Network Strengthening Program

MODULE 4

Governance

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Learning Objectives

- Understand and apply the practices of effective governing bodies.
- Determine the current governance practices that are adequate and those that are not.
- Identify the required competencies of individual board members in light of their responsibilities.
- Understand and distinguish between governance and management activities in a network.
- Determine what formal documents need to be written or modified to strengthen or validate the network's status.

Benefits of Good Governance

- **Clarity around the strategic direction** of the organization within a highly dynamic environment in which there is rapidly growing demand for its services.
- **Opportunities to explore outside and inside perspectives** and gain advice and experience for overcoming both management and technical challenges.
- **Oversight that provides the checks and balances** that reassure donors and clients regarding the integrity of the organization.

Four Governing Practices

Exercise: Governance in Your Network

- How does your network best exemplify these practices? (In other words, what do we do that demonstrates that we are already using some or all of these practices?)
- What governing practices would we like to use or to strengthen and how?

10 Basic Board Responsibilities (Part 1)

1. Ensure that there is a clear mission and vision for the network.
2. Choose an Executive Director or senior manager of the secretariat.
3. Support and evaluate the Executive Director.
4. Ensure that planning processes are undertaken regularly.
5. Monitor and support activities.

10 Basic Board Responsibilities (Part 2)

6. Ensure adequate resources.
7. Protect assets and provide financial oversight.
8. Build a competent and representative board.
9. Ensure legal and ethical integrity.
10. Promote the network and enhance its public reputation.

Adapted from BoardSource

Board Member Roles and Responsibilities

Unless the individual board members have clear roles and responsibilities and perform them, the board will not be competent as a whole.

Governing Body vs. Secretariat Responsibilities and Roles

Requires:

- Understanding of typical roles.
- Clearly delineated policies, procedures and position descriptions/Terms of Reference (TORs).
- Regular board and management performance reviews.

Role Play Questions

What did you see acted out related to our earlier discussions regarding:

- The responsibilities of the board
- The responsibilities and competencies of individual board members
- The relationship between secretariat and board responsibilities

Functional Systems: Documentation

- What documents are required to support the structure of a network?
- What documents does your network have?
- What revisions do your current documents need?
- What new documents do you want/need?

Exercise: What Documents?

- ✓ Certificate of incorporation
- ✓ Business registration/license
- ✓ Statements of mission/purpose, vision, values/ideals
- ✓ Processes and procedures (operating manuals)
- ✓ Roles and responsibilities of the governing bodies
- ✓ Position descriptions and limits of authority for staff and the Board
- ✓ Legal representations of compliance with local and international laws
- ✓ Contracts defining relationships between the central 'office' and members
- ✓ Strategic and operating plans
- ✓ Ethical standards/Code of Conduct
- ✓ Standards for continuing employment, business relationships, or membership (HR policies)

Short and Long Term Action Planning