



Focal NGOs and Leadership Committee Meeting

Meeting Report



13th to 14th November 2007

1.0 Introduction

The Gender-based Violence Prevention Network established Focal NGOs to coordinate members within the 18 member countries of the Network. To-date there are 15 Focal NGOs in existence in the following countries: Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Mauritius, Tanzania, Malawi, Namibia, Rwanda, Kenya, South Africa, Sudan and Uganda. This meeting brought together Focal NGOs for the first time.

In addition the Leadership Committee was also established in 2007 to provide overall strategic guidance to the Network. This committee is comprised of five members: Tigist Zeleke of EWLA in Ethiopia, Johanna Kehler of AIDS Legal Network South Africa, Rose Kimotho of Kenya and two Raising Voices Staff (Network Coordinating Office).

This report presents the proceedings of the first meeting for Focal NGOs and the Leadership Committee held in Kampala, Uganda from 13th to 14th December 2007. The meeting was intended to foster more active participation and sharing among focal NGOs and together with the Leadership Committee guide the Network on strategic directions.

2.0 Process

The meeting was conducted in a participatory manner to ensure input from all participants. Various sessions were held that took the participants through various sessions for two days including¹: introductions, overview of the GBV Prevention Network, motivations and intentions of joining the Network, working together (challenges and successes) and way forward for the Network and all her structures.



Participants in group discussions during the meeting

Participants also visited the Network's coordination office at Raising Voices and held a discussion with staff of Center for Domestic Violence Prevention and Raising Voices to share experiences of working to prevent violence against women in the region. Sessions were punctuated with group discussions, power point presentations and plenary discussions. A total of 15 people attended the meeting. On the 13th December 2007 the Leadership Committee held their first meeting where general strategic issues pertaining to the Network were discussed.

Objectives of the Meeting

1. To build solidarity, connection and ownership among Network members
2. To review and share experiences from Focal NGOs and the Network coordination office
3. To plan together new activities for 2008
4. To clarify and document roles and responsibilities for Focal NGOs, and the Network coordination office for the year 2008

¹ Full schedule in appendices

The meeting offered the first opportunity for Focal NGO staff, the Leadership Committee, and staff of the Network Coordination Office to have a face to face meeting, get to know each other, discuss successes and challenges of the Network and also plan for the way forward for the Network within the year 2008. Participants appreciated the opportunity to meet, share, and plan. The meeting helped them to reflect more on the Network and their roles as leaders within the Network.

For the Network as a whole this was an important meeting as the Network is going through a period of growth especially with the establishment of the Thematic Working Groups. Also by the geographical diversity of the Network most coordination is conducted by email which is not easy in this region where connectivity is low as well as the fact that regular power supplies and access to computers are not always guaranteed. So to have leadership structures having a sharing and planning meeting was very beneficial to the Network.

Through the participants, the Network as a whole² was able to reflect on the benefits and benefits of belonging to the Network which acted as a guide the Network's strategic direction for the coming period. The final outputs from this meeting were; a detailed list of activities to constitute the 2008 work plan, streamlined roles and responsibilities of all the Network structures and detail on the functionality of the Thematic Working Groups.

3.0 Meeting Proceedings

3.1 The GBV Prevention Network: An Overview³

Lori Michau of Raising Voices guided participants through the Network's background, objectives, values/ beliefs, membership, activities and leadership structures. She informed participants that the Network is a dynamic group of activists and practitioners committed to preventing gender-based violence in the Horn, East and Southern Africa.

Participants learnt that the Network evolved in 2003, during a regional dialogue in Kampala, organized by Raising Voices and UN Habitat's Safer Cities Program. This dialogue was attended by 30 organizations that highlighted the need for connection, sharing and collaboration. To date the Network has over 130 individuals or organizations from 18 countries within the region who share the Network's beliefs of ending violence against women. The Network believes the root cause of violence against women, is the unequal power relations between men and women, and therefore uses the concerted efforts of both women and men to prevent it.



The Network activities were summarized as follows: highlighting innovation through; the Network website and tri annual newsletter; building skills through Thematic Working Groups' trainings; connecting activists through; regional campaigns, Focal NGOs and regional dialogues. It was noted that the main reason for coming together was to have space for highlighting local innovation in the region as opposed to larger well resourced international organizations that are always being highlighted globally and within the region, and to build members capacity to prevent gender-based violence.

² Prior to the meeting Focal NGOs consulted with the members in their country on issues pertaining to the Network

³ Full presentation in appendix IV

In the discussion that followed; participants noted that gender-based violence was broad, and there was a need for the Network to examine their beliefs and ensure that resources and materials subscribed to these as well as all membership. It was agreed that it was better to have fewer members that wholly embraced the Network's beliefs than a large diverse membership whose members varied widely on their analysis of GBV and its causes. To this effect members suggested further vetting of proposed members to ensure a feminist perspective remained the core of the network.

Participants brainstormed on their perceptions of a 'real Network' (which they wanted for the GBV Prevention Network). They presented 'a real Network' as one with close connection, sharing and a common voice. It was agreed that to have all the mentioned attributes, there was a need for active participation, commitment and collaboration of all structures of the Network including all members.

What is a 'real' Network?

- Active connection and linkages among members
- Sharing of experiences and challenges in each sub-region through exchange visits, sharing of campaign experiences
- Emphasizing regional connections
- Creating joint campaigns
- Collective voice/solidarity, engaging on common issues
- Collective accountability i.e. members that monitor each other as per the Network's beliefs and values
- A belief in fundamental human rights
- Database with contacts of all members
- Committed members
- Has a clear identity

3.2 Motivations and Intentions

In this session participants presented what they and the member organizations in their of their countries felt was the value added of being a member of this Network, in addition they presented the motivating factor for Focal NGOs to act as coordinating organizations within their countries. Among the motivational factors for members were: show-casing their practices (visibility), learning from other programs within the region, a feeling of solidarity within the region, having facilitated campaigns (provision of materials), increased credibility, an enhancement of fundraising capacity and opportunities for training.

Similarly focal NGOs were motivated by the fact that the Networks vision and objectives were similar to their organizations goals and objectives, and they were seeking to further strengthen their programs through learning and forming a stronger voice within their countries and the region as a whole, on GBV prevention.



It was important for the Network to gather this feed back from members in order to further motivate the membership and stimulate vibrancy and growth, and determine the Network's up coming activities.

3.3 Working Together

On the second day, participants shared their experiences of working as focal NGOs the discussion centered mainly on challenges faced by the Focal NGOs and the Network

coordination office, suggestions for improvement were also discussed. Focal NGOs pointed out internal organizational challenges that involved change of staff, or lack of staff, specifically attached to coordination of the Network's activities, to which it was agreed to have each staff in the Focal NGO brought up to date with the Network and current activities. It was also suggested to have the Network coordination office prepare an orientation package for any new staff that takes over the role of coordinating Network activities in an organization to ensure that the GBV Network activities are not seen as a side project but integrated into the organization as a whole.

Another challenge pointed out was the politics and sometimes competition at play within various countries and among CSOs within those countries, where it may be difficult to get members to share information for fear of their programs being 'hijacked', or member organizations getting the perception that Focal NGOs were benefiting financially from the Network. This could be the reason for inadequate and at times no response from members when they are contacted by Focal NGOs.

As a reaction to the above challenges pointed out, participants further reflected on the benefits of being part of the Network, which moved towards tangible benefits as most participants felt the biggest benefit was the 16 Days of Activism campaign Action and Advocacy Kits. It was suggested to have more issues based interaction (e.g. joint campaigns) and create more tangible information sharing avenues, this would be realized through the functioning of thematic groups and finding a balance between administrative tasks and issue based/ thematic tasks for all structures of the Network (membership, Focal NGOs, Leadership Committee, thematic groups and the Network Coordination office).

To pave the way forward members brainstormed on potential benefits and opportunities for increasing motivation within the membership as outlined below:

Potential Benefits/ Opportunities

- Strengthen programs/ ideas/ expertise by learning form various organizations within the region
- More organizational visibility
- "Safe" space for collaborating within smaller thematic groups
- Documentation of local NGOs work
- Becomes the source for GBV Prevention in the region
- Sharing information on funding opportunities, studies/ research (fresh and current issues)

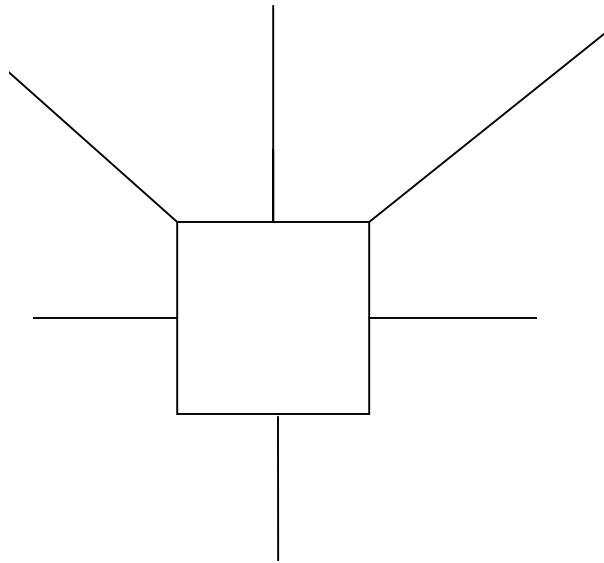
3.4 Focal NGOs and Coordinating Office – Working Together

Having discussed and analyzed motivational factors, and current and potential benefits of belonging to the Network as well as challenges or limitations that have been experienced by all Network structures since inception, participants then discussed and suggested the way forward. It was noted that it was important for members to consciously participate in the Networks activities and promote the Network mainly by active participation in activities, regular communication and sharing information. Participants noted that the Focal NGOs should put in more efforts to collect information from members and send the Network office information regarding on going campaigns and other engagements related to GBV within the region.

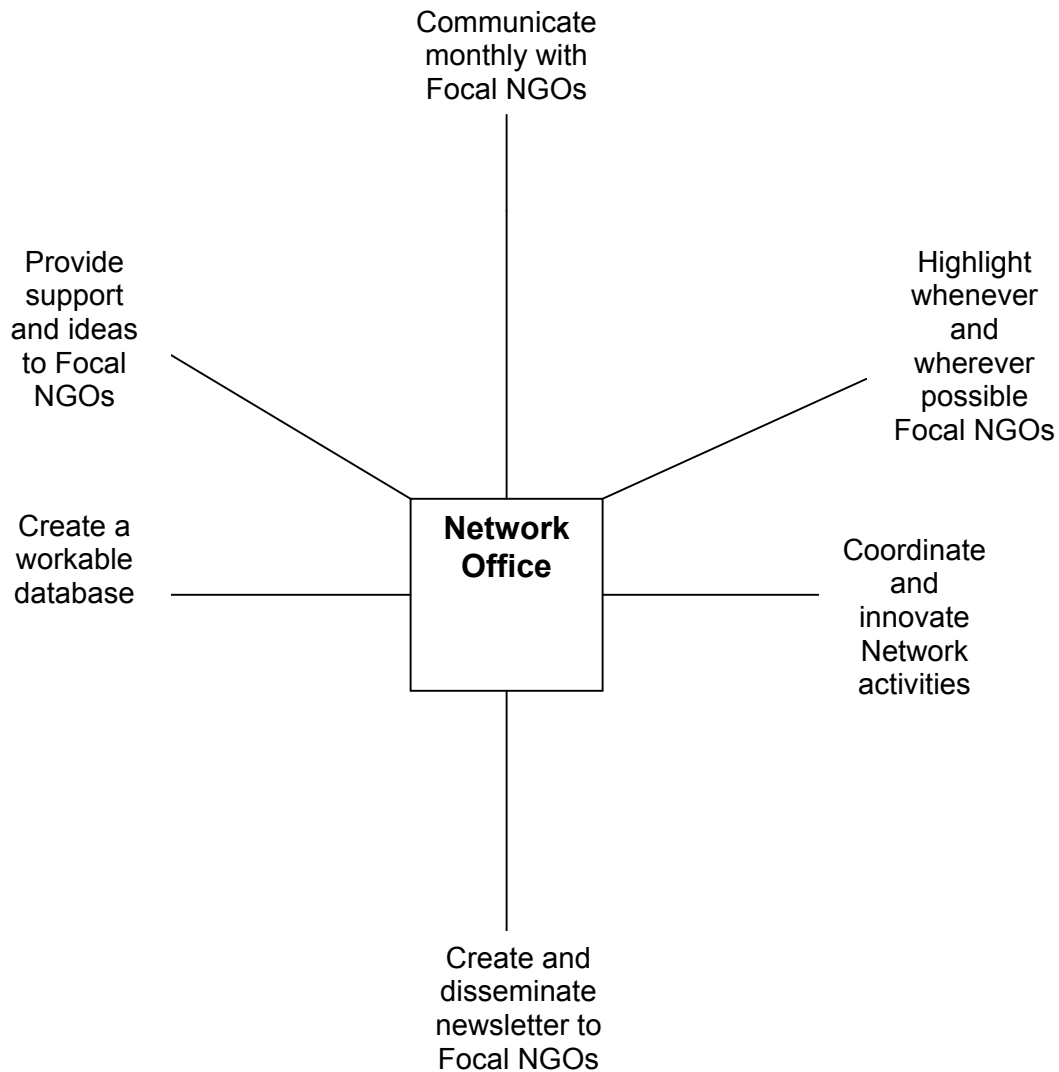
Participants discussed the duties and functioning of Focal NGOs, the Network Office and the thematic groups. In addition Focal NGOs and the Network Office staff suggested activities to be conducted throughout 2008. Suggestions from both groups were similar and it was agreed to merge the two group's suggestions into one work plan for the Network in 2008.

This diagram below illustrates the roles and responsibilities of Focal NGOs as agreed in the meeting;

Participate
in activities/
campaigns



The diagram below represents support that will be given by the Network Office to the Focal NGOs as they perform their roles:



On the whole participants were responsive to these roles although there were limitations with regards to submission of one resource from each Focal NGO per month; participants seemed to have difficulty committing to carryout this role mainly because of the difficulty of sharing among NGOs within their countries.

3.5. Moving Forward

In addition to the above mentioned roles and responsibilities, participants held a brain storm session and suggested activities for 2008 as listed below:

- Set up the Thematic Working Groups that are member run and conduct trainings, exchange visits and other joint activities
- Reorganize and re-launch the website making it more user friendly, informative and accessible.
- Producing Action and Advocacy kits for the 16 Days of Activism

- Create a calendar of events for the Network i.e. activities and campaigns being conducted by members. Focal NGOs to send these on 3 months basis
- Share information by posting members resources (provided by members and Focal NGOs) on the GBV Prevention website monthly
- Production of a tri annual Newsletter
- Produce practical material to supplement each newsletter's themes i.e. badges, stickers, films, posters, tool kits, print ready CDs
- Select, document and publish 3-5 innovative programs form among the membership
- Recognize innovative GBV Prevention programming through awards
- Compile a speakers bureau that has resource persons in GBV prevention that will give presentations to members within their different countries

It was agreed that the Network Office will produce a comprehensive work plan for the year 2008 and share this with Focal NGOs.

Thematic Working Groups

In four groups participants discussed and suggested the functionality and activities for the Thematic Working Groups each group presented their suggestions and during the plenary a consensus was agreed as summarized in the table below.

Suggestions for the Thematic Working Groups

Function	Suggestions
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership of the group may emerge naturally as some members nominate themselves or spearhead activities (secretariat to circulate list of members to the group) • If no leader emerges naturally this will warrant the intervention of the coordinating office who may call for a vote • Voting should involve all members who should vote for a Chair and vice chair of the working group • The leaders must be active members of the Network • Must have demonstrated capacity in the thematic area • The leaders must accept to work on a voluntary basis <p>Must be committed to preventing GBV and equitable geographic representation</p>
Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of each group by the chair and vice chair through emails • Internet or telephone meeting at least bi annually to update each other and plan together for Thematic Working Group activities. • Provide advisory services to the coordinating office on the thematic issues
Potential Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-discussions • Thematic Trainings • Issue based campaigns • Articles for the Network Newsletter • Sharing information related to GBV prevention (interesting and relevant) • Publication of analytical material on GBV prevention • Exchange of resources among members • Exchange visits between member organizations

Support from the Network office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Coordinating Office will help in focusing discussions and planning • Connecting all thematic groups • Developing campaign materials • Recognize and award the best performers • Provide administrative support e.g. towards telephone meetings where possible • Create opportunities and provide support for thematic groups to interact with each other • Connecting funders to the groups • Sharing highlights of all thematic groups activities • Distribution of materials
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It was pointed out by Network Office staff that the Thematic Groups would be primarily member run therefore fundraising would be mainly carried out by the groups with the Network Office's guidance and support. It was noted that the functioning of the Thematic Working Groups in 2008 would help create one common voice against gender-based violence in the region and build the capacity of organizations working to prevent gender-based violence to design more effective GBV prevention programs.

4.0 Conclusion

The meeting was an important milestone for the GBV Prevention Network; it facilitated interpersonal dialogue within focal NGO members and the Leadership Committee members. In addition the Network was able to develop work plans with input from all members and to develop working modalities for the various structures i.e. Focal NGOs, Leadership Committee and the Network Office. It is envisioned that this meeting was the foundation for a vibrant and powerful Network of committed activists that will work towards the prevention of GBV in the region and also vibrant members who will push for increased interest and investment in GBV prevention.

APPENDICES

Focal NGO and Leadership Committee Meeting – Workshop Schedule 13th and 14th December 2007 Kampala, Uganda

Objectives

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2. To review and share experiences from Focal NGOs and the Network coordination office
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Meeting Schedule

Day One: 13th December 2007

Time	Activity
9:00 – 10:30	Welcome, Introductions, Objectives, Expectations
10:30 – 11:00	Break
11:00 – 1:00	The GBV Prevention Network: An Overview
1:00 – 2:00	Lunch
2:00 – 3:30	Motivations and Intentions
3:30 – 3:45	Break
3:45 – 5:00	Leadership Committee Meeting

Day Two: 14th December 2007

Time	Activity
9:00 – 11:00	Moving Forward
11:00 – 11:30	Break
11:30 – 1:00	Working Together
1:00 – 2:00	Lunch
2:00 – 4:30	Commitments
4:30 – 5:30	Visit to Raising Voices / GBV Prevention Network
5:30	Evening out at Faze II

Appendix II

Participants List

Name	Organization	Country
Tigist Zeleke	Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association	Addis Ababa - Ethiopia
Shadrack Oyier	Kenya Female Advisory Organization	Kisumu - Kenya
Silas Ngayabosha	Forum for Activists Against Torture	Kigali - Rwanda
Selina Mudavanhu	Southern Africa Media and Gender Institute	Cape Town- South Africa
Johanna Kehler	AIDS Legal Network	Cape Town- South Africa
Maimuna Kanyamala	Kivilini Women's Rights Organization	Mwanza - Tanzania
Cecilia Mhiti (SAfAIDS)	Southern Africa AIDS Information Dissemination Service	Harare - Zimbabwe
Unia Nalugya	Friendlyhaven	Windhoek - Namibia
Nyanda ka Khanyile	Sonke Gender Justice Network	Johannesburg – South Africa
Concepta Mwachi	Coalition on Violence Against Women	Nairobi - Kenya
Rose Kimotho	Independent Consultant	Nairobi - Kenya
Tina Musuya	Center for Domestic Violence Prevention	Kampala - Uganda
Lori Michau	Raising Voices	Kampala - Uganda
Jean Kemitare	Raising Voices	Kampala - Uganda