

TACSO BiH Technical Assistance REPORT

TA- STRATEGIC PLANNING, November 2-3, 2011

OLDER BROTHER, OLDER SISTER NETWORK (*Older Brother Older Sister- OBOS* is a non-formal network of eight CSOs from Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Mostar, Zenica, Tuzla and Foča focused on social inclusion of children at risk through youth and adults volunteer engagement)

The network has implemented its activities at the local community level.

OBOS' activities started in 2003 in Banja Luka and Sarajevo and extended through 2007 to the above mentioned towns. Currently, there are 120 established mentorships. Each NGO cooperates with Social Welfare Centres and/or Children Care Centres in their respective towns.

Older Brother, Older Sister Network (OBOS) has organized students-volunteers and trained them in providing one-to-one mentoring for children at risk, i.e. orphanage children, neglected children or children from socially marginalized families, in order to compensate for educational disadvantages and to prevent further social marginalization and antisocial behaviour in children.

The network strives to contribute to social inclusion of children and social justice in BiH society through youth and adults volunteerism and socially beneficial work. This new approach, partnered by both governmental and nongovernmental organisations, supports the process of reforming social welfare system in BH.

Purpose of Support (Strategic Planning)

The purpose of the intervention was to assist the Network in making important decision on further steps of *Older Brother, Older Sister* BH Network regarding the following:

- To explore *pros* and *cons* of Network's formal registration,
- To define the place of work and how the Network Secretariat should function,
- To define membership conditions,
- To define responsibilities and obligations of Network members,
- To define active membership monitoring mechanisms,
- To ensure implementation of quality standards developed in accordance to the Network Book of Regulations.

Applied Strategies/Tools

In the preparation period, the *OBOS Network* has sent all relevant materials, reflecting the period from the first steps up-to-date:

- Network Fact Sheet;
- Network Structure re decision making process and communication;
- Comprehensive Manual including standards covering all aspects of work (partnership agreements with Social Welfare Centres, Faculties, Child Care Centres; criteria for children and volunteers; criteria for expert associates; criteria for monitoring, evaluation and reporting; PR activities and media relations);
- Terms of Reference for Coordinators;
- Chart presenting communication channels;
- Training reports and internal meetings minutes.

The methodology applied was *Future Search* for the reason of having all CSO leaders present at the Strategic Planning heard with their arguments for further continuation and development of the Network.

Reflections were opened with the focus on past, tailored for this particular situation and the following questions:

- How did membership in the *OBOS* Network influence me?
- How did experience gained through the Network influence growth and development of our organization?
- What has happened in the communities we work and live in through the activities of the Network?

As there were eight members of the Network present at the workshop, methodology applied at the workshop, enabled all members to work with each other on different tasks, either in pairs or in groups of four. Typical consensus was avoided and no difficulties were encountered in choosing the best arguments, voting with coloured dots based on personal affiliation for the offered options.

Mind mapping exercise was also tailored towards workshop needs and reflected aspects of the Network communication both internally and externally.

Major Challenges

It was rather challenging to design adequate environment for all CSO leaders having equal opportunities to express their visions and concerns in regards to further status, activities, coordination and sharing resources of the Network. High commitment of present leaders (all being extremely active throughout the process) was another factor dictating special adaptation of the planned tools to the circumstances and validation of outputs for Networks members. Facilitation had to be conducted with two moderators aimed at achieving results and requested high concentration and co-action.

Major Achievements

In two days of structured workshop OBOS Network produced a comprehensive set of documents related to the next two-year period and decision-making process.

- Two-year Action Plan in the form of logical framework with four times six-month periods and seven progress measuring indicators for the period of November, 2011-November, 2013. The seven indicators defined as a base for measuring the change and the progress are: local projects duration (of each Network member); position of coordinator; improved work of the Network; Network growth and development; assessment of volunteers' motivation; dispute resolving mechanisms; Network membership;
- A table with elaboration of Resources for each Network member made as a follow up based on the approach used at the workshop;
- A table with argumentation of pros and cons related to registration with final recommendations included Mind mapping on organizational effectiveness, efficiency and responsibility;
- Follow up activities in terms of individual resource planning for each Network member (agreed at the Strategic Planning Session) were done in a very short period after Strategic Planning while in the Network's Report all components were completed as agreed.

Lessons Learnt

There are dual lessons learned obtained from Strategic Planning Process:

- Preparation started on time was a precondition for joint understanding between participants and TA providers;
- High commitment and motivation of Network members, importance of outputs and its validation during the process itself resulted in producing the Strategic Planning that was used immediately after the workshop as guide for everyday work.



Dots for voting allocated based on individual preference during one phase of the Strategic Planning process



Presentation of the strategic options re plan for period November 2011-November 2013



Mind mapping on the options of pros and cons related to registration

Annexes: A1 - Agenda with Basic Question and A 2- Participants Feedback

A1- Agenda and BASIC Question:

What to do to make *OBOS* Network self-sustainable (financially, functionally/operationally and institutionally) in the next two years?

Time	Session Contents	Remarks
DAY 1		
9.30-10.30	-Introduction into working procedure. Agreement on working rules. Role and responsibility of process participants. -Verification of anticipated workshop results with managers. - Reflections on the previous period regarding Network activities	
10.30-12.00	- Trends influencing self-sustainability of the Network – reality/environment - Interior challenges influencing Network sustainability	Refreshment breaks will be organised as per working dynamics – they can be informal (refreshments during the work) Subject to internal agreement
12.40-14.00	Responsibility for the present Focus on the future in three years	
14.00-14.10	Establishing joint foundations for planning activities – I	
14.10-17.00	Establishing joint foundations for planning activities – II (framework: membership; fund raising, Network efficiency)	Reflecting the process and session results towards the end of the day
DAY 2		
9.00-10.30	Resources and organisation of members' activities	
10.30-12.00	- Defining priority tasks - Planning Network members' activities (deadlines, responsibilities, progress indicators) - Participation monitoring	Refreshment pauses will be organised as per working dynamics – they can be informal (refreshments during the work) Subject to internal agreement
12.40-14.00	-Organising documents generated in the planning process - Recommendations for inclusion of other interested parties' input into the document contents	Evaluation of work and achievements Closing the workshop



Technical Assistance for
Civil Society Organisations
Bosnia and Herzegovina Office



This project is funded
by the European Union.

A 2- Participants' Feedback

Participants' Feedback (summary of comments) to methodology applied.

Discreet approach to sensitive subjects, relations and communication problems. Fantastic methodology of work, adapted to activities – not tedious or burdening.

Excellent methodology, carefully chosen in excellent working environment.

We have identified methodology we could use ourselves for workshop product.

Primus interparis is a mind map.

Recognition that there are more ways to react, rather than recognition of network being registered or not.

Logical framework creation.

Positioning the Network secretariat, creating the logical framework matrix.

A definite stepping-stone for the future Network steps.