide describes how formal networks can be set up, managed and used in an efficient and effective way. The process-oriented approach is explained with a flow chart, and checklists summarise the crucial steps. Pages 77-80.
World Bank	Resources for Civil Society Organisations. http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/sdvext.nsf/64ByDocName/ResourcesforCivilSocietyOrganizations	This publication is a web-based guide to technical and financial resources for NGOs and other organisations of civil society. The publication uses NGOs (non-governmental organisations) and CSOs (civil society organisations) throughout the document usually depending on how the programs have used these terms. The second version of this popular publication is in response to the demand for NGOs and other organisations of civil society for a one-stop source to information about funding for development projects.
Global Development Network	Toolkit: Proposal writing and fundraising. http://www.gdnet.org/middle.php?oid=363	This toolkit provides practical suggestions for applying for funding and writing proposals.
The Resource Alliance	www.resource-alliance.org	The Resource Alliance is an international network working to build the capacity of not-for-profit organisations to mobilise funds and local resources for their causes. They achieve this through training, knowledge sharing and networking activities worldwide.
CHALLENGE 2: EMPOWERING A HEALTHY LEADERSHIP		
ORGANISATION	NAME AND LINK	COMMENT
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)	Work the Net: a Management Guide for Formal Networks. Author: U. K. Egger. http://www2.gtz.de/dokumente/bib/06-0342.pdf	Pages 63-68.
Development Planning Unit - University College London	Participation, relationship and dynamic change: New Thinking On Evaluating The Work Of International Networks. Author: M. Church et al. http://www.ucl.ac.uk/dpu/publications/working%20papers%20pdf/WP121.pdf	This paper reviews central issues concerning the use of networks in the field of international development. It draws on several case studies and illustrative examples to highlight topics such as network relationships, trust, structure, and participation. A two-page checklist for networks is provided, with suggested evaluation questions covering the issues raised above. The authors then show why networked linking and coordinating can bring much added value to advocacy work. Page 33.
Overseas Development Institute	Power in Networks. http://www.odi.org.uk/RAPID/Projects/PPA0103/Power.html	A brief article on power in organisational networks.

CHALLENGE 3: COORDINATING AND GLUING MEMBERS: RIGIDITY AND FLEXIBILITY

ORGANISATION	NAME AND LINK	COMMENT
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)	Work the Net: a Management Guide for Formal Networks. Author: U. K. Egger. http://www2.gtz.de/dokumente/bib/06-0342.pdf	Pages 38-44.
The Berkman Centre for Internet & Society, Harvard Law School	The Readiness Guide. http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/readinessguide/theguide.html	This Guide is an instrument that systematically organises the assessment of numerous factors that determine the Networked Readiness of a community in the developing world.
Google	Online Community Toolkit. http://www.fullcirc.com/community/communitymanual.htm	This toolkit provides tips for building or hosting an online community. It is a collection of articles that may help inform your work. They are all covered by the Creative Commons license of Google which makes the material available with limited restrictions.
United Nations Development Programme	How to launch a network? Key Success Factors and Tips. Author: UNDP http://www.km4dev.org/index.php?module=uploads&func=download&fileId=232	This toolkit is based on UNDP's experience in launching networks. It provides several tips and milestones to improve the chances of having a successful network launch.
Development Planning Unit - University College London	Participation, relationship and dynamic change: New Thinking On Evaluating The Work Of International Networks. Author: M. Church et al. http://www.ucl.ac.uk/dpu/publications/working%20papers%20pdf/WP121.pdf	Pages 9-11.
Overseas Development Institute	Understanding Networks: The Functions of Research-Policy Networks. Author: E. Mendizabal. http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid/Publications/RAPID_WP_271.html	From its extensive study on the linkages between research and policy, ODI has developed this handbook on networks. Networks can help researchers influence policy processes in several ways. This usefulness hints at the functions that networks can play.
id21 - Development Research Reporting Service	Learning through networking and information exchange: how NGOs can increase their impact. Author: S. Madon. http://www.id21.org/society/s8csm1g1.html	This articles tries to answer the question about how can international NGOs use networking, learning and information systems to increase their development impact. It describes the state of their systems for accessing and processing information and present different options to make them more successful in sharing and learning information.
Free Hosts	Yahoo! Groups (groups.yahoo.com), Google Groups (groups.google.com), MSN Groups (groups.msn.com), Freelists (Freelists.org), Mail Spaces (mailspaces.com), d Groups (www.dgroups.org)	Free web-based services offering an easy way to run and maintain mailing lists are a very useful tool to run a network. Nowadays, the most popular web-based mailing service is Yahoo! Groups. This is used by a wide range of groups. MSN Groups appears to be pushing hard to catch up to Yahoo! Freelists.org is a web-based service using all-free software, though it may be more difficult for some users to set up. The new version of Google Groups includes free mailing list services as well as access to Usenet. MailSpaces adds wiki and feed aggregation to the traditional group model, and ties it together with an "auto-tagging" function using natural language processing techniques.

CHALLENGE 4: ACHIEVING GOOD INTERNAL GOVERNANCE		
ORGANISATION	NAME AND LINK	COMMENT
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)	Work the Net: a Management Guide for Formal Networks. Author: U. K. Egger. http://www2.gtz.de/dokumente/bib/06-0342.pdf	Pages 55-68.
International Institute for Sustainable Development	Strategic intentions: managing knowledge networks for sustainable development. How to manage a successful knowledge network. Author: H. Creech and T Willard. http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2001/networks_strategic_intentions.pdf	Guide written for practitioners who are working with different models of individual and institutional knowledge collaboration. It aims to capture the details of network operations and management: what it really takes to help knowledge networks achieve their potential. Pages 57-94.
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)	Making North-South research networks work. Authors: R. J. Engelhard and L. Box. http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/ec-n16s4m5.pdf	This study is an analysis of North-South research networks in terms of their effectiveness and organisation. It also presents case studies of networks to indicate the need for particular institutional arrangements
CHALLENGE 5: NURTURING PARTICIPATION		
ORGANISATION	NAME AND LINK	COMMENT
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)	Work the Net: a Management Guide for Formal Networks. Author: U. K. Egger. http://www2.gtz.de/dokumente/bib/06-0342.pdf	Pages 38-46.
Development Planning Unit - University College London	Participation, relationship and dynamic change: New Thinking On Evaluating The Work Of International Networks. Author: M. Church et al. http://www.ucl.ac.uk/dpu/publications/working%20papers%20pdf/WP121.pdf	Pages 25-35.
Overseas Development Institute	What are networks made of? The structures of research policy networks. Author: E. Mendizabal. http://www.odi.org.uk/RAPID/Projects/PPA0103/docs/Understanding_networks_form.pdf	This paper looks at the key structural characteristics of research policy networks in an attempt to develop a methodology for studying and understanding what networks do and how. The paper explores the literature on networks to identify the main and most common structural factors considered by the authors. The paper then considers the possible effects of these structural factors on a network's functions.
CHALLENGE 6: GENERATING CREDIBLE RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE		
ORGANISATION	NAME AND LINK	COMMENT
Urban Institute	Managing Think Tanks. Author: R. Struyk. http://igi.osi.hu/publications/2002/121/0644-03CH03.pdf	The chapter Ensuring Good Advice: Quality Control provides concrete advice on how to organise the peer review process which could be applied within networks to ensure quality of research.

	Policy Analysis for Effective Development. Authors: R. Struyk and K. Morse. Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, London.	This book aims to improve the quality of public decision making and service delivery. It is intended to equip students with intellectual tools to aid practitioners in the identification and specification of policy problems and the development of sensible, useful, and politically viable solutions.
	Research for Development: A Practical Guide'. Author: Laws, S. et al. London, Sage.	This book provides a comprehensive introduction and handbook for undertaking and managing research in development. It is designed to provide both a quick reference manual and an indispensable learning tool for all students, researchers and practitioners engaged in development work.
Global Development Network	Access to journals http://www.gdnet.org/middle.php?oid=243	GdNet offers a range of journals services to address the difficulty faced by many researchers in the global south in accessing journal articles to support their research. Details can be found on this page. Also, comprehensive listings of publicly accessible, non-subscriber journal services are posted and regularly updated on GdNet
Global Development Network	GdN Data Initiative http://www.gdnet.org/middle.php?primary_link_id=5&secondary_link_id=18	"Through the GdN Data initiative, researchers in low and middle income countries can access datasets to support the quality of their research and analysis. This page gives further details on eligibility and registration."
CHALLENGE 7: COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY WITHIN STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIPS		
ORGANISATION	NAME AND LINK	COMMENT
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)	Work the Net: a Management Guide for Formal Networks. Author: U. K. Egger. http://www2.gtz.de/dokumente/bib/06-0342.pdf	Pages 103-117.
Interact Networks	Case Studies of Networks: Networks in Action. http://www.interactweb.org.uk/Network_PDF/Interact_Case_Studies.pdf	These two case studies represent successful experiences of facilitating networks which tried to involve all the stakeholders in the decision making process.
DFID, Social Development Division	Communications and Development: a practical guide. Author: A. Burke. http://62.189.42.51/DFIDstage/Pubs/files/c_d.pdf	Practical guide to use of communications media in development programmes. Why communication is important? Guide to implement development communication programmes. Guide to using specific media, including drama (theatre and video), television, radio, ICTs (including internet, email), advocacy, public relations and networks.
Global Development Network	Toolkit: Disseminating Research Online. www.gdnet.org/online_services/toolkits/disseminating_research_online/	This toolkit provides broad tips and practical suggestions for communicating academic research using the internet. It draws on best practice for web strategies from the information and commercial worlds, especially selected to help the successful electronic dissemination of your research.
Overseas Development Institute	Successful Communication: A Toolkit for Researchers and Civil Society Organisations. Author: I. Hovland. http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid/Publications/Documents/Comms_tools_web.pdf	This handbook presents work in progress on communication tools, specifically geared towards the needs of researchers in civil society organisations. The tools are grouped under the headings of Planning, Packaging, Targeting and Monitoring tools.

CHALLENGE 8: ENSURING CAPACITY TO FOLLOW UP		
ORGANISATION	NAME AND LINK	COMMENT
Transparency International	Anti-Corruption Conventions in the Americas: What Civil Society Can Do to Make Them Work (2006). Author: Transparency International. http://www.transparency.org/content/download/6978/42645/file/Guide_Conventions_Americas.pdf	This guide provides a more easy access to the Latin American anti-Corruption Conventions to CSOs. It is focused on the Interamerican Convention against Corruption and on the United Nations Convention against Corruption.
WOLA & CEDPA	Manual para la Facilitación de Procesos de Incidencia Política. Authors: A. McKinley and P. Baltazar. http://www.wola.org/publications/atp_manual_para_facilitacion_jun_05.pdf	This handbook provides elements, both conceptual and practical, to turn more effective the work of CSOs interested in strengthening public policy influence processes, through workshops, planning events and evaluating efforts. Step # 7.
CHALLENGE 9: ACCESSING GOVERNMENTS		
ORGANISATION	NAME AND LINK	COMMENT
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)	Work the Net: a Management Guide for Formal Networks. Author: U. K. Egger. http://www2.gtz.de/dokumente/bib/06-0342.pdf	Pages 35-50.
WOLA & CEDPA	Manual para la Facilitación de Procesos de Incidencia Política. Authors: A. McKinley and P. Baltazar. http://www.wola.org/publications/atp_manual_para_facilitacion_jun_05.pdf	Steps # 3 & 4.
Open Society Institute	Writing Effective Policy Papers. Authors: E. Young and L. Quinn. http://www.publicpolicy.umb.edu/documents/policywriting-toc.pdf	Writing Effective Public Policy Papers is a guide to support policy advisers through the whole process of planning, writing and publishing policy papers. The analysis and insight provided in this guide is based on the view of the policy paper as a purposeful communication tool of the public policy community. As such, this guide not only details the nature of the policy paper itself, but also focuses on the paper's context and role in the community. For the novice, it provides a useful starting point to becoming an effective policy paper writer; for the experienced policy adviser, it provides an opportunity to further develop by reflecting on various approaches to policy paper writing.
WOLA	Manual Básico para la Incidencia Política. Author: A. McKinley. http://www.wola.org/publications/atp_manualbasico.pdf	The Basic Manual presents the fundamental principles for an effective advocacy campaign in an accessible and practical fashion. The manual was designed for civil society groups and other organisations that wish to effect policy change. The authors have structured it for group work and made it highly participatory, with a series of worksheets and exercises to help develop tools for analysis and reflection. Only available in Spanish.

Overseas Development Institute	Tools for Policy Impact: A Handbook for Researchers. Authors: D. Start and I. Hovland. http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid/Publications/Documents/Tools_handbook_final_web.pdf	This handbook presents work-in-progress on tools for policy impact, specifically geared towards the needs of researchers. The tools are grouped under the headings Research Tools, Context Assessment Tools, Communication Tools, and Policy Influence Tools. Pages 48-59.
Overseas Development Institute	Mapping Political Context: A Toolkit for Civil Society Organisations. Authors: R. Nash, A. Hudson and C. Luttrell. http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid/Publications/Documents/Political_Context_Toolkit_web.pdf	This toolkit describes a range of tools that CSOs might use to understand and map political contact, in order to engage more effectively in policy processes.
CHALLENGE 10: DEVELOPING DIRECT CAPACITY OF INFLUENCE		
ORGANISATION	NAME AND LINK	COMMENT
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)	Work the Net: a Management Guide for Formal Networks. Author: U. K. Egger. http://www2.gtz.de/dokumente/bib/06-0342.pdf	Pages 35-50.
CARE	Advocacy tools and guidelines. Authors: S. Sprechman and E. Pelton. http://www.care.org/getinvolved/advocacy/tools.asp	This manual is a training guide designed to familiarise program managers with key advocacy concepts and techniques. Chapter 3.
Rainforest Action Network	Activist Toolbox - Campaign Strategy 101. Authors: Midwest Academy Strategy Chart. http://ran.org/act/activist_toolkit/campaign_strategy_101/	A useful summary of the importance of, and steps in, planning a policy influence campaign.
Global Policy Forum	The Role of Transnational NGOs in Global Affairs. Author: S. Toulmin. http://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/role/globalact/state/2000/1122.htm	This essay focuses on the problems that result from the dominance within the Organisation of Nation State Governments (NSGs) - institutions whose motives are too often suspect - as compared to the apparent weakness of those other Non-Governmental Organisations (or NGOs), whose actual influence is out of proportion to their seeming power.
CHALLENGE 11: MEASURING IMPACT		
ORGANISATION	NAME AND LINK	COMMENT
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)	Work the Net: a Management Guide for Formal Networks. Author: U. K. Egger. http://www2.gtz.de/dokumente/bib/06-0342.pdf	Pages 95-102.
International Institute for Sustainable Development	Strategic intentions: managing knowledge networks for sustainable development. How to manage a successful knowledge network. Author: H. Creech and T. Willard. http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2001/networks_strategic_intentions.pdf	Pages 117-140.

Development Planning Unit - University College London	Participation, relationship and dynamic change: New Thinking On Evaluating The Work Of International Networks. Author: M. Church et al. http://www.ucl.ac.uk/dpu/publications/working%20papers%20pdf/WP121.pdf	Pages 25-34.
International Development Research Council (IDRC)	Outcome mapping. Author: IDRC and B. Kibel http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-26586-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html	This methodology called "Outcome Mapping" characterises and assesses the contributions development programs make to the achievement of outcomes. Outcome Mapping can be used at the program, project, or organisational level.
International Development Research Council (IDRC)	Enhancing Organizational Performance. Authors: C. Lusthaus et al.	The main objective of this guide is to provide the reader with a process for conducting an assessment, a framework for assessing issues, and some tools and tips to help as the organisation faces a big or small issue. Chapter 4 focuses on how to diagnose the performance of the organisation.
University College London (UCL), Development Planning Unit (DPU)	Participation, relationships and dynamic change: new thinking on evaluating the work of international networks, Methods for the evaluation and monitoring of networks. Authors: M. Church et al. http://www.ucl.ac.uk/dpu/publications/working%20papers%20pdf/WP121.pdf	This paper looks at how to make monitoring and evaluation real and useful for networks. This is accompanied by an analysis of what a network means, what it means to work in a networked way, what holds a network together and what facilitates its functioning.

Other valuable resources

GOOD PRACTICES		
ORGANISATION	NAME AND LINK	COMMENT
REN21	Renewable Energy Network 21. http://www.ren21.net/PolicyProcess/default.asp	Renewable Energy Network 21. http://www.ren21.net/PolicyProcess/default.asp REN21 is a global policy network that provides a forum for international leadership on renewable energy. Its goal is to bolster policy development for the rapid expansion of renewable energies in developing and industrialised economies.
IFRTD	International Forum for Rural Transport and Development. http://ifrt.d.gn.apc.org/	The International Forum for Rural Transport and Development (IFRTD) is a global network of individuals and organisations interested in rural transport issues in developing countries. It achieves this aim by identifying gaps in knowledge and capacity and priority issues for change, supporting networking and new research, and pursuing a programme of advocacy work that will influence donors, policy makers and practitioners.

TI	Transparency International. www.transparency.org	Transparency International is a global network including more than 90 locally established national chapters and chapters-in-formation. These bodies fight corruption in the national arena in a number of ways. They bring together relevant players from government, civil society, business and the media to promote transparency in elections, in public administration, in procurement and in business. TI's global network of chapters and contacts also use advocacy campaigns to lobby governments to implement anti-corruption reforms.
TKN	Trade Knowledge Network. www.tradeknowledgenetwork.net	The Trade Knowledge Network is the collaboration of research institutions in developed and developing countries located in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas. The Trade Knowledge Network is aimed at building long-term capacity to address issues of trade and sustainable development in developing country research institutions, non-governmental organisations and governments through increased awareness, knowledge and understanding of the issues. The TKN links network members and consolidates new and existing research on trade and sustainable development.
GCAP	Global Call against Poverty http://www.whiteband.org/	GCAP, the global coalition of community groups, trade unions, Non-Governmental Organisations, individuals, faith groups and campaigners from all over the world, raise awareness on the importance of the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The main focus is the fight against poverty and all the groups that form GCAP have country-based coalitions to promote its demands and enable concerned citizens to put pressure on world leaders and decision makers.

STRAND C: NON GOVERNMENTAL ACTION PROGRAMME
(Research Programme on international action of NGOs, networks and civil society).
See <http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/NGPA/>

NGPA	The Global Campaign on Access to Medicines: Re-shaping intellectual property rules at the World Trade Organisation. Author: V. Munoz Tellez http://www.ipngos.org/NGO%20Briefings/Access%20to%20medicines%20campaign.pdf	Case study on how NGOs have been pressuring states to fulfil their international obligations to enable access to essential medicines, including adopting trade practices and using trade flexibilities and safeguards to protect public health, and implementing national legislation that prioritises the right to essential medicines. They have also been pushing states to abstain from measures that hamper the implementation of flexibilities and safeguards available under current international trade agreements.
NGPA	The campaign against "biopiracy": introducing a disclosure of origin requirement. Author: V. Munoz Tellez. http://www.ipngos.org/NGO%20Briefings/Disclosure%20of%20origin.pdf	NGOs have been long concerned with the adverse effects of biotechnology on health and environment. Given that many new biotechnology products and processes are now protected by intellectual property rights, they have further concerns that access to the genetic resources may be facilitated for users without the consent and sharing benefits with the providers, mainly in developing countries. Moreover, NGOs have effectively raised public awareness and sparked concern at the national and international level on the inequity in the access and use of genetic resources and traditional knowledge, in particular through their direct involvement and role in highlighting cases of alleged misappropriation, also known as "biopiracy".

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Networks are increasingly drawing scholarly and practitioner attention as very effective ways to organise efforts towards achieving certain social agendas. New regional and global networks of civil society organisations (CSOs) are being constantly created and CSOs continue to participate in them. There is a demand to improve knowledge about how these networks – as one mode of non governmental public action – operate today. There is also a need to open up new spaces to think about how they can evolve in the near future in order to become more legitimate, effective, transparent, democratic and accountable.

The goal of this Handbook is two-fold: 1) it aims at contributing towards the systematisation of lessons learned by practitioners from networks of CSOs throughout their participation in regional and global fora; and 2) based on these lessons, it seeks to offer some practical tools and guidelines that might help these networks enhance their impact through the use of evidence and knowledge in regional and global public policies and policymaking processes.

CIPPEC (Center for the Implementation of Public Policies Promoting Equity and Growth) is an independent and non-profit organisation that works to create a just, democratic and efficient State that improves the quality of life for all Argentine citizens. Thus, it concentrates its efforts in analyzing and promoting public policies that foster equity and growth in Argentina. Its challenge is to turn into concrete actions the best ideas that emerge from the areas of Social Development, Economic Development and Strengthening of the Institutions, through the programs of Education, Health, Fiscal Policy, Justice, Transparency, Political Institutions, Local Management, Civil Society Influence and Training for Political Leaders for Democracy.