_____

Civil Society Workshop Minutes

"Panorama of Civil Society Organizations in Afghanistan: From the perspective of coordination"

26th January 2015 Kabul Afghanistan – Queen Palace Babur Garden

8:00-8:30	Registration and breakfast
8:30- 8:40	Opening of workshop and prayer, followed by an introduction by ACBAR Chairman
8:40-9:10	Presentation of the findings of the report and structure of the workshop by ACBAR
9:10-9:30	History of Civil Society in Afghanistan by WADAN
9:30-9:50	Challenging definition CS/CSO AICS
9:50-10:10	Q&A
10:30-11:00	Scope and actors of coordination by CSHRN
11:00-11:20	Space for the international Community within Afghan Civil Society by ACKU
11:20-11:40	Support, funding and sustainability of Afghan Civil Society by CPI
11:40-12:00	Q&A
13:00-13:20	Advocacy capacity and initiatives by APPRO
13:20-13:40	CSO and media, scope, synergy and challenges by Killid Group
13:40-14:00	Q&A
14:00-14:40	Working groups on relation of civil society with key stakeholders
14:40-15:40	Presentation and recommendations of each group
15:40-16:00	From the past to the future of Afghan Civil Society by TLO
16:00-16:10	Wrap up and conclusion by ACBAR

The workshop commenced with a recitation of verses of Holy Quran. ACBAR's Steering Committee Chairman then welcomed participants and introduced the report, "*Panorama of Civil Society Organizations in Afghanistan from the Perspective of Coordination*, hereinafter the CSO report. Prepared by ACBAR, the report incorporates important findings in terms of recommendations for the Government of Afghanistan, the private sector, media, and other civil society actors, including ACBAR's members. Besides launching CSO report, the workshop aimed to clearly define civil society in Afghanistan and provide further information how to strengthen society in Afghanistan through a work group session.

ACBAR Presentation: Panorama of Civil Society Organizations in Afghanistan

ACBAR is an independent body for the collective voice of NGOs operating in Afghanistan, dedicated to facilitating effective aid effectiveness, capacity development, advocacy, coordination, and information exchange services to address the humanitarian recovery and sustainable development needs of the country effectively and efficiently. The members of ACBAR are committed to work in partnership with each other, the government, donors, civil society organizations (CSOs) and communities to support *Afghan – led* humanitarian and development assistance.

ACBAR was created in August 1988 in Pakistan, in response to the demand from many Afghan and international non-governmental organizations involved in humanitarian work in Afghanistan, in addition to many Afghan refugees in Pakistan at the time. Between 1988 and 1999, ACBAR focused on coordination of humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people implemented by its members in cooperation with other main stakeholders such as the UN agencies and donors. ACBAR returned to Kabul in 2000 and has been registered with Afghanistan's Ministry of Economy since 2001. During the Taliban era, ACBAR acted as a trusted facilitator with a view to supporting a peaceful and just society. During this time, ACBAR's aimed to improve the relations between the Government and NGO implementers.

At the time of writing, ACBAR represented and supported 128 members, including 76 INGOs and 52 ANGOs, working across Afghanistan. The organization is mandated to ensure active participation of CSOs and networks in joint initiatives, and coordinate with NGOs and political stakeholders in terms of policy development. ACBAR works closely with the international community, donors, UN agencies and the media to enable a good operational working environment for NGOs.

Why the Report?

The CSO report was authored by consultant Marine Durand, who was hired by ACBAR on a three month contract financed by Tawanmandi. The report highlights the lack of understanding of civil society in Afghanistan and establishes the scope of activities currently undertaken by civil society. Furthermore, the report focuses on coordination within civil society, in addition to regional and thematic networks registered with the Ministry of Economy.

The report aims to examine and investigate what constitutes a CSO and outlines the types of organizations and activities undertaken by civil society in Kabul. This incorporates existing coordination entities and their respective capacities, their standing position, perception, and the role that ACBAR has in relation to civil society actors. The report will be used by ACBAR to strengthen ACBAR's strategy for the next three years.

The report's methodology focuses on qualitative information over quantitative data. Information was gathered through face interviews, skype interviews, and questionnaires regarding inter-organizational coordination and relationships. Research was conducted at a central level. Due to a limitation in human resources, it was not possible for ACBAR to cover Afghanistan's provincial areas; however, if funding became available in the future, ACBAR could conduct such a research at provincial level.

Findings of the Report

The report finds a lack of proper definition and understanding of civil society in Afghanistan, limited coordination and fierce competition between CSOs in Afghanistan. The report gives recommendations to improve relations between CSOs, the media, government and private sector. Better understanding and advocacy could be achieved through strengthening knowledge and resource capacity and tools.

CSOs need a broader engagement outside of their own constituencies and should remain focused and united in terms of joint initiatives. For instance, more engagement is needed with Afghanistan's young generation, universities and other educational institutes.

History of Civil Society in Afghanistan by ACBAR's Steering Committee Chairman

When looking at the history of civil society in Afghanistan, it is important to consider:

- Who provides services to remote communities?
- Who manages potable and irrigation water?
- Who manages local disputes?
- What is the government reach?
- What is the international community, NGO and CSOs reach?

The traditional setup and century old civil society mechanisms bring people together with local governments. Although these mechanisms have the same role of facilitating communication between the government and local communities, they have been given different names, including, Arbab, Wakil, Malek, Masher.

With regards to bridging the gap between local communities and the international community, efforts over the last decade have focused at a central level in terms of development and rehabilitation. This is neither satisfactory and or acceptable to the Afghanistan's general public.

Modern, Traditional, Formal and Informal Approaches to Defining Civil Society

If the definition of civil society can be separated into what constitutes modern, traditional, formal and informal civil society one may reach a clear picture of the evolution of civil society.

Some people believe that King Amir Sher Ali Khan 1862 – 1878 was founder of "Shams-u-Nahaar" serving and informing the people through publishing news, essays enlightening people. During this era there were also signs of European industrial revolution in the daily newspaper.

Following World War II between 1939 and 1945, many believe that civil society in Afghanistan made remarkable progress in terms of media, job creation, establishment of political parties etc. Others have termed the era between 1952 – 1952 as the decade dedicated to democracy where women and men were legally enjoying equal rights.

In 1946, King Shah Mahmood's educated dignitaries found their way to the cabinet of the time. During 1948 – 1949, elections of a national assembly and municipal were held in a free and fair manner.

Other historians argue that during 1951, media law and freedom decreed in 1951. One of the worst eras for civil society, however, was 1971 – 1980. During this time a 'power vacuum 'in Afghanistan was obvious.

From 1986 onward Afghanistan experienced a 'brain drain'. The political context of the time meant that people were physically and psychologically insecure. The worst damage which occurred to the efficiency of civil society during this time was due to lack of trust among organizations and people due to hostile attitudes all over. Today Afghanistan has many national and international NGOs working in Afghanistan, who work to fill the gaps supporting Afghans.

Traditional Civil Society

Throughout history, the Government of Afghanistan has relied on the traditional set up and mechanisms of civil society by way of Elder Shuras, Ulama Shuras, and Education Shuras. Development actors, NGOs and formal CSOs also rely on informal CSOs gaining access and acceptance in a country.

There are over 150,000 villages throughout Afghanistan and not a single village is without Masid and Imam (this is true whether there are two houses in an area or 200). Ulama and Masjids' Imams are the key change agents and well aware of the needs of communities and individuals. They teach basic literacy and act as trustee entities among people.

Throughout history, governments have sought approval, and sometimes even legitimacy, from religious authorities. The government needs to establish religious educational institutions and communicate with well-established private madrasas in the country to help build trust and integrate religious intellectuals.

The CSO report found that government should be careful not to marginalize Islamic (madrasa) education politically, socially and economically as this could increase tensions between religious and secular education systems.

Beside this, the government should engage local religious leaders in the process of legal reform, and Government could incorporate Zakat (the Islamic charity tax) into income tax to fund social security functions. At present, the social security network is poor, largely because Zakat is not well implemented.

The NGO community should formalize their relations with the religious authorities at local, regional and national levels. This would encourage both their support and protection[1].

Religious leaders are among Afghanistan's traditional "gatekeepers" for making local decisions, especially on questions of women's rights, and they can be effectively engaged[2]. The WORDE research explores best practices, and ultimately, avenues through which the international community can best enhance indigenous efforts of both faith-based and non-faith based local Afghan organizations[3].

---

[1] Co-operation for Peace And Unity 2007

[2] Referenced, Palwasha L. KakarJune 18, 2014

[3] Referenced WORDE research, Organization for resource and development

Reform of Traditional Civil Society

Village organizations and Shuras are an important part of Afghan civil society and work to provide services to communities. They also serve as local aid committees through funding from World Bank channeled through Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD). Community Development Councils (CDCs), District Development Assemblies (DDAs) advise or oversee the administration of assistance.

Fostering Shuras and Shuras of Ulama (religious scholars) is important to "*anchoring civil society as a force in Afghanistan*[4]".

Change in Donors' Approach

The donor community has recently recognized the role of traditional civil society in Afghanistan and therefore increasingly makes room for traditional leaders in their programs, Ulama and Imams in particular.

Presentation Afghanistan Institute for Civil Society AICS

Afghanistan Institute for Civil Society (AICS) is an institution which aims to increase credibility of Afghan civil society. There are still issues with defining civil society in Afghanistan. It is therefore important to highlight the gaps, distinctions and space for civil society. It is important to consider civil society actors, functions and identity. Perceptions of civil society should also be considered, especially the implications of perceptions which may prevent the sector moving forward.

Civil Society Actors

Civil society actors and associations, include unions, educational institutions, and cultural institutions. Further, NGOs, including networks like ACBAR, Afghanistan Civil Society Forum (ACSF), Civil Society and Human Rights Network (CSHRN), Afghanistan Women Network (AWN) are also part of Afghan civil society. Although traditional structures also form part of Afghan civil society, it is important to note that sometimes traditional structures can undermine principles and values of a civil society. It is therefore important to closely observe what that general civil society stands for. Activities within society must be coordinated with traditional leaders and civil society groups or individual activists who mostly show up in media. Unity of these conceptions would bring specific support and strengthen the civil society framework.

Functions of CSOs

As with any conflict country, CSOs in Afghanistan have to be broadly involved to the rehabilitation process of Afghanistan. In terms of function, CSOs and especially NGOs work to provide service delivery and response to issues which affect communities, including those in remote areas.

Civil society has played a critical role in trainings, civic education and awareness raising, advocacy and policy engagement. For example, numerous civil society structures convinced people to come out and vote in the 2014 elections.

---

[4] Civil Society Assessment Counterpart International, 2005

Perceptions, Realities and Expectations of Civil Society

Identity and Image

When considering identity and real image, it is NGOs who have access and provide critical services during conflict and emergency situations. These include, providing health care, education services, and humanitarian assistance. NGOs also advocate for constituency behalf citizens, i.e. giving citizens a 'voice'.

It must, however, be acknowledged, that CSOs and NGOs in Afghanistan are perceived to work in non-transparent ways. This is due, for example, to individuals entering into the CSO community to begin their self-interested career in politics or NGOs hiring family members, which turns the organization more into a family business. Additionally, even the most efficient organizations are perceived to be wasting resources from donors. In general, during past years, greater work and progress has been made by the civil society to main positive perceptions. Good perception is paramount. Organizations should remain committed to the values and principles of civil society, otherwise their work will hold less relevance in the future.

Credibility and Relevance

It is also important to define and identify sources of credibility as many CSOs must demonstrate credibility in order to gain funding. The level of trust from the public should be seen as the main source of credibility for CSOs.

Accountability and Transparency

CSOs are supposed to hold the government accountable as well as ensuring that they themselves are 100% accountable. This includes assuring transparency within processes and procedures through reports to donors, in addition to feedback and reports the public, media and board of governance. Mechanisms for self-regulation, including, the codes of conduct developed by ACBAR, Counter Part International (CPI), and other networks, all should all be observed.

Representation

CSOs exist to represent the interest of particular groups, communities and people. It is important that this representation is legitimate. CSO activists should be involved in decision making and policy mechanisms to represent the views of their constituency and should not just used as a mechanism for voting. It is time to re-connect to a grassroots level to maintain credibility and tendency.

Challenges and Recommendations

- CSOs and NGOs are currently generalist in their activities. As a way of gaining funding, organizations work in multiple areas. CSOs and NGOs need to be more focused in their activities and expertise.
- Organizations have to be more mission driven and less donor dependent. There should be a balance between available funding, main missions and targets. If organizations are driven by funding opportunities only, and ignore their objectives they will lose their relevance and effectiveness.

- Organizations should work in collaboration with each other and aim to be less competitive. Although diversity is important, CSOs also have to be collaborative, in order to achieve the most impact, efficiency and effectiveness in their programs.
- Programs should aim to have more long-term and a proactive engagement and less short-term reactive strategies. Currently program activities, in particular those surrounding advocacy, policy and strategy engagement have a very short focus. There are several cases where CSOs and NGOs will react to a situation but provide no follow-up, making the activity fruitless. Advocacy need to be strong enough to bear relevance to future policies or legislation for the coming 5 to 10 years. This type of long term planning is currently missing in Afghanistan.
- For long-term developmental programs, there should be more engagement from the donor community to prevent against negative impacts to program sustainability, shared values and missions. This will happen by long-term coordinated support and open communication with donors.
- Conventional civic activism is no longer sufficient; more than press statement needed. During last two years civic movement has increased and must be supported by CSOs.
- More money is not always good. Less money needs to be spent in a more accountable, efficient, effective way.

Civil Society and Human Rights Network (CSHRN) Presentation- What Is Civil Society?

Civil society includes, NGOs registered with registered in the Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Justice, or registered under any structure of the Government who works for positive change. In addition to this, other institutions which are not registered under government structure but work for positive change, rule of law, good governance, women's rights, human rights and other issues also come under the meaning of civil society. These include institutions, unions, associations, local shuras, community based organizations and academic centers.

There are currently there are 5000 organizations and institutions registered by Ministry of Economy and Ministry of Justice; around 700 organizations are registered with the Ministry of Culture.

There are many unregistered informal structures in urban and rural areas which are involved in decision making process; they are very much active in decision making events and provincial and local levels. Civil society has shared values and visions with these structures, which should be utilized.

Coordinating Bodies

Many coordinating bodies exist in Afghanistan and are very active within civil society. These include, ACBAR, Afghan Civil Society Forum ACSF, Afghan Women's Network (AWN), Civil Society and Human Rights Network (CSHRN), Afghan NGOs Coordination Bureau (ANCB), Foundation for Culture and Civil Society (FCCS), Transitional Justice Committee (TJC) and the Civil Society Coordination Center (CSCC) .

During the Bonn 2 Conference, democratic elections were held to decide who would organize and represent Afghan Civil society during the event. Pro-government organizations wanted to interfere and impose views on civil society organizations during the conference. After Bonn 2 the representatives of Afghan civil society who took part, discussed a solution to the problem. The Civil

Society and Human Right Network (CSHRN) and Afghan Civil Society Forum (ACSF) developed an MoU to establish a constructive cooperation mechanism for all civil society organizations. This MoU was signed by majority of umbrella organizations and the Civil Society Joint working Group (CSJWG) was established to facilitate the joint advocacy of civil society organizations. The members of CSJWG tried to include all remaining civil society in decision making process and joint advocacy plans.

Today the CS-JWG is a national platform that consists of around 30 civil society thematic networks covering over 1000 civil society organizations (CSOs). Members of CSJWG elect one member to act as the secretariat of the CSJWG. Currently the members of the CSJWG have planned to conduct a meeting and bring change in the shape and structure of the secretariat of the CSJWG; a board consisting of 13 organizations will take the responsibility of the secretariat.

Aim of Coordination

Coordination allows for information and resource sharing, strengthening constructive cooperation between different key players to have a better influence on decisions, and working towards a common goal without duplication of activities. A further aim is to strengthening horizontal and vertical interactions; Interaction can be divided into three tracks; track 1 is the highest level and includes government bodies and international community. Track 2 is a medium level consisting of CSOs. Track 3 consists of local communities, shuras and CBC in remote areas. Coordination should occur between these divisions both horizontally and vertically.

Challenges

There is currently a low level of trust between civil society organizations particularly between formal and informal organizations. Furthermore there is negative competition between networks, Pro-government civil society organizations and 'brief case' NGOs- a term used to describe crooked or 'mafia' NGOs. There is also short term support of international communities for coordination mechanisms.

Presentation by ACKU - Space for the international Community within Afghan Civil Society

Civil society has finally come of age and is now in a position to perform very valuable services for the future of this nation. It is very dangerous to generalize about anything Afghan as pontification causes disagreements. Someone will always disagree because the fabric of the society is so rich and varied that many different variations have to be considered.

The definition of civil society has been articulated for many years but more work is needed in terms of:

- **Developing trust between organizations-** Striving to establish trust is important as no progress or development can take place without trust. International organizations should work hard to dispel the impression that they are working in isolation and are intent of protecting their own territory, and projecting their own ideas. It is the international organizations which work in partnership with Afghan organizations which are considered the beacons of the community.

Afghan organizations must bond with the community they are working with and deliver practical projects which are relevant to the needs of the people they are serving. In the past, Afghan

organizations were not very well regarded and suspected of been too influenced by foreign ideals and were accused of weak governance and professionalism, in addition to negligent accountability. There was also a view that Afghan civil society was riddled with opportunists- NGOs with incredible energy and ideas but directed their efforts towards the individual and not the good of overall society. Today, however some of these organizations with previous negative imagery now represent the pillars of Afghan civil society.

- **Developing capacity of civil society organizations-** Capacity building is vital, particularly for international NGOs to make sure the effectiveness of their programs is sustainable over time. Technical expertise paired with cultural sensitivity creates something fresh and works towards the development of something diverse. This takes collaborative sharing and patience; quick fixes are nothing but facades and are not sustainable.

The ultimate goal is to change attitudes. This is particularly difficult when traditions go way back. It is not the *how* which is important but *why* it is beneficial to change attitudes, only then will real sustainable progress take place.

Attitudes are changing, for example, the attitude towards secular education and the acceptance of pre and post natal care. The acceptance of these ideas has taken place because they have shown they are valid with good results. When considering better human rights and practices across various sectors, it is the changing of attitudes that make thes difference. This does not happen over-night. A lot of people and effort has gone into the changing of attitudes, and a lot of capacity building also.

- **Developing a sense of ownership-** One of the most admirable Afghan personality traits is their passion for being self-sufficient. This has been badly undermined by cascades of too much money and legions of advisers who tended to "do" rather than "advise." Therefore there was little motivation to make sure projects succeeded because there was no sense of ownership. It is about time the internationals pull back and give the reins to the Afghans**.**

Counterpart International Presentation (CPI) - Sustainability of CSOs

The sustainability of CSOs has become an increasingly important topic. Sustainability is the cornerstone of civil society.

Reduction of aid, especially as international troops withdraw from Afghanistan will have a major impact on CSOs and NGOs. Organizations which work in insecure areas or have experienced a surge of aid since 2002 from international and military sources will be the most vulnerable to a reduction in aid. CSOs cannot limit themselves to the needs and priorities of international donors who are here on a short term basis. Therefore, as international troops withdraw CSOs must work more with Afghan communities and encourage them to be more participatory.

Concept of Sustainability

'Sustainability' is not an end, it is a process. It is not just about economic resources. It is a long term process with socio-economic dimensions to it. It should take into account, capacity building,- the need for specialization for CSOs, advocacy efforts, infrastructure, and trust as an economic and political institution.

One may consider sustainability a process or wheel which enables civil society is to build bridges between government bodies and communities. If sustainability is equal to specialization in a particular field, then that community's needs and priority's must be taken into account. These needs and priorities are equal to empowerment and a sense of ownership. This also creates transparency and continuous support which is equal to building trust, and encourages Afghans to work together and build institutions. In this manner a cycle of sustainability which sustains itself is created.

There is also a requirement for CSOs to create needs. In the 1970s a Dutch organization went to Indonesia and bought an economist into a poor community which mainly produced rice as a source of income. The economist advised to give each family a cow for the selling of milk etc. 1 month later, all the cows had been slaughtered. The community argued that as they had no fences, the cows were destroying their fields. The NGO got it wrong; a top down approach had not worked so the NGO asked the community what they wanted. They asked for more cows. This is an example of why it is important to reflect needs and create demands.

There is need to diversify the services CSOs provide, for example, the development of business developments unit within NGOs. There is also a need to improve the perception of NGOs. A 2012 Asia Foundation Survey found that 24% of people asked thought that CSOs were not functioning for the needs of the people. 47% thought that CSOs were working for personal benefit and not for the community. This is not good in a competitive environment. There is a need to work with communities and for communities in partnership with the Government.

There is a need to build trust with communities and give ownership to those communities. NGOs must move towards specialization. They must focus on areas where they have a particular advantage. This means better work. Quality work means trust that donors and communities will come to CSOs. Not the other way round.

Questions and Answers Session

Question: How can there be trust between CSOs when something is dictated by donors? How do you avoid been donor driven?

Answer: CSOs must be strong and clear about the needs of the community. There is an importance in balancing the expectations of a community with the needs to generate funds. Communication with communities is paramount and it is also important to see past superficial needs to the real issues of the community. Donors will try to impose their ideas, objectives or their political agendas onto NGOs and one has to be strong to stand up apart it.

Question: How can Afghan Civil Society be more financially independent?

Answer: The line is blued between CSO government and private sector due to the massive surge international aid. We are moving towards clarifying those lines, less aid is good for Afghanistan. Aid is political as it provides models for activities various government departments. There are different kinds of aid. Aid generated from international NGOs sourced through fundraising have a more positive impact. The President has plans to diversity funds in the long term.

Furthermore, cooperation between the private sector and civil society could produce positive economic growth as long as there is a clear monitoring in place. A free market economy and better

regulation of the private sector is needed. It is not only profit which makes an entrepreneur great. This culture needs to be encouraged.

Question: How do we improve specializations in CSOs and also work with donor demands.

Answer: The international community must be clear in their practices. There needs to be an encouragement of Afghans doing voluntary work in their community. Mechanisms for umbrella organizations to pay more attention to different organizations in different areas of Afghanistan are also needed. The way forward is to ensure partnerships with other specializing organizations to obtain greater funds.

Question: How applicable are these recommendations in the Afghanistan of today, especially because specialization costs money.

The commitments of the London Conference make clear that there will be a gradual reduction of aid in from 2017 onwards. CSOs need to work in partnership with the different levels of the Government to build trust, and partnerships to strengthening the rule of law. For example the President of Afghanistan has asked Civil Society for practical applicable approaches to work with the new mining law.

CSOs need to think out of the box and be more creative. Specialization and effective work of CSOs is not necessarily about money. For example, an NGO specializing in in human rights could benefit from volunteerism, or approach university professors and international organizations. Specialization needs support, networking, communication but not necessarily money.

Question: How can we build trust between CSOs in Afghanistan, with so much corruption occurring in CSOs?

Mechanisms to combat corruption are important. This could include the introduction of certification mechanisms, to work against corruption, or adhering to ACBARs Code of Conduct etc. A combination of efforts and coordination has to take place.

The most important transportation should be in the minds and attitudes of CSOs. Trust as an institution can only be built on a transparent floor of information and therefore transparent information mechanisms must be in place to build trust. As part of this, a high level of transparency needs to be extended to the stakeholders and beneficiaries that CSOs work with.

Afghanistan Public Policy Research Organization (APPRO) Presentation- Advocacy Capacity and Initiatives

APPRO addresses knowledge gaps in policy making processes and utilizes their research findings in to policies and strategies through research; critical dialogue on policy and reconstruction; and advance learning for researchers, academics, and policy decision-makers at both national and international levels.

APPRO is a specialized organization covering specific thematic areas of work including, governance, rights and development, political economy, natural resources and environmental management. The organization also provides trainings on policy and decision making analysis with government

institutions and ministries, together with trainings on logical framework development and analysis, specialized monitoring and evaluation and research methods.

So far, numerous evaluations have been done for donor and government initiatives, including advocacy initiatives.

What is advocacy and how does it work?

Advocacy simply means actively supporting a cause, and trying to get others to support it as well. Advocacy is speaking up, drawing attention to an important public issue and directing decision makers toward a constructive solution. Civil society must be careful to actively pursue a cause and collect support from other organizations and individuals.

Purpose of advocacy as defined by United Nation Family and Population Agency UNFPA

The purpose of advocacy, defined by UNFPA, is to promote or reinforce a change in policies, program or legislation, not only to flag with or bring changes at community level but also for influence on policy level and to bring changes in legislation.

Rather than providing support directly to clients or users of services, advocacy aims at winning support from others for instance creating a supportive environment.

Major Advocacy Areas

Major areas for advocacy include leadership development, coalition building, networking, political lobbying and promoting legislative change. The purpose is to ignite change and influence policy.

Stakeholders of Advocacy

Beneficiaries of an advocacy campaign should include the entire stratum of those who are affected negatively, positively, directly or indirectly by a decision or circumstance. Decision makers, allies and partners and resistant groups and the government must be considered.

Techniques and Tactics of Advocacy

Different organizations use various techniques and tactics in to their programs and policies, these may include, sensitizing, mobilizing, dialogue, negotiating, lobbying, petitioning, pressuring and information sharing to gain influence.

Advocacy Initiatives

- Numerous advocacy initiatives are undertaken by CSOs, but mostly efforts are focused on specific issues instead of long term strategic issues or changes.
- The majority of advocacy campaigns by CSOs in Afghanistan are mobilized through "flag-waving" which is actually not constructive advocacy.
- There is little participation and engagement in advocacy initiatives by civil society in Afghanistan. The purpose, however, is to engage stakeholders, and to engage decision makers and eventually to bring influence on them.

- It is argued that most advocacy efforts by civil society in Afghanistan are based on aggressive and unsustainable approaches to overcome attitudes.

Questions and Answers

Q: What is meant by an 'unsustainable approach' to overcoming attitudes?

A: There are lot of organizations, initiatives and programs which aim to influence. There is a need to shift attention from input orientation to output orientation in order to achieve sustainability of projects and enable them to transform some of the interventions into sustainable mechanisms.

Q: Advocacy is a broad term and policy change might be a process while advocacy concerns the community and individual beliefs. Do UNFPA's advocacy policy mechanisms aim to cover the entire all aspects of advocacy or is just developed for UNFPA's internal use?

A: From different perspectives, there are numerous definitions for advocacy. In this presentation, APPRO means advocacy from the perspective of policy level. All projects and programs are being designed and implemented through specific policies therefore CSOs and NGOs have to be careful in developing policies.

In terms of advocacy, there are fundamental and elementary questions about the purpose of advocacy initiatives. So, if CSOs would like to bring change at policy level then advocacy should not be conducted with follow-up actions because otherwise there will be no effect at policy level.

Q: It seems your definition for changes in attitudes for advocacy is state-orientated, where will the changes in attitude come from? Should they come from the Government in a top down process, or should advocacy be directed towards the society to ignite changes?

A: When it comes to the designing of advocacy strategy, it's usually designed from top to down and when it come to the implementation and bringing necessary changes then it's a bottom-up approach. But it all depends on intervention each agency have how to design advocacy approaches.

Definitely, for the part of advocacy there are different methods, channels and media. For real advocacy, activists have to form a specific pressure groups consisted of Medias to raise the voice from each angel and broadcast it at country level.

The Killid Group Presentation

When considering the relationship between independent media and civil society organizations, it is important to remember that both have experienced extraordinary development, which is objectively very good and have been used to highlight Afghanistan recent successes.

However, it is equally important to consider 'the other side of the coin' to understand and identify the real value, current status and objectives and interests the relationship between CSOs and the media.

The international community needs media to voice its agenda, and CSOs to implement the same agenda. There are too many 'project oriented' bodies, focusing on matters for which funding is available, instead of having ownership, strong editorial policies or a real social commitment with the sector in which the NGO is working. That said, there is also an existence of qualified and committed

independent media and CSOs that interact with each other for the benefit of Afghanistan's development and the Afghan population.

There is an opportunity for media bodies and CSOs to bring together information and communication plans for short, medium and long term objectives. Good governance, Afghan ownership and leadership demand such interaction that goes together with fostering a strong civil society sector, in addition to an independent social, cultural, political and economic actor.

This requires working on some specific difficulties. Most reporters do not have a deep understanding of civil society due to a lack of information from journalism courses/school, workshops and seminars conducted in Afghanistan. This misunderstanding can lead to mistrust of the CSO community as a source of information, data and opinion.

Moreover, there is a need for CSOs to develop their communication skills and, in particular, to engage with media. Regarding the latter there is not enough awareness on the principles and rules guiding journalistic outputs. Afghanistan has what can be termed as a "press release culture"; CSOs expect their press releases to be disseminated by media, their poor quality or interest value. Others expect stories on their organizations, or their advocacy plans to be disseminated as they deliver it.

Instead, it should be understood that to gaining public interest and impact, journalists need stories, cases, facts, and events. In telling these stories, unless under a roundtable discussion, it is the media and not the CSOs who should be considering the issues at hand, for example, human rights, corruption, justice, etc.

Over the last two years, The Killid Group has been actively working to overcome these difficulties, through meetings, workshops and practical work. Two important tools were created in 2012: the Independent Media Consortium (IMC) and the Freedom of Expression Initiative (FEI). IMC members are organization that do care about own editorial policies and prepared to negotiate funding accordingly.

The IMC joint editorial policy considers CSOs as partners, real and relevant sources of information that must be taken into account at the moment of covering any issue. The IMC acknowledges that in Afghanistan there are three main "narratives" dominating people's access to information, namely the US-NATO narrative, insurgency narrative and the government narrative. The IMC wants to develop "the narrative of Afghan reality". This demands knowledgeable journalists, and its final objective is a well-informed citizenship. These scopes could not be reached without a synergy with CSOs-NGOs.

Killid has asked CSOs to conduct workshops addressed to reporters, while Killid delivers training addressed to CSOs on elaborating communication and information policies.

The Killid Group's fundamental aim in story telling at general is to build a culture of peace and non-violence. They have recently managed to get funding for three years to cover conflict stories at national community levels.

CSOs' activities have to be based on and to set around discussions with the government, international community and private sector. Civil society as a sector should raise and discuss priorities, policies and implementation.

The Killid Group is also advocating for independent trust fund for Afghanistan civil society organizations but this is the principles and that principles must be implemented together with CSO components through sounded communication and information policies.

Questions and Answers

Q: It seems the Afghan media mostly act for the benefit of, or good relationship with political parties. How then can media play a role of impartially and reflect the voice of population and better advocate on behalf of the affected stratum of the country?

A: In general, no media in the world can say they are impartial because they always focus on a particular interest and represent specific sectors or individuals. However, the media, as social or political actors should adhere to the principles of impartiality when covering news stories as a general principle.

Gandhi was saying "if we do not create a provocation on daily bases, we fail". People have to be trained in how to facilitate the production of a story and attract the interest of reporters, and motivate them to cover issue. Therefore, big or important organizations should have a communication officer in order to develop relations with CSOs, NGOs, media bodies and reflect the voices of communities.

Participants proposed ACBAR to arrange another workshop to focus on civil society and the media.Killid Group complemented the suggestion and added that they will start such workshops in Febuary or March 2015 as Killid group is core partner of Tawanmandi and has specific budget line for it.

Q: What is your view on international NGOs being able to communicate with the media and their use of donor funding in doing so?

A: International organizations are more aware of communication techniques to gain maximum impact. They count on specially trained people, and do consider it within their budgets. Afghan organizations need to change their attitude on this.

Working Group Session

Group (1): CSOs issues	
Challenges:	**Solutions/ Recommendation**
- There is no appropriate definition of civic movements for civil society. Therefore there is not an adequate understanding of the activities and work of civic movements, and how to link them with other sectors. - There is a lack of coordination and information sharing between CSOs and civic movements due to the belief they both work differently and have different approaches. - There is competition between CSOs and civic movements. CSOs believe that if they	- There is a need for information sharing platform to enable civic movements and CSOs to come together and lean from each other's experiences, goals and objectives. - There is also need for mobilization and awareness raising programs for both CSOs and civil movements in order to allow for better understanding of the responsibilities of various actors and improve coordination together. - There is a thought that civic movements are

| coordinate with civic movement then there will be more opportunity for them rather than civil society.
- Civic movements mostly focus on religious, political and cultural issues. CSOs tend to keep themselves away from those kind issues and therefore do not want to inter-act their activities. | merely created due to a specific current issue and then become inactive after the achievement of their immediate goals. It is in very important to have sustainability for progression of civic movements. |

Group (2): Network Organizations	
Challenges	Solutions/ Recommendation
- There is a lack of coordination between CSOs and NGOs at the central and provincial levels - There is no clear definition of what civil society in Afghanistan incorporates. - There is a negative perception of the NGO community in provincial areas. There is therefore a need for effective coordination with all stakeholders, networks and coordination bodies in these areas. - There is a lack of follow-up regarding joint decision making within networks and a lack of trust among CSOs, NGOs, government and the coordination bodies due to the existence of corruption.	- Constructive coordination and trust building mechanism should be established among coordination bodies in order to reach out to the provincial level. - External and internal policies among coordination bodies and networks should be prepared to shape transparency and accountability toward their members. - There should be mechanisms and regular follow-up of joint making decision and communication by networks.

Group (3): Civil Society Joint Working Group (CSJWG)	
Challenges:	Solutions/ Recommendation
- The CSJWG need to be more committed to the core values existing in the MoU. - There is a lack of coordination among the CSJWG at the sub-national level. - There is a weak concept of volunteerism among the CS actors. - The process of decision making within the CSJWG takes a long time	- The CSJWG should be supportive and to have good commitment for the core values of MoU and observation of MoU principles. - The CSJWG should have external linkages and have task division for the secretariat. The number of employees should be increased in the secretariat to take responsibility for each sector of civil society. - There is a need for community awareness raising about the rights to increase volunteerism in the society also to attract the political weld to support volunteerism movements.

Group (4): Media	
Challenges:	**Solutions/ Recommendation**
- The media is perceived as commercial, dependent and violent in methods of reporting. - The media do not understand CSO's advocacy and can report it incorrectly. - Media reports do not always reflect the needs of the people - There is poor communication and understanding between CSO and media groups	- Killid group wants to build partnership with media organizations like TOLO, Killid, Lemar and others which consist providing participatory programs for the university students regarding the civil society issues, as the students regularly invited.

Group (5): International Community, Donors and UN Agencies,	
Challenges	**Solutions/ Recommendation**
- There is a lack of technical capacity within CSOs in terms of writing proposals, reports and monitoring projects. - There is a lack of transparency and accountability within CSOs. - There is high staff turnover within CSOs meaning that funded projects cannot be implemented in a proper and timely manner. - There is a lack of coordination between CSOs and the donor communitiy. - There are problems with corruption relating to the disbarment of donor funds.	- Regular and strong coordination among the CSOs and donor community to avoid duplications and also corruption is needed. - CSOs need to be supported to gain better technical capacity and analysis of issues. - There needs to be more capacity assessment and institutional analyses before giving fund to CSOs to see if they are able to implement the projects. - Providing accessibility to the CSOs for communication directly with the donors rather other channels to avoid corruption and to identify the need of people on the ground

Group (6): Private Sector	
Challenges:	**Solutions/ Recommendation**
- There is a lack of trust and good communication between CSOs and private sector. - There is a lack of coordination between CSOs and private sector.	- There is a need for better communication and trust building to create positive results for both CSOs and private sector. - Having coordination and cooperation with civil Society will enable private sector to become more active in philanthropic activities and improve their social responsibility. Private media can also play a role in broadcasting the realities in order to aware the communities about their rights.

Group (7): Government Relations	
Challenges	**Solutions/ Recommendation**
- There is a lack of effectiveness and efficiency for the services delivery by the government of Afghanistan to the people. There is a lack of transparency and accountability in the activities for both the Government and CSOs. Additionally, both parties lack knowledge and understanding of community needs. There is a lack of women's and youth's participation in decision making in rural areas due to cultural, political and religious related issues and also lack of coordination or communication among all parties.	- To overcome challenges, the Afghan government needs to be supported though international donors'. - The Afghan Government now have the capacity to reach out rural remote areas in all 34 provinces of Afghanistan through 22 NSP programs. They should use money through NSP programs to answer the people's needs rather the NGOs implementation.

Group (8): Conflict and Sensitivities	
Challenges:	**Solutions/ Recommendation**
- For the past 13 years thousands of NGOs have been established for short periods of time with numerous areas of focus. There needs to be better monitoring systems in place or sustainability plans to prevent projects remaining uncompleted as this results in a poor perception of CSOs and causes conflict between parties. - There is little understanding about civil society and their responsibility in the community. - The majority of CSO documentation and proposals are written in English which is hard to understand by rural communities who have no access to reach and observe the written proposals or action plans . - Afghanistan struggles with high levels of corruption and less monitoring, evaluation or effective auditing systems. - There needs to be better coordination government, NGOs, CSO and CBOs and	- CSOs need to redefine their terminologies to renew their image and trust by being close to communites and people. - People still need to provide them service as they need to be more focused. - Increasing of government willingness for supporting civil society. - As a suggestion, MoUs could be signed between (Government, AOGs and CSOs) agreeing to allow NGOs/CSO access to insecure areas. - Advocacy initiatives which let local communities advocate for themselves. - There is need of a very clear mandate to define CSOs roles to be followed accordingly.

networking bodies.	

Group (9): Public and citizens	
Challenges:	**Solutions/ Recommendation**
- There are some disparity issues between CSOs and community based organizations (CBOs) in terms of access to resources, donors and international community. - The CBOs CSOs seem to be in competition with each other. - Donor agencies need to be more responsive to the needs and ideas of CBOs. Sometimes CBOs do not meet the criteria for donor funding. - CSOs usually optimize on CBOs' potentiality without giving recognition to CBOs and there are always issues perceptions of stereotype and involvement showing that CBOs are outdated entities and not useful enough. - CBOs need to gain more knowledge in orientation and information particularly in humanitarian interventions.	- INGO and CSO should integrate more with CBOs to improve their capacity. - Donors need to recognize CBOs and provide them with more long term funding.

Wrap up and conclusion

This workshop has considered the history and evolution of Afghanistan's civil society. As Afghanistan socio-economic and political context changes, CSOs must ensure they grow to meet the needs of the country. This may include developing new strategies for more impact, or ensuring accountability, transparency and communication with wither CSOs. It is also important to maintain a space for traditional CSOs which are an important mechanism in the workings of Afghan Civil Society.

Furthermore, the workshop has explored the importance of trust, of changing attitudes and improving capacity building so that CSOs can really have a sense of ownership (a diffusion of responsibility is no longer acceptable). This will ensure self-empowerment of both CSOs and beneficiaries.

Sustainability, a long term process, should be seen as a wheel to keep CSOs effective and relevant. Sustainability should incorporate socio-economic and political aspects. Perception of CSOs needs to be strengthened and guaranteeing transparency within CSOs is key to this.

Effective advocacy, particularly, coordinated advocacy initiatives are needed to promote equality reinforce changes in attitudes and policy. The formation of pressure groups maintains this.
To enhance knowledge, interactive communication and collaborative information policies, a synergy between media and CSOs is needed.

In conclusion, the workshop has identified 3 key areas need to focus on:

1- CSOs and the Afghan Government need to work more closely to allow for improved accountability and effective advocacy.

2- There is a need to bridge the gap which currently exists between CSOs in rural areas and CSOs in urban areas. Afghan civil society needs to engage more with shuras, jergas and local community members.

3- It is important to improve the perception and image of CSOs and strengthen trust with Afghan citizens to prove that civil society exists to represent their interests.