

POLICY FORUM MONTHLY MEETING – AUGUST 2, 2007
CARE INTERNATIONAL OFFICES,
TIME: 10AM-1PM

MATTERS ARISING:

- Steadman Group: PF has been in touch again and there is discussion of getting the TAMPs report by mid August for 2005 and 2004.
- Steering Committee: still do not have complete number and is proceeding with five people until more candidates are selected.
- PF website: as discussed, the last contract was terminated and PF is in process of getting someone else to do the formal site. In the interim, there is a simple temporary website up which is live and has the necessary information and links until the formal website is put up. TNRF has recommended the individual that did their website and PF will be utilizing their services.
- BWG met for strategic planning – will be discussed in working group updates.
- Still working on the new dialogue structure – will be discussed.

OPENING

The meeting was officially started by the Chairman of Policy Forum's Steering Committee, Hebron Mwakagenda at 10:30am. There was a round of introduction as there appeared to be a few new faces and with a special mention of the new Executive Director for HakiElimu (Elizabeth Missokia).

ATTENDANCE:

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|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Octavius Alex Kisinda | TEN/MET |
| 2. Edward Shighula | World Vision |
| 3. Ntirwihisha Serges | SAHRINGON |
| 4. Exuper James | TACOSODE |
| 5. Ruth Carlitz | HakiElimu |
| 6. Elizabeth Missokia | HakiElimu |
| 7. Hebron Mwakagenda | The Leadership Forum |
| 8. Gertrude Mugizi | PF |
| 9. Semkae Kilonzo | PF |
| 10. Namwaka O-Mwaikinda | PF |
| 11. Suleman Toroka | NPA |
| 12. Festa Andrew | WDP |
| 13. Jans D. Sinkamba | Tushiriki |
| 14. Omary Fadhili | UDI |
| 15. Rose Mushi | ActionAid |

AGENDA

1. Mid-Year Report –PF – Gertrude
2. New Dialogue Structure – Update
3. Review of our meeting structure – how to make monthly meetings more effective
4. Working Group Updates
5. AOB

MID YEAR REPORT: GENERAL SUMMARY

The report is available in detail and sent out to all members electronically as well as budget sheets. Several things have happened:

- New Strategic Plan 2007-09 – incorporates lessons learnt in last 3 years
- Put into practice strategic/selective in political process – diversify. There is movement to work with parliament and not only the executive
- Law making: Prevention and Combating Corruption, Freedom of Information bill

- Stocktaking: how worked in media in past to see how to work more effectively with media (the use of Steadman Group for example).
- Consistent/Regular Publication- JUKWAA (monthly) and SERA (quarterly) – but need more feedback

Challenges:

Sending out information packages- have to be sent out monthly. This is important for outreach to our members.

Working Groups: there needs to be more incorporation of working group activities into Policy Forum work and strategic plan.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS FROM PF OBJECTIVES:

Objective One: publication of pre-budget briefs, TNRF, and have collaborated with partners outside DSM to do more work with our networks.

Objective Two: JUKWAA/SERA, Communication Strategy (Steering Committee has put comments that will be incorporated). There will be a presentation on the strategy in next month's meeting.

Objective Four: MP Seminar – June – work on budget process with parliament.

Challenges:

- Ability to reach members outside DSM (feedback and communication)
- Participation in monthly meeting – decrease in attendance (this will be discussed in more detail later)
- Bigger staff element: consistency has improved but struggling to manage budget because of delays in fundraising. The delay was partly caused by the need for completed reporting from last year. Fundraising will occur mid-September. There is an alternative budget in case the amount of money raised is not enough.

Comments:

- Effectiveness/quality of work is improving therefore gaining ground in terms of content – issue: capacity to use funding. The worry should be in ability to absorb what we already have and focus on how best to utilize what we already have
- Concern: under spending – does this represent work not being done/completed?
- Need to show definite commitments that are unavoidable. Give a % relative to the budget. Show how much is supposed to be spent by quarters
- Is PF allowed to accrue for the next financial year?
- Need to show that PF can spend the money requested instead of returning money yearly (under spending).

Response:

- The budget indicates that we have spent 18% of what is budgeted for the year but it is actually 45% of what we have (money in hand).
- PF has been conservative (frugal) because cannot guarantee that money will come in before December 2007.
- There has been some savings for example Policy Officers came in mid-Year
- There will be big spending in the future ie. PCC Act, Citizen's Guide to Budget, Local Government Regulation at Village Level (Tshs 100 million should be spent here).
- Objective 2: 27% of budget already spent – contract with media 35 million- printing of PETS manual.
- To make sure the audit report comes out on time, PF now has independent financial/accounting management as PF is officially registered as NGO as of October 2006. The books are done monthly and this should assist in timely release of audit reporting in the future.

Way forward:

Look at challenges

Look at structure: there is a steering committee so oversight body is present

Validity of monthly meetings – maybe members feel that PF is strong enough to stand on its own without the monthly meetings.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

- Accepting that this is a member based and led network, PF does not want the secretariat to take over and lose touch with its members. Monthly meetings are a part of communication with members. PF is supposed to be governed by what members do – coordinate/facilitate what members do and want.
- Monitoring/Evaluation: need to know who is still with PF.
- What are we getting in 30 day? Is there an exchanging of ideas etc?
- Initiate more dialogue and tools to be more effective
- Questionnaire: need to develop a questionnaire for members to show who is committed to come to monthly meetings. Is monthly meeting needed? What do members want from the meetings? PF has to be relevant to members.

COMMENTS:

- Reduce meetings and do more outreach
- MPI and TNRF are networks that are active, need input from our members to identify networks that are active
- Raise awareness – what PF is – need to be strategic ie 1 or 2 regions per year. This has be demand driven and also agenda driven
- Look at regions that are often neglected
- Networks to be in 'zones' to help outreach
- PF to act as 'lamp post' – where the public gets the information.
- PF to address areas that are not usually focused on.
- Communication strategy – this is an important element in outreach and will be discussed in more detail in next month's meeting by Semkae Kilonzo.

POLICY DIALOGUE STRUCTURE UPDATE

- Wrote to MoF to ask for more time
- Prepared session to invite MoF to present on the new structure to explain better (at end July monthly Breakfast Debate) but it did not happen (cancellation)
- Thinking through some of the issues and rethinking how we dialogue (why are we dialoging in the first place? What is purpose of civil society in dialogue?).

WORKING GROUP UPDATES

Budget Working Group (BWG): met on 27/07/07 with Helena Hafboeur from IBP for capacity building and strategic thinking/planning session and to 'take stock'.

- BWG has been successful in numerous ways (raise awareness and understanding within CSOs of budget issues and analysis, media,
- Challenges: consistency and relevance. Budget analysis in not to be an end in itself but should be a TOOL. The work needs to be linked to member organizations own work. It should be incorporated into part of organizations work.
- Report will be shared widely

Local Government Working Group (LGWG):

- De Kees of SNV has left – Hebron Mwakagenda needed a co-convener – Sara Teri (YAV) has taken this position. She now works with both BWG and LGWG.
- LGWG is taking lessons learnt from BWG and looking at what can be incorporated into LGWG. Currently Semkae is working on a draft framework so that there is something in place. This will be helpful especially with new members who come it; there will be a clearer picture as to what the basic framework is.
- Joint meeting on the 30th August, 2007 with BWG.

- LG booklets
- PETS video – Toroka NPA feedback. The initial plan was good – to film training of PETS, but once in field, the situation did not go as planned. Issues arose with the Permanent Secretary – bureaucracy – the need for permission from the prime Minister’s Office Regional Administration and Local Government (PMORALG). Nevertheless, a DVD has now been produced. Hebron, Macha and Toroka will be meeting with the Minister for Regional Administration and Local Governance on 7th August to introduce themselves and ask him to make an opening statement in the DVD as a show of his endorsement (emphasis on the need to be diplomatic and strategic).
- Follow up on PETS manual – need final input from TGNP
- PF has the money to put into the printing (1000 copies).
- Include other groups that may have work that may be of relevance to PF ie People in agriculture. These groups can share information and bring new ideas.

AOB

1. TEN/MET training with HakiElimu – Budget Training on Folk Education Development Plan (FEDP) and Education Training Policy (ATP).
2. Teacher Education Development Strategy – TEN/MET
3. WDP – Health Budget Analysis and Gender Festival
4. World Vision – PETS – 32 districts
5. Corruption Bill- July 1st. There are hard copies available at PF offices. A simpler version of the bill is to be produced.
6. Media – Freedom of Information Bill – HakiElimu will share the document.
7. Council Coalition – can get coalition based on ‘agenda’
8. Working groups: monthly meetings are for PF members only. Need to ask members if it is ok for an external person to attend as an observer only.
9. PF training in South Africa – Social Accountability Training at Rhodes University for 2 weeks.
10. PF is moving offices. Moving to Mikocheni ‘B’ – off old Bagamoyo Road. Will be sharing a building with Oxfam but is entirely independent from Oxfam with a separate entrance that is wheelchair accessible to accommodate all our members.

The meeting was closed at 12:45pm.