Global Disaster Preparedness Center

REVIEW OF MATERIALS ON COALITION BUILDING

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Introduction

This review describes materials on coalition building and good practices within the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement and externally. It is informed by desk study and key informant interviews. There is a vast literature on coalition building, which is beyond the scope of this review to cover. Instead, these materials are practical guides to collaborating with others, many with specific tools that practitioners can use.

There are many names for this work: coalitions, networks, partnerships, alliances, and others. There are distinctions among them, but there is no general agreement about what each term means, so in this review they are treated as synonyms of collaboration in general. The important thing is to gather the insights into how collaborative action work for building resilience.

The first part of the review covers general principles common in the field of coalition building. The second part reviews a sample of guidance documents within the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement and from outside it. These outside sources come from practitioners, not academic observers, so they tend to cover practical advice rather than broad conceptual frameworks.

Principles of Coalition Building

The guidance documents reviewed here present a wide variety of approaches to coalition building. Yet they share a number of core principles that are summarized here.

Why work in coalitions?

Coalitions are necessary when the goal is to bring about change on a complex social problem that is beyond the influence of a single organization. Examples include managing the impacts of climate change, addressing social issues such as poor health or domestic violence, or reforming large systems such as schools or health care.

The advantages of working in coalition are:

- Rapid diffusion of innovative approaches
- Range of capacities beyond what a single organization has

- Increased access to resources
- More channels for engagement with the wider set of actors
- Increased understanding of the values and attributes of other sectors
- Coordinate efforts
- Share information easily
- Increased ability to manage stresses and changes to the system
- Increased legitimacy results when policymakers and other important social actors perceive NGO members as part of a larger representative group.

What makes a successful coalition?

Successful coalitions have a number of practices in common:

- Diverse membership, giving members access to other channels and resources
- Clear shared goals or value propositions
- Satisfies needs of each member organization to reach its individual organizational goals
- Clear structure, processes, and governance
- May be temporary or permanent, but always must be flexible and evolve as needs change

Work Practices for Success

- Trust
- Transparency
- Members use good networking behavior – high social IQ, empathy, optimism, follow through on commitments, openness to alternatives
- Member organizations support representatives to network effectively

Sample of Guidance Documents

Materials from Within the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, *IFRC Framework for Community Resilience*, Geneva, 2014.

This document outlines the IFRC understanding of resilience. The IFRC defines resilience as, “the ability of individuals, communities, organizations or countries exposed to disasters, crises and underlying vulnerabilities to anticipate, prepare for, reduce the impact of, cope with and recover from the effects of shocks and stresses without compromising their long-term prospects.”

The definition recognizes that resilience can be observed and strengthened at multiple levels:

1. **Individual level**: a resilient individual is healthy; has the knowledge, skills, competencies and mind-set to adapt to new situations and improve her/his life, and those of her/his family, friends and community. A resilient person is empowered.

2. **Household level:** a resilient household has members who are themselves resilient.

3. **Community level:** a resilient community strengthens the resilience of its constituent individuals and households.

4. **Local government**: can either strengthen or weaken resilience at the individual, household and community levels as it is responsible for infrastructure development, maintenance, social services and applying the rule of law.

5. **National government**: resilience at this level deals with policy, social protection systems, infrastructure, laws and governance issues and can profoundly impact community resilience.

6. **Organizations** such as National Societies including their branches and volunteers: make contributions that are integral to resilience at all levels.

7. **Regional and global levels**: the impacts of conflicts, violence and insecurity; hunger; mass migration; economic recession and prosperity; pandemics; pollution and climate change; positive and negative effects of globalization and new technology all offer examples of the inter-connectedness of the levels and how actions at one level can negatively or positively impact the other levels.

   Resilience is relevant in all countries because all countries have communities that are vulnerable.

For the IFRC, resilience relates to all the activities that National Societies carry out, regardless of whether they are domestic or international; it is about improving the sustainability and quality of the programs and services that National Societies deliver in response to the demands of their communities and the scale at which these programs and services are undertaken.

Key Elements of the Framework

The document identifies three key elements:

1. Assisting communities as they adopt risk-informed, holistic approaches to address their underlying vulnerabilities.
2. Community resilience is about a demand driven, people-centered approach.
3. Being connected to communities by being available to everyone, everywhere to prevent and reduce human suffering.

Within these elements, there are two main areas where working in coalition is essential to building resilience:

- Supporting communities to access external support networks, such as the public authorities, civil society and the international Red Cross Red Crescent network.
- Partnering with the public authorities, civil society and the private sector in support of holistic, integrated, community-led solutions.

National societies and branches must be connected into networks of organizations that are either not accessible to local communities, or are not able to hear their voices in an authentic way. IFRC can use its presence in coalitions to lift up those voices, and to connect outside resources with communities in an appropriate way.

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, *Integrating climate change and urban risks into the VCA*, Geneva 2014.

This document indicates a number of points about climate and urban risks that make it important to work in more collaborative ways.

1. Cities are more complex than rural areas in terms of social, economic, and political organization. As a result, understanding risks and taking action require the cooperation of numerous organizations from community to regional level: local government, businesses, civil society organizations, academic institutions.
2. Populations are more diverse and less stable than in rural areas, which means programs must address a dynamic situation with multiple ethnicities, ways of making a living, and social needs. Coalitions can bring together the variety of organizations with varying skills and constituencies needed to address these communities.
3. Communities in urban areas are dependent on lifeline systems – water, energy, transportation – that are governed by larger bodies outside the community. Governance of these systems is therefore important to reduce risk for individual community members. Addressing city-wide governance issues is beyond the reach of any single organization.
4. The definition of community itself may not be clear-cut. Urban dwellers have cross-cutting identities – profession, ethnicity, age, gender, place of residence – all effect what “communities” people belong to. It requires many different types of organizations to address risks and needs – labor unions, employers, women’s organizations, professional societies, etc., all are important to different parts of the community.
5. Climate risk is difficult for local community members to determine on their own. Connections with outside specialists are important to know what climate risks communities will face in the future. Outside specialists need the perspectives of local community members to know the capacities people have for managing those risks, since they are often not obvious from the outside. Collaboration is essential for reducing climate risk.

The document also shows how the VCA must be adapted to handle climate and urban risks.

1. Secondary data is important for all VCAs, but in these cases, it is essential. Urban systems and future climate projections require the insights of many different organizations, including academics and private sector. These systems are too complex for any one organization to understand them sufficiently. Collaborations are required to understand them and then carry out actions likely to reduce risk across these systems.
2. Institutional analysis in the traditional VCA examines people's perceptions about the work and value of institutions around them. In urban situations, there are many relevant institutions that are not well known by most city dwellers, so institutional analysis must bring in other organizations with other perspectives. Urban water supply or waste removal, for example, are often regulated by local government and carried out by public or private organizations with little presence in communities. City budgeting can be opaque to all but insiders, so collaboration with organizations better placed to influence the process is important to communities.
3. The sheer number of players and their action at different levels may overwhelm the ability of community members to construct a useful Venn Diagram. Dialogue with other organizations with other perspectives is important, since there may be many organizations important to local communities whose action is poorly understood by local residents. Examples include utility companies supplying energy or water, public transportation services, private and public health care providers, or businesses – in these cases, local residents see the action of these large entities locally, but may not be familiar with its wider functioning or how to influence them.

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, *Handbook: Building City Coalitions*, Panama

This handbook is part of the materials supporting the One Billion Coalition for Resilience. It is a brief but clear introduction on to how to build coalitions that serve as urban platforms to build community and urban resilience.

The handbook defines a city coalition and why you would want to develop one. It lays out four different types of coalitions: hub and spoke, networked model, lead partner, and simple affiliation. It outlines what makes coalitions successful:

- Clear objectives
- Focus on the work, not general discussion or research
- Understanding of what a network can accomplish that one organization can not
- Constant learning from each other
- Clarity on the most appropriate level for action, connecting the top and the bottom
- Comfort with ambiguity
- Sustainability and adaptability.

It then lays out the essential components of building a coalition. Most important, it emphasizes that:

> A coalition is not a linear process, but an organic system. Therefore, the different components that are essential for a coalition to come together may not happen one after the other, in a sequential manner. Rather, they are likely to be consolidated at different stages in the coalition building, or could be taking place all at the same time.

In this sense, the handbook is a guide, not a recipe – users must take the components as they apply to their situation at different points in time and depending on the needs of partners.

These components are:

- Stakeholder Engagement
- Creating an Urban Profile
- City Risk Assessment
- Sustainability
- Community Work
- Advocacy at National Level

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, *Resilient Communities Handbook*, Panama

This handbook is a companion to the *Handbook: Building City Coalitions* but focused at the community level, not the higher level of city-wide coalitions.

It reviews the IFRC vision of a resilient community, which:

- Is knowledgeable, healthy, and can meet its basic needs
- Is socially cohesive
- Has economic opportunities
- Has well maintained and accessible infrastructures and services
- Can manage its natural assets
- Is connected.

It outlines the following steps to follow to build resilient communities initiatives:

- Promoting the initiative and engaging partners
- Conducting a community-led assessment
- Community managed implementation
- Linking with others outside the community
- Monitoring
- Building Networks outside the community

The handbook has a number of checklists for use in going through each of these steps. Branches familiar with VCA should be able to follow the steps of this process, since many of the tools are the same.

Unlike the Building City Coalitions Handbook, this one suggests a linear process for building resilient communities. In practice, it is unlikely that most processes would follow these steps in the proper order, since different communities have different levels of organization and capacity that must be considered. It also treats the private sector only as a source of donations, not as an active resilience partner in the process. A broader view of engaging the private sector could deepen considerably the ability of a community to build its resilience.

Materials from Outside the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement

John Kania and Mark Kramer, *Collective Impact*, Stanford Social Innovation Review, Winter 2011.

In recent years a form of collaborative action known as “Collective Impact” has become very popular, particularly in the United States. It is designed for dealing with issues whose scale and complexity render them difficult to manage, which is the case for building resilience. The essential elements of this type of collaboration are:

1. Centralized infrastructure (a “backbone organization” to lead the collaboration)
2. Dedicated staff
3. Structured process that leads to a common agenda
4. Shared measurement
5. Continuous communication
6. Mutually reinforcing activities among all participants.

Collective impact has had success in difficult problems like wide-scale education reform, environmental protection of watersheds, and reducing child obesity. In all these cases, isolated organizations typically have limited impact, but with collaboration much more is possible.

As collaborations go, these tend to be very tightly managed. A single organization – the “backbone organization” – runs the whole thing. Participants agree to an action plan with well-defined objectives and activities, and then the backbone organization ensures that everyone stick to the plan. Funding and resources often pass through the backbone organization, though all members must bring their resources and capacities to the effort. Staff dedicated to this effort work on it full time.

Because Collective Impact collaborations are tightly managed, they tend to work less well when it is difficult to agree on a common program, to share resources, or to build trust among participants. They are also unlike many collaborations in their dependence on a single organization for success – any shocks to the backbone organization can cause problems for the entire collaboration.

Diana Scearce, *Catalyzing Networks for Social Change*, Monitor Institute and Grantmakers for Effective Organizations.

While written for funders, the insights of this document are useful for anyone who wants to work in collaboration with other organizations. While the language used is about "networks," the principles are the same for any collaborative action, whatever the name.

The document describes well how working in coalition is different from working independently. These differences are summarized here:

Challenge	Traditional Approach	Network Approach
Build community assets	Administer social services	Weave social ties
Develop better designs and decisions	Gather input from people you know	Access new and diverse perspectives
Mobilize action	Organize tightly coordinated campaigns	Create infrastructure for widespread engagement
Overcome fragmentation	Bring players and programs under a single umbrella	Coordinate resources and action
Spread what works	Disseminate white papers	Openly build and share knowledge

The document discusses the need to "work with a network mindset," which means you are always aware of the relationships you are embedded in, you take part in conversations and action that is happening around you, and you act transparently and openly. It identifies the common concerns that can make it hard to collaborate:

- Lack of time
- Restrictions posed by your organization's communications rules
- Privacy of other relationships
- Fear of misuse of information
- Enforcing accountability of people to do what they commit to.

Building networks follows a familiar cycle:

- **Know the network** – map the issue, stakeholders, and existing connections

- **Knit the network** – connect stakeholders, nurture network stewards/leaders, create different entry points reflecting a range of interests, establish structures and procedures as needed
- **Grow the network** – build trust and connectivity, decentralize network functions, spread and deepen network strategies, raise resources
- **Transform or transition the network** – evaluate effectiveness, refine network value propositions

The guide also presents a very useful rubric for assessing the health of networks, and pointing to things you can do to improve its performance.

Ros Tennyson, *The Partnering Toolbook*, The Partnering Initiative, 2011.

This toolbook provides very complete guidance to starting and managing collaborative action. It uses the term "partnering," which implies bilateral or small group projects. Yet the contents are applicable for any collaboration among organizations, whether few or many. It lays out why you might want to collaborate with others, what can get in the way of doing so, and a series of steps to go through to make a successful collaboration.

More specifically, it lays out the following.

The partnering challenge:

- The rationale for partnering – Collaboration brings innovative approaches, a range of capacities beyond what a single organization has, increased access to resources, more channels for engagement with the wider set of actors, and increased understanding of the values and attributes of other sectors.
- Obstacles to partnering – These can include negative attitudes about other sectors, inadequate partnering skills and lack of belief in the effectiveness of partnering, and conflicting priorities among organizations.
- Key partnering values – Equity, transparency and mutual benefit.
- The leadership challenge – Managing these challenges is important if a collaboration is to be successful.

Building partnerships:

- Identifying partners – A Partner Assessment Form aids in thinking through who to include.
- Assessing risks & rewards

- Resource mapping – Guidance in figuring out what each organization brings to the collaboration is helpful to starting well and ensuring that all needed capacities are well represented. There is also a useful stakeholder mapping tool to determine who should be included. For urban resilience coalitions, the tool assumes prior familiarity with all possible stakeholders, so a further tool guiding participants to what the important urban systems are would be helpful.

Partnering agreements:

- Securing partner commitment – A sample Partnering Agreement is included, though more models appropriate to different levels of commitment would be helpful.
- Interest-based negotiation
- Governance and accountability – Guidance on how to set up governance mechanisms is limited, so participants may want to supplement this guide with others.

Managing the partnering process — The guide gives excellent advice on how to work as coalition member. It clarifies a range of roles that participants can play, how different leadership styles can help or hinder efforts, and good practices for individuals and organizations that lead to successful collaborations.

- Partnering roles
- Partners as leaders
- Partnering skills
- Good partnering practice

Delivering successful projects — This guidance on how to create a program of work will be familiar to anyone who has designed or managed a project, so there are few new insights here. It would have been helpful to include a note about recognizing that participants in coalitions often vary in the depth of their engagement with each other, from specific projects with tangible outcomes to more general information exchanging efforts. And in practice, often the way coalitions are formed is around this planning of activities, so it is helpful to remember that sometimes the steps outlined here come in different orders.

- Managing the transition
- Keeping to the task

- Reporting, reviewing & revising

Sustaining partnerships — Helpful insights into how to keep a partnership going, including the option of setting up an organization to manage it. Also helpful are insights into how to build the capacity of participating organizations to support and use collaborations, which often requires member organization to adapt their way of working.

- Planning for the longer-term
- Securing greater engagement
- Building institutional capacity

Successful partnering — This guidance on assessing the success of a partnership does not provide much beyond the obvious – does the partnership function well, did it achieve its goals. There are more nuanced frameworks elsewhere for assessing coalition effectiveness to draw on.

- Defining success
- Sharing good experiences
- Collaboration in a competitive world

The tools at the back are useful for moving through each of these stages.

Robin Katcher, *Unstill Waters: The Fluid Role of Networks in Social Movements*, The Nonprofit Quarterly, Summer 2010.

Much of the experience and guidance in coalition building comes from social movements. Movements tend to be wider and looser than formal coalitions, though they contain networks that come together for a common goal. While the networks–in-social-movements literature is vast, this article summarizes nicely the role of networks in supporting wider social movements.

In social movements, networks perform the same function as in coalitions – expand the reach of each member, combine complementary talents, coordinate efforts, take joint action, share information, etc. These networks often deepen their political analysis more than a typical coalition, with a broader view of the change sought. Successful networks in this context must foster flexibility and make space for marginalized voices, which often have difficulty participating in coalition with formal organizations. Social movement networks also tend to be more porous, allowing new groups to join as they emerge, to be more open to

disagreement, and to foster internal debate about adapting the program to changing circumstances.

Peter Plastrik and Madeleine Taylor, *NET GAINS: A Handbook for Network Builders Seeking Social Change*, Innovation Network for Communities, 2006.

This handbook deals with networks, though the insights are valuable for any form of collaboration, whatever the name or form.

It identifies why networks can be effective in terms that are different than the other sources reviewed here:

- **Rapid Growth** -- Network can expand rapidly and widely, because its members benefit from adding new links and, therefore, they seek to make new linkages.
- **Rapid Diffusion** -- As more nodes are added, the network diffuses information and resources more and more widely through its links. This diffusion effect allows networks to spread ideas and generate feedback rapidly.
- **"Small World" Reach** -- Network can bring people together efficiently and in novel combinations, because it provides remarkably short "pathways" between individuals separated by geographic or social distance. When two people in a network create a "bridge" across a distance or social category, the connection is available to other nodes in the network.
- **Resilience** -- Network can withstand stresses, such as the dissolution of one or more links, because its nodes quickly reorganize around disruptions or bottlenecks without a significant decline in their functionality.
- **Adaptive Capacity** -- Network can assemble capacities and disassemble them with relative ease; it can adapt nimbly. Links among people or organizations can be added or severed, or they can become "latent," meaning they are maintained at a very low level of connectivity, or more active.

There are seven major decisions any collaboration needs to make:

1. What **kind of network** do you want to build?
2. What is the "**collective value proposition**" of the network? What is the potential benefit that attracts people or organizations to participate in the

network? A collective value proposition is a benefit that is broadly desired by members of the network.

3. What is the initial **membership** of the network? Who is in and who is out?
1. Networks have boundaries and horizons, but their borders may be “soft”—easy to penetrate—or “hard”—impossible to penetrate.
4. How should the network be **governed**? Networks are self-governing; the members rule. But how shall they rule? What is decided by governance? Who governs?
5. What **structure** should the network have? Networks have structures or shapes—patterns of connections among their members. Different structures have different impacts on a network’s capabilities and operations. Which structure is right for your network?
6. What are the initial **operating principles** of the network? Networks have their own ways of functioning— “natural rules” that you violate at your own risk. What are these rules?
7. **Who will build** the network?

Types of Networks

- **Connectivity Network** -- Connects people to allow easy flow of and access to information and transactions
- **Alignment Network** -- Aligns people to develop and spread an identity and collective value proposition
- **Production Network** -- Fosters joint action for specialized outcomes by aligned people

While it is not hard to come up with a different set of types, these three serve to show that different purposes call for different kinds of networks. The coalitions that Red Cross/Red Crescent members are likely to build will tend to be in the Alignment or Production network, depending on how tightly the coalition carries out activities.

How to choose members of the collaboration – effective partners have the following characteristics

- Shared commitment to network’s goals
- Acknowledged expertise or competence in work of the network
- Connections that matter
- Capacity to Collaborate

- Good network citizen

Managing the network

The guide provides considerable guidance on how to manage an effective network, far too much to summarize here. It provides guidance on:

- Network governance
- Structures of networks
- Operating principles for network building
- Different roles of network builders
- Program agreements
- Coordinating activity
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Mapping networks

CoalitionsWork, http://coalitionswork.com

This web site is a treasure trove of tools, guides, and forms for every stage of coalition work. While the group is based in the United States, it draws on experience from around the world, especially in building coalitions around health.

The following is a sample of the downloadable tools available that anyone can use.

Coalition Start-Up Tools

- Is a Coalition Right for You?
- Coalition Guides
- Model Commitment Letter
- Checklist to Become a 501 c(3) Non-Profit Organization
- What Makes a Good Lead Agency?

Coalition Planning Tools

- Plan Quality Index (PQI)
- State Plan Index (SPI)
- Coalition Action Plan Form
- Coalition Roles & Job Descriptions

- Coalition Vision, Mission & Goals
- Coalition Bylaw Contents
- The Strategic Planning Process

Coalition Building Tools

- Potential Member Grid
- Am I a High Functioning Coalition Member?
- Am I a Transformational Coalition Leader?
- Stages of Team Building
- Coalition Meeting Check-Up
- Chair or Facilitator's Meeting Guidelines
- Guidelines for Coalition Meeting Etiquette
- Meeting Agenda Template
- Meeting Minutes Template
- What Kind of Member Are You?
- Skills Inventory Worksheet
- Member Orientation Packet
- Coalition Member Gap Analysis
- Buddy Program for Member Recruitment
- Partnering with Community Sectors

Coalition Assessment & Evaluation Tools

- Are You Ready to Evaluate Your Coalition?
- Coalition Initial Needs Assessment
- Coalition Member Survey
- Coalition Effectiveness Inventory (CEI).
- Meeting Effectiveness Inventory (MEI)
- Prioritizing Your Strategies
- Is This Group Really A Coalition?
- What to Do When Things Go Wrong

Coalition Sustainability Tools

- Key Sustainability Tasks for Coalitions
- Coalition Sustainability Characteristics
- 1-Page Organizational Message for Coalitions
- Coalition Resource Development Plan

- Seven Tips for Retaining Coalition Members
- Six Steps to Successful Fund Raising
- Fostering Innovation in Your Coalition
- Should You Disband Your Coalition
- Collective Impact
- Factors that Promote Sustainability

All tools are written in accessible language. They range from focus on small details such as a guide to taking minutes to the more conceptual such as a coalition member gap analysis.

Dave Prescott, Katie Fry Hester, Darian Stibbe, *Zambia Partnering Toolbook,* The Partnering Initiative, Oxford, 2015.

This guide is particularly useful for thinking about collaborations among private business, civil society, and government. It lays out principles and processes for successful "cross-sector partnerships," which can be tricky since the different sectors have different interests and working styles. It emphasizes the stages important in developing partnerships more than what needs to be done to keep them going. While it describes a progression of stages, it notes that in actual practice the stages may be repeated or implemented in different order depending on each situation.

These stages are:

- Understand the alignment of interest among potential partners
- Agree on an overarching vision
- Agree on a common purpose/mission
- Agree on specific objectives and activities
- Agree on resources, roles, and responsibilities
- Structure the partnership
- Sign a partnership agreement

The guide provides seven tools to support the process.

1. **Partner assessment form** – poses questions about capacities of potential partners, and guides inquiry when answers are unknown.
2. **Partnership concept** – a template for early communication among potential partners. It poses key questions such as: What issue/problem

does this partnership address? How does the partnership address individual partners' strategic priorities? What potential resources (financial and in-kind) might be required? What potential conflicts, concerns, risk might this partnership present?

3. **Internal prospective partnership assessment** – a checklist allowing each partner to decide whether to enter into partnership.
4. **Partnership planning template** – a brief guide to developing the vision, mission, objectives, activities, and measurement of the partnership.
5. **Resource mapping** – a brief guide to what resources will be needed, what resources each partner can bring to the table, and any external resource requirements. These may include people, technical expertise, social capital and relationships, legitimacy and authority, access to critical knowledge/information, products/equipment/logistics, or office/land/storage space.
6. **Building blocks of partnership structure --** clarifies the parameters of partnership governance and operations, including ten areas of discussion for an effective partnership structure: governance and decision-making, management structure, relationship management, accountability, human capacity, communication, legal structure, reporting obligations, financial arrangements, and ongoing review process.
7. **Partnering agreement scorecard** -- a simple checklist to assess the status or health of the partnership.

These tools are all very basic, and will require some interpretation to put them into practice. They fit better into civil society or government styles of operation than business styles, but if used as guides for discussions rather than rigid procedures to be followed they can be useful to all potential partners.

The guide also provides a useful case study to illustrate the procedures described.

Niels Keijzer, Eunike Spierings, Geert Phlix and Alan Fowler, *Bringing the invisible into perspective: Reference document for using the 5Cs framework to plan, monitor and evaluate capacity and results of capacity development processes*, ECDPM Maastricht, the Netherlands, December 2011.

This document describes a comprehensive approach for planning, monitoring and evaluation of capacity and the results of capacity development processes. This capacity framework used centers around five capabilities ('5Cs') that together contribute to an organization's ability to create social value. While focused on overall organizational capacity rather than coalitions, it has useful insights for thinking about how an organization collaborates with others. Because it takes a systems perspective to understanding organizational capacity, external relationships are therefore of high importance in the framework.

The 5Cs framework distinguishes capacity defined as a 'producing social value' and five core capabilities.

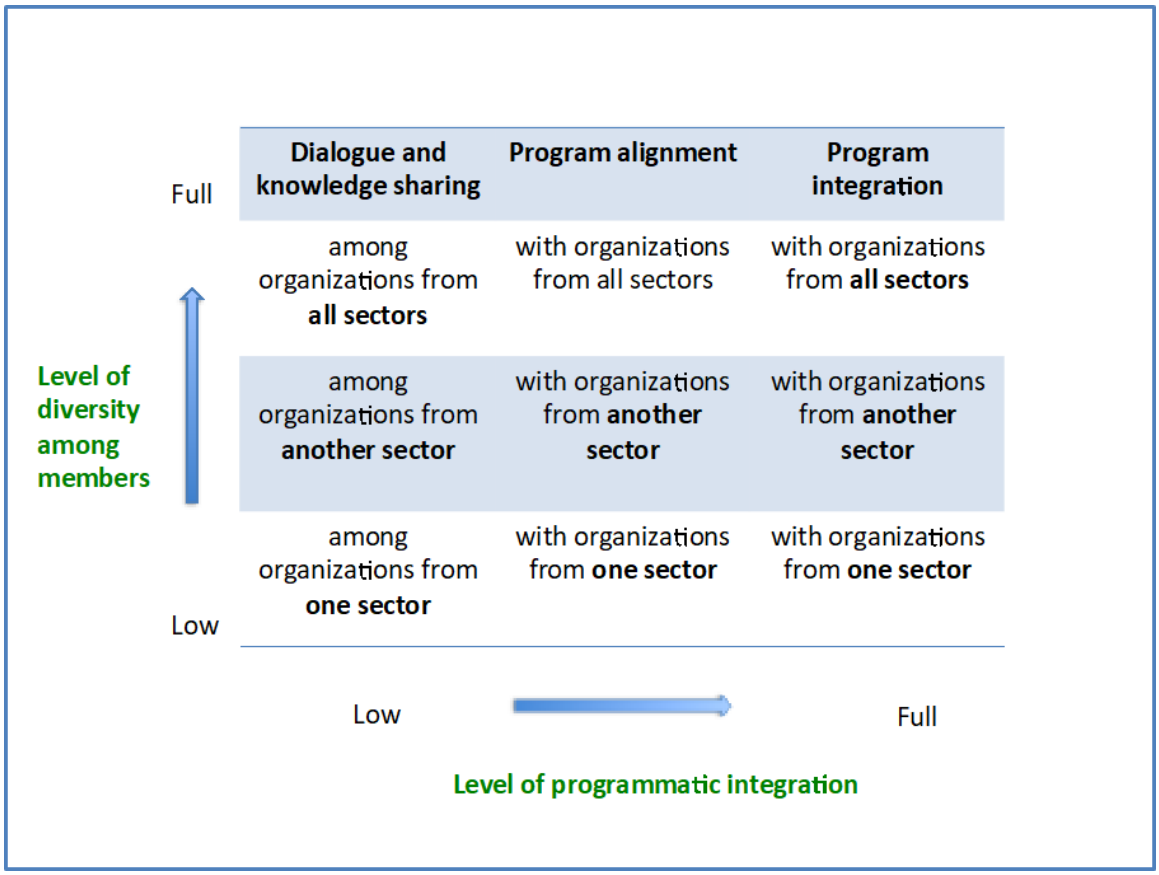
- **Capacity** is referred to as the overall ability of an organization or system to create value for others.
- **Capabilities** are the collective ability of a group or a system to do something either inside or outside the system. The collective skills involved may be technical, logistical, managerial or generative (i.e. the ability to earn legitimacy, to adapt, to create meaning, etc.).
- **Competencies** are the energies, skills and abilities of individuals. Fundamental to all are inputs, like human, material and financial resources, technology, information and so on.

The "5Cs" refers to the Capabilities. These are:

- The capability to act and commit
- The capability to deliver on development objectives
- The capability to adapt and self-renew
- The capability to relate to external stakeholders
- The capability to achieve coherence

For the purposes of this review, the insights into the capability to relate to external stakeholders is the main point of interest.

First, the framework identifies a range of collaborative associations, summarized in the following table:



Different Kinds of Collaborations

Moving to the right, collaborations may range from simple information sharing and discussion to joint programs and action. Moving upward, collaborations may join organizations from the same sector, such as civil society organizations, or it may bring in representatives from other sectors such as government and business. This range is similar to the types of collaborations documented by Plastrik and Taylor above.

The guide also suggests some simple indicators for each Capability of a coalition, as illustrated in the table here:

Capability	Indicator
To commit and act	• Leadership is shared rather than positional • Members act to satisfy the interests of all members
To deliver on development objectives	• There is sufficient transparency, data freely shared and explained
To relate	• Development and joint recognition of shared values and interests among association members
To adapt and self-renew	• Members effectively deal with their diversity and power asymmetries
To achieve coherence	• There is a results driven structure and process • Attitudes of respect and trust are present, avoiding stereotyping or reactive behavior (culture) • Credit and responsibility for the collaboration is shared among members • Members ensure that views of less powerful stakeholders are given a voice

Of particular interest is that the document provides considerable guidance on relationships between Northern and Southern partners, which can be useful in the IFRC movement given the common funding relationships between National Societies and their Partner National Societies from Europe and North America.

Brian Hardy, Bob Hudson, Eileen Waddington, Assessing *Strategic Partnership: The Partnership Assessment Tool*, Strategic Partnering Taskforce, Office of Deputy Prime Minister of the UK, May 2003.

As with many of the other guides and tools covered here, this document lays out principles of partnership:

- recognize and accept the need for partnership
- develop clarity and realism of purpose
- ensure commitment and ownership
- develop and maintain trust
- create clear and robust partnership arrangements
- monitor, measure and learn.

There is an online password-protected version that collaborators can use adapted from this tool: The Partnering Process Tool, http://www.ppplab.org/ppplab-partnership-process-tool/.

These principles are similar to those of many of the other guides reviewed here. This tool has a simple assessment form for each principle that can be filled out by all coalition members. For each principle there are six questions, and respondents mark the box from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”. It is simple to use. Mapping the results and comparing them not only diagnoses what is working well and what is not, it also shows varying perspectives across the membership that is an extra clue to how to fix any problem diagnosed.

The guide does not provide solutions to these problems, however, simply diagnosis.

Conclusion

There are a variety of frameworks and guides to building strong coalitions. While some emphasize some points over others, there is broad consensus on the steps needed to build, run, and monitor coalitions, tools for assisting the process, and methods for making it all work. There is variation on the extent to which coalitions should be tightly directed or more porous and flexible, depending on the type of organizations involved, what it is trying to achieve, and what stage a coalition has reached. Many documents advise that coalitions are not built from a preset series of steps – participants must diagnose where they are in building trust, finding common purpose, agreeing on governance and process, and progressing on implementation. And they all recognize the power of working together as the only way to solve complex problems.