Affiliated Network for Social Accountability for East Asia and the Pacific

NETWORKING STRATEGY
By Dondon Parafina

Introduction

The networking approach to development work has emerged in recent decades as a result of the increasing complexity of issues and the growing diversity of voices that claim to have stake in these issues. It has provided a multi-dimensional treatment that connects network participants for learning and collaboration. More importantly, it has been shown to help institutions improve programs through fast dissemination of information, especially best practices, and through enlightened knowledge of different views.

Various types of networking have also emerged from years of experience. Some developed into a constellation of people that is formally organized and rigidly structured and others into an informal and loose community but nevertheless capable of creating public value. Some became more selective while others were liberally open. Some prioritized organizational membership; others valued individuality.

Regardless of its form and character, networking has proven to be a promising approach. While it is basically considered useful for connecting people through exchange and communication, it can also have a powerful transformative effect on the way of thinking and social practice of its members. When members discover serious convergence of interests and understanding, a network can challenge social structures and introduce a different perspective in viewing social reality with new concepts and norms.

Strategic Considerations for ANSA East Asia Pacific

The rate of internet usage in East Asia Pacific region is increasing, albeit still relatively limited. Most of these internet users are young (30 years old and below) and active in many social networking sites, such as Friendster and Multiply.

On the other hand, the realm of civic engagement has also taken notice of the active role of the young generation. Student activists figured prominently in many social and political events around the region; youth volunteers likewise made their mark in different civic initiatives that aimed to improve transparency and accountability in governance.

Combine these two together with the overall youthful character of the population, the strategic direction for ANSA East Asia Pacific then is to tap the energies of this group into the network. With their number and spirited involvement, they can breathe life and attract the rest of the population to the network.

Project Plan

As a general framework, the networking strategy refers to the project plan's stipulation, as follows:

> Under networking, the strategy is to start a common platform for social accountability engagement based on local and global experiences and lessons of demand-side governance initiatives. It shall activate and establish connectivity among SA stakeholders in the region to enhance citizens' interest and participation in SA initiatives.
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> ANSA-EAP will be an open action network for civil society practitioners, intellectuals and researchers, collaborators, supporters and other stakeholders of social accountability. It will provide a contact base for its advocacy and help facilitate knowledge-sharing and partnership-building.
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> Building on in-country networks, ANSA-EAP's regional network expects to hook up various groups and individuals championing and pursuing social accountability ideas and methods. It will provide online service (i.e., social networking website) and direct-encounter venues (i.e., conferences, forums, consultations and meetings) to activate and promote the network.
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> The network activities will also be designed to allow a gradual build-up of the members' level of connectivity. Through a core group in every country, different stakeholders shall be linked in the dynamics and operations of the network. For groups and individuals that showed extraordinary interest and participation, mechanics to formalize their involvement at an advanced level shall be devised.
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> The networking strategy shall also facilitate "hand-holding" with organizations where social accountability is not yet developed. It shall make use of G-Watch, a tested Philippine model for engagement, as the framework. The G-Watch initiative has introduced a unique approach in mobilizing citizen participation to help improve service delivery in the Philippines. Through a collaborative approach, which targets specific items, such as textbooks, school buildings, medicines and public works, it has simplified and concretized vital governance concerns where ordinary citizens can have useful and meaningful intervention. It has also defined the parameters of a proper venue where the government can be moved to receive and respond positively to the citizens' monitoring reports and recommendations. This kind of government-citizen interface suits the socio-cultural sensitivity and need of peoples in East Asia and the Pacific. The G-Watch approach, therefore, can be potentially replicated by interested and well-meaning citizen groups in other countries in the region. It provides a practical framework for learning the democratic process in a non-confrontational, but assertive and results-oriented way.

Indicative target interventions include:

- Link up with various sectors-- government, civil society, academe, business, church, labor unions-- for social accountability dialogue
- Support organizational development for social accountability
- Develop positive interactions with government, at different levels of the bureaucracy, for monitoring and problem-solving activities
- Help coordinate advocacy at the regional level, such as ASEAN Meeting

Action Network powered by social networking

ANSA East Asia Pacific is designed as an action network that is powered by social networking. As an action network, it drives members to advocacies and initiatives that promote social accountability. Through social networking, it personalizes the interest on social accountability and facilitates free and open exchanges.

ANSA East Asia Pacific crystallizes the purpose of the networking component as follows: "to provide a venue [platform, mechanism] where stakeholders meet, engage and help expand [spread the word, contaminate] activities that lead to exchanges of knowledge, information, resources, problem-solving, approaches, and expertise promoting interest in SA as a living advocacy."

Three core elements shall drive the networking strategy. They are membership, collaboration and partnership, and the website.

First, as an open network, it accommodates both organization and individual members. Organizational membership provides solidarity with the institutional causes of various citizen and civil society groups. Individual membership, on the other hand, supplies the passionate interest that will drive the network into a movement.

The network shall move in a progression to activate and promote membership, namely (a) scanning of environment, (b) recruitment, (c) maintenance, and (d) scaling up. From a preliminary scanning of the regional and country environments, where stakeholders and civil society practitioners are mapped and profiled, it will proceed to recruitment via letter-communications and face-to-face meetings. The network must aspire for the retention of recruited members, particularly those who are vital partners and collaborators. From simple membership, a scale-up plan has to be formulated to make way for an advanced and more committed responsibility towards the network.

Moreover, the network will identify exceptional members who, to adapt Malcolm Gladwell's terminology in his book *Tipping Point*, will serve as "connectors", "brokers" and "mavens". The connectors spread the word about the network given the many people and groups they know. The brokers are charismatic personalities

who persuade people and groups to join the network. The mavens are "hoarders of knowledge and information" or experts in the field of social accountability whose expertise attract people and groups to the network.

Second, as a result of the convergence of the different stakeholders within the network, the strength of connections between and among them can be examined. The connections may be viewed from different perspectives, namely degree, between-ness, centrality, and reach. Degree refers to the strength of the bond among the members; between-ness to the nearness of connections; centrality to the dependence on a central initiator; and reach to the capacity of members to multiply themselves.

Collaboration and partnership fuel the dynamism within the network. To fulfil this function, the network shall encourage both online and offline exchanges that make possible the incubation of project ideas, monitoring initiatives, capacity building activities, and advocacies.

In recognition of the role of the youth in social accountability, a special initiative on youth participation will be pursued (see concept paper).

From these interactions and exchanges, a unique social accountability language is expected to be developed by and among the network participants. It will accumulate words and meanings that define the work of thinkers and practitioners in the region. In the process, the network indigenizes the concept and practice of social accountability.

Finally, the website is a vital tool to steer network members' interactions given its regional scope. It is imperative that this tool be customized for members' needs for connection, information, knowledge and resources, as well as opportunity to broadcast their own ideas, advocacies and aspirations. The website must treat the network members as both receiver and contributor of anything that will define its content and direction.

This suggests the appropriateness of the social networking approach to the website design for ANSA East Asia Pacific. It focuses on the individual as the basic unit of connection, but emphasizes opportunity for grouping. It highlights discussions and forums and the common space to share materials and resources.

See Attachment 2: Work Breakdown Structure.

Key Performance Indicators

With membership and collaboration and partnership, aided by the special function of the website, as the drivers of the networking strategy, the performance measures can be categorized in two ways. The first is in terms of network quality and the other in terms of network productivity.

Quality refers to the following:
- Members
- Strength of members' connections
- Influence of members
- Language

Productivity, on the other hand, refers to the following:
- Project incubation
- Transfer of knowledge
- Advocacy
- Policy Influence

The key performance indicators are as follows:

Quality

Output	Measure	Target
Membership	Number of active member organizations	10
	Number of active member individuals	90
Strength of connections	Degree	Direct external connections per member ≥ 2
	Between-ness	Members' interconnection ≥ 11%
	Centrality	Dependence on secretariat < 30%
	Reach	Enrolment > dropouts
Influence of members	Number of connectors	4 per country
	Number of brokers	4 per country
	Number of mavens	4 per country
Language	Vocabulary	1 manuscript
	Indigenous ways and practices	1 manuscript

Productivity

Output	Measure	Target
Project incubation	Number of monitoring initiatives incubated	4 (1 per sector)
Transfer of knowledge	Number of capacity-building activities initiated by members	4 (1 per sector)
Advocacy	Number of advocacy pushed	1 (region-wide, long-term, secretariat-driven)
Policy influence	Number of reform policy instruments proposed	4 (1 per sector)

Monitoring and Evaluation

Internal website tracking of activities and survey of transactions shall be used for the monitoring and evaluation of network performance.

The website generates internal tracking of connections for each online member and for each member's activity within the online network.

The transactional survey may make use of the PACT tool for Organizational Network Analysis (ONA). It can analyze the strength of connections, as described in the Key Performance Indicators.

The Monitoring and Evaluation may be done twice a year.

Definition of Terms

Some terms may require clarification. See below:

Activate
To activate the network platform is to set up the infrastructures for it, articulate its services, and introduce its existence to the public. It implies readiness to accept members and respond to their expectations.

Establish
To establish the network platform is to maintain the members' steady interest and participation in network activities. It manifests the members' relative familiarity with the network and its services.

Common platform
A common platform is a venue to bring the members together in an organized manner. It presents a matrix of activities, where similarities and differences are recognized and allowed to flourish.

Connectivity
Connectivity is a process of interaction among the members that keeps the network alive. It defines the degree and depth of relationships among the members.

SA stakeholders
Social Accountability stakeholders are the members of the network, regardless of their contributions to and level of participation in network activities.

Region
The region refers to the grouping of countries in East Asia and the Pacific. They include American Samoa, Cambodia, China, Democratic Republic of Korea, Fiji, Indonesia, Kiribati, Laos, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Thailand, Timor Leste, Tonga, Vanuatu, and Vietnam.

Enhance interest
To enhance interest means higher demand for information on social accountability. It implies more activities to gain understanding and appreciation. It also means attraction to incentives, in the form of opportunities to meet new people and learn new ideas and techniques.

Enhance participation
To enhance participation means greater effort by the citizens to engage the government using social accountability methods. It is also a greater capacity to undertake initiatives.

Open network
Open network means the network welcomes any organization or individual from the region to join, but subject to processes of clearing and verification of the Secretariat. It is not by invitation.

Practitioners
Practitioners are civil society organizations or private individuals who have engaged and/or are currently engaging the government in a social accountability initiative.

Intellectuals and researchers
Intellectuals and researchers are institutions or individuals who are concerned with the academic value of social accountability.

Collaborators
Collaborators are organizations or individuals who belong to other sectors or fields but wish to intermingle with the network.

Supporters
Supporters are organizations or individuals who contribute resources to the cause of social accountability. Resources may be monetary or in kind and services.

Contact base for advocacy
A contact base for advocacy is a database of organizations and individuals that can be tapped to support a specific advocacy. It is characterized by accessible and reliable information on the organizations and individuals.

Knowledge-sharing
Knowledge-sharing happens with the exchange of ideas, learning materials, tools and other useful information.

Partnership-building
Partnership-building is the coming together of different groups and individuals to push an issue or implement an activity.

In-country networks
In-country networks are existing networks of social accountability organizations within a country. They have active member organizations who share the same advocacy.

Online service
Online service refers to a website with knowledge products and social networking feature that the members can avail of.

Direct-encounter venues

Direct-encounter venues refer to organized events for sharing and exchange, such as conferences, forums and consultations. Through this venue, the members have the opportunity to interact directly with other members, strengthen bonding and teamwork.

Gradual build up

Gradual build up recognizes the need to spend some time before the members get familiarized and become sufficiently interested with the new platform. This targets selected organizations or individuals to eventually commit more formal involvement in network activities. Their contributions to the network likewise get more significant in the long run.

Hand-holding

Hand-holding is a capacity-building process where an organization with demonstrable competency in social accountability mentors another organization in a relatively disadvantaged position. It assumes willingness in both parties to undertake the process.

Collaborative approach

Collaborative approach is based on a mutual agreement between the government and citizen groups to undertake a common objective. It requires a trusted champion as channel of reform within the government.

Government-citizen interface

Government-citizen interface is the venue of dialogue between government and citizens. The venue allows sufficient and meaningful opportunity for both to ventilate issues and concerns.

Socio-cultural sensitivity

Socio-cultural sensitivity refers to the high regard for the peculiar way of beliefs and practices of peoples in East Asia Pacific.

Attachment 1:

YOUTH NETWORK FOR SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY
A Concept Paper

Rationale

As it is the youth that holds the future, it goes without saying that they have an important role in social accountability advocacy. This is peculiarly true in the East Asia Pacific region where a big portion of the population (half are 24 years old or younger and could go as high as 63% in one country) belongs to the young generation. However, youth participation in social accountability so far is negligible, or at best limited to token attempts at raising issue awareness through seminars, forums and such. Despite the gravity of government corruption problem, rarely are the youth summoned to understand it fully, much less, share in the responsibility in solving it. Governance is considered too abstract a concept to the youth and anti-corruption work is believed to be an exclusively adult matter. This perhaps partly explains why the youth sector remains indifferent to, sometimes clueless about, and worst of all, tolerant of existing corruption in their midst. If ever they speak to condemn bad governance and demand their rights, it is doubtful if their voice will be heard.

A few citizen groups, however, made some headway in higher-order social accountability advocacy. A non-government organization in Cambodia, for instance, has integrated anti-corruption subject in school curriculum. In the Philippines, scouts and students volunteered actively for textbook delivery monitoring. It is imperative to build on these gains by encouraging more initiatives of this kind. In this time and age, one way to encourage them is make use of the networking approach, which amplifies reach and sense of collectiveness.

The formation of a Youth Network for Social Accountability (YNSA) is expected to:
- lend **voice** to the youth sector;
- enhance their **capacity** for a more meaningful engagement;
- provide broader **opportunity** to exercise citizenship; and
- establish **linkage** with other key sectors of society.

The enduring hope that the youth will fulfil their promise of hope cannot be discounted easily. The youth network relies on three factors that make young people a potential force for social accountability:
- **number**: they are found in schools, clubs, shops, offices, shopping malls, etc.;
- **enthusiasm**: they are proactive in trying new things that interest them; and
- **technology**: they command the use of internet-based information and communication technologies.

Specifically, the YNSA can therefore address the issue of youth sector participation in social accountability by raising awareness of the youth as stakeholders of governance, identifying areas for social improvement using the citizen report card,

with emphasis on delivery of basic social services, and empowering the youth sector in engaging key players in governance.

Development Objective

The development objective of the formation of YNSA is to establish a model approach to youth participation in social accountability. The approach should mainstream social accountability method in the youth culture and amplify youth concerns in the overall governance agenda, particularly in the delivery of better social services.

Project Activities

As YNSA focuses on enlarging youth participation in social accountability work, it has to initiate activities in four phases, namely (1) networking, (2) tool design, (3) mobilization, and (4) dialogue.

In the initial phase of forming the network, the activity consists of tapping existing active groups interested in social accountability issues. It shall take advantage of the online platform provided by the ANSA East Asia Pacific to activate and sustain the members' interest in the network.

In the tool design phase, the youth develops the report card that will be used for monitoring a specific social service. A specialist may be commissioned to help in designing the tool, but the young users shall be the ultimate judge of its usefulness.

In the mobilization phase, the tool is put to actual use by the young people. This phase will have sub-phases that orient them on (1) key issues on good governance and social accountability, (2) how to use the monitoring tool, and (3) how to process and report the results of the monitoring.

Finally, the dialogue phase provides the venue for youth interaction with concerned government offices. Based on the results of the report card, the youth shall articulate their demands for improved governance.

Innovation

YNSA expects the dynamic and technology-savvy youth to take the lead in social accountability innovations in capacity building, collaboration and social mobilization. These will come mostly in the form of a heated presence in social networks, blogs and YouTube to promote social accountability. In particular, an interesting project worth pursuing is the use of multimedia gadgets, such as video camera, for youth journalists.

Sustainability and Scalability

The youth network shall operate like any community or school clubs. It perpetuates itself by getting a constant supply of new members and resources.

The use of internet technology also increases the prospect of sustaining and scaling up the youth group's advocacy. It is a medium that is conveniently accessible to young people, with or without additional funding support.

Attachment 2:

WORK BREAKDOWN STRUCTURE 13

1. STRATEGY DOCUMENT
    1.1 Membership Strategy
        1.1.1 Scanning
            1.1.1.1 Framework
            1.1.1.2 Method
            1.1.1.3 Outline
        1.1.2 Recruitment
            1.1.2.1 Criteria for selection of members
            1.1.2.2 Classification of members
        1.1.3 Maintenance
            1.1.3.1 Transition from individual to institutional
            1.1.3.2 Decentralization
        1.1.4 Scaling up
            1.1.4.1 Best practices
            1.1.4.2 Global partnerships
    1.2 Collaboration and Partnership Strategy
        1.2.1 Online
            1.2.1.1 Exchanges
            1.2.1.2 Project Ideas
            1.2.1.3 Capacity Building
            1.2.1.4 Advocacy
        1.2.2 Special Initiatives
            1.2.2.1 Concept Paper on Youth Participation
    1.3 Website Strategy
        1.3.1 Front-end
            1.3.1.1 Content/Features
            1.3.1.2 Mechanics to populate
            1.3.1.3 Contributors
            1.3.1.4 Designer
        1.3.2 Back-end
            1.3.2.1 Specifications
            1.3.2.2 Programmer

2. MEMBERSHIP
    2.1 Scanning Report
        2.1.1 Start-up
            2.1.1.1 Scanning Framework
            2.1.1.2 Country Profile
            2.1.1.3 Civil Society Directory
            2.1.1.4 Civil Society Profile
            2.1.1.5 List of Sources and References
        2.1.2 Continuation
            2.1.2.1 Review of previous scanning report
            2.1.2.2 Update previous scanning report
            2.1.2.3 Identify new countries
            2.1.2.4 Scanning report for new countries
    2.2 Recruitment

2.2.1 Letter-based
    2.2.1.1 Internal List of Prospective Invitees per country
        2.2.1.1.1 Familiar networks
            2.2.1.1.1.1 Name of Organization
            2.2.1.1.1.2 Name of Head
            2.2.1.1.1.3 Telephone Number
            2.2.1.1.1.4 E-mail Address
            2.2.1.1.1.5 Website address
        2.2.1.1.2 Familiar individuals
            2.2.1.1.2.1 Name of individual
            2.2.1.1.2.2 Telephone number
            2.2.1.1.2.3 E-mail address
        2.2.1.1.3 Web-generated name of networks
            2.2.1.1.3.1 Name of Organization
            2.2.1.1.3.2 Name of Head
            2.2.1.1.3.3 Telephone Number
            2.2.1.1.3.4 E-mail Address
            2.2.1.1.3.5 Website address
        2.2.1.1.4 Web-generated name of individuals
            2.2.1.1.4.1 Name of Individual
            2.2.1.1.4.2 Telephone Number
            2.2.1.1.4.3 E-mail Address
            2.2.1.1.4.4 Website address
    2.2.1.2 Referrals
        2.2.1.2.1 Organizations
            2.2.1.2.1.1 Name of Organization
            2.2.1.2.1.2 Name of Head
            2.2.1.2.1.3 Telephone Number
            2.2.1.2.1.4 E-mail Address
            2.2.1.2.1.5 Website address
        2.2.1.2.2 Individuals
            2.2.1.2.2.1 Name of Individual
            2.2.1.2.2.2 Telephone Number
            2.2.1.2.2.3 E-mail Address
            2.2.1.2.2.4 Website address
2.2.2 Face-to-face (1 per country)
    2.2.2.1 Aggressive
        2.2.2.1.1 Country contact organizations
            2.2.2.1.1.1 Qualifications and credentials
            2.2.2.1.1.2 Contact details
            2.2.2.1.1.3 Arrangements
        2.2.2.1.2 Resource Person
            2.2.2.1.2.1 Powerpoint material
            2.2.2.1.2.2 Profile
            2.2.2.1.2.3 Honorarium
        2.2.2.1.3 Participants
            2.2.2.1.3.1 Criteria for selection of participants
                2.2.2.1.3.1.1 Civil Society
                2.2.2.1.3.1.2 Government
                2.2.2.1.3.1.3 Business
            2.2.2.1.3.2 List of prospective participants

3. COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP
   3.1 Online
      3.1.1 Exchanges
         3.1.1.1 Secretariat-driven
            3.1.1.1.1 Mechanics and incentives to facilitate exchanges
            3.1.1.1.2 Call for proposals
            3.1.1.1.3 Discussion paper
         3.1.1.2 Maven-initiated
         3.1.1.3 Member-driven
      3.1.2 Project Ideas
         3.1.2.1 Secretariat-driven
            3.1.2.1.1 Call for proposals
            3.1.2.1.2 Discussion paper
         3.1.2.2 Maven-initiated
            3.1.2.2.1 Request for Discussion Paper
            3.1.2.2.2 Request for referral to current studies and researches
         3.1.2.3 Member-driven
            3.1.2.3.1 Collection of Discussion Papers
            3.1.2.3.2 Mechanics for tracking
      3.1.3 Capacity Building
         3.1.3.1 Secretariat-driven
            3.1.3.1.1 Call for proposals
            3.1.3.1.2 Comments on existing modules
         3.1.3.2 Maven-initiated
         3.1.3.3 Member-driven
            3.1.3.3.1 Collection of Discussion Papers
            3.1.3.3.2 Mechanics for tracking
      3.1.4 Advocacy
         3.1.4.1 Secretariat-driven
            3.1.4.1.1 Draft statements
            3.1.4.1.2 Consultations
         3.1.4.2 Maven-initiated
            3.1.4.2.1 Request for Discussion Paper
            3.1.4.2.2 Request for referral to current studies and researches
         3.1.4.3 Member-driven
            3.1.4.3.1 Collection of Discussion Papers
            3.1.4.3.2 Mechanics for tracking
   3.2 Special Purpose
      3.2.1 List of special individuals and organizations
         3.2.1.1 Criteria for selection
         3.2.1.2 Contact details
      3.2.2 Agenda
      3.2.3 Partnership plan

4. WEBSITE
   4.1 Front-end
      4.1.1 News
         4.1.1.1 Collection of stories
         4.1.1.2 Guidelines for writing
         4.1.1.3 Writers
      4.1.2 Members
         4.1.2.1 Database and profiling of members