

Toolkit for Building Coalitions for Resilience

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INTRODUCTION

Communities worldwide have greater opportunities for growth and connectedness than ever before; yet the number of people exposed to hazards, shocks, and stresses is rapidly increasing, especially in coastal cities, leading to increased risk and vulnerability. At the same time, people living in cities are themselves agents of change and have significant resources, skills, and capacities to bring to resilience efforts in their own communities and across their cities and districts.

Numerous community organizations do significant humanitarian and development work in vulnerable neighborhoods, and this is helping to build social capital and local capacity. However they are not able to address the full range of needs related to resilience and are also frequently unable to relay unaddressed concerns – including many related to disaster risks – to corresponding municipal or national authorities, or to other potential partners.

To strengthen their resilience in the face of climate change, cities need an enhanced level of civic engagement that draws on the strength and growing diversity of urban communities and that can effectively complement formal governance structures by engaging a wider set of stakeholders to focus on resilience at the community and household level. Combined with the community-based, neighborhood approaches that community organizations have long invested in, this type of civic engagement in urban settings provides a bottom-up push to accelerate local risk-sensitive decision-making and influence development, governance and investment for effective community resilience outcomes.

Addressing the increasingly complex issues facing urban areas requires a city-wide civic process to build local coalitions to guide and foster work at the community level and tap the wide range of resources available in cities. This coalition-building process engages a wide set of interested stakeholders from local government, civil society organizations, the private sector, academia, and community volunteers to identify and pursue locally developed solutions for resilience and climate change adaptation.

This toolkit is a guide to building these coalitions.

It is a companion to the *Do-It-Together Toolkit for Building Urban Community Resilience* on conducting community resilience assessments. Ideally both toolkits would be used together, taking from each what is needed given local context and experience.

Why Use This Toolkit

If you are reading this document, you probably already have some interest in working more with coalitions. Coalitions are necessary for addressing the complex problems we are faced with these days. Organizations need to bring together different sets of skills, resources, and perspectives to solve problems that have many dimensions. This toolkit was developed in collaboration with and piloted with community-based development and humanitarian aid organizations, local governments, and academics.

This toolkit is also:

- ***User friendly,***
- ***Community oriented,***
- ***Comprehensive, and***
- ***Designed for organizations to implement without the need for external expert help.***

This toolkit is best for organizations that want to work on city-scale resilience, and organizations working in communities that find community problems need to be addressed beyond the community-level.

What is in this Toolkit

This toolkit presents an approach for building coalitions in cities to build resilience. This approach will allow you to:

- Determine whether effective coalitions exist already to build resilience, and how to strengthen them;
- Identify key organizations that have contributions to make to a coalition
- Identify common goals for different stakeholders on the key issues to be addressed

Building coalitions is an ongoing process – you are never finished. Starting up a coalition, though, probably takes two to four months. At the end, you will have the beginnings of a collaboration that you can build on for years to come.

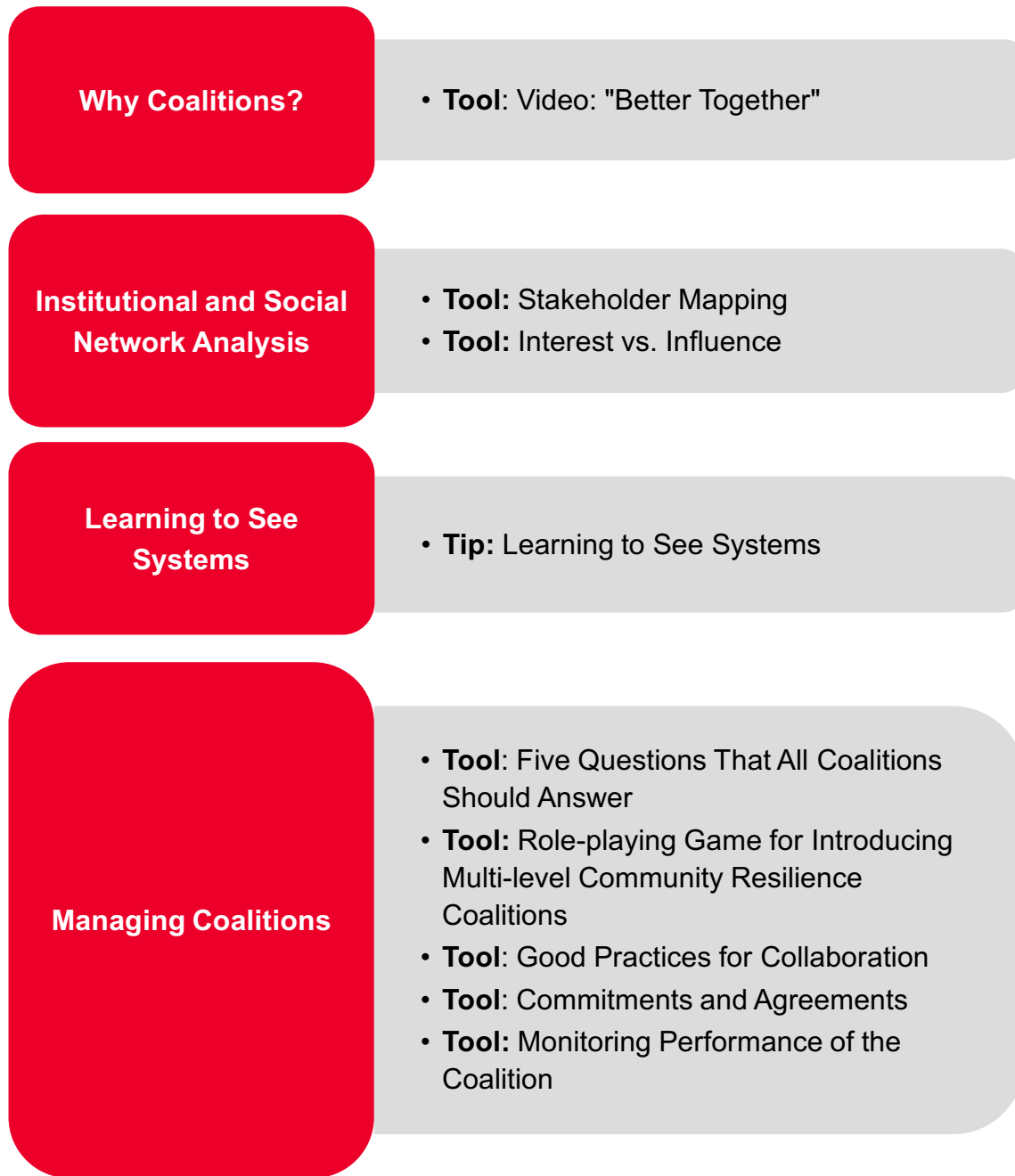
How to Use this Toolkit

No outside experts are required to implement this toolkit – the tools are designed to be picked up and used by anyone, and assume no prior familiarity with building resilience or running a coalition.

However, facilitation may make the process move more smoothly. The facilitator does not need to be a professional facilitator hired externally; rather, she/he can be someone from your organization or one of the coalition organizations familiar with the concepts presented in this toolkit. You could also assign different members of the coalition to facilitate different parts of the toolkit.

The tools are presented in an order from how to start up through how to keep your coalition going and assess its progress. You may use them in this order, but there is no need to follow them as laid out here – use the ones that seem appropriate for your coalition and the issues it is facing at the moment. Coalitions continually grow and change, rise and fall, and keeping these tools in mind at the right time can help keep them on track.

FIGURE 1: COALITION BUILDING TOOLS





TIPS FOR TRAINERS

The exercises in this toolkit are for use by coalition members to put together effective coalitions. In some cases you may also want to train people in how to help others run through the exercises. In support of this training, the manual includes “tips for trainers.” These serve as a guide to helping people understand and do the exercises. However, the introductory workshop should not be confused with the coalition building process as a whole.

Some tools in this manual are simply for training purposes, to understand the principles better. They do not have to be done as part of the coalition building process, but can be helpful if members want to deepen their understanding. Those exercises are also marked “tips for trainers.”

In leading a coalition building process using these tools, please keep in mind that you don’t have to use all the tools. If the group you are leading already has some experience with resilience, build on what you already have.

In addition to the introductory workshop, **it is necessary to take the time to engage the correct stakeholders for each step, and complete the work with each tool with your stakeholder group.** Resilience is as much about process as the information collected through these tools. The process of working through these tools together is a fundamental aspect of your resilience work, as it helps you build the relationships that are needed to implement a cohesive, integrated resilience strategy and resilience activities, and establishes the value and expertise that different partners bring to the table.

Coalition Building Workshop in a Box

You can download a workshop training kit to help your coalition members increase their skills in coalition building. That kit contains:

- A detailed agenda
- PowerPoint presentations
- Coalition building worksheets for guiding and recording workshop sessions.



TIPS FOR TRAINERS

COALITION BUILDING WORKSHOP AGENDA

SESSION/TOPIC	TIME	OBJECTIVE
Day One		
Introduction to this training	1 hr	Participants <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Know who everyone in the room is• Understand what this pilot training will deliver Facilitators understand what people expect from the workshop
Managing Coalitions	1 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participants understand the essential agreements that effective coalitions need to make.
Stakeholder Mapping	1.5 hrs	Participants have a clear understanding of which organizations and groups need to be involved in a coalition to address the prioritized shocks and stresses at various scales, both vertical and lateral.
Interest vs. Influence	1 hr	Understand which organizations have influence over managing shocks and stresses, and which have interest in engaging as a coalition member.
Managing Coalitions: Role Play	2 hrs	Participants understand the essential agreements that effective coalitions need to make.
Good Practices for Collaboration	1 hr	Participants understand principles and practices of individuals and organizations that make collaborations effective.
Road Map	1 hr	Participants develop a road map for rolling out a coalition building process

WHY COALITIONS?

Video: Better Together

What is it, Why do it, What you get:

This short video covers the basic concepts of how and why to use coalition building to build resilience, especially building resilience in response to climate change and urbanization in developing countries.

It is not an instructional video -- it is designed to motivate people to learn more about how working in coalitions can help them reach their goals. The video is probably best used as part of a training workshop or coalition building meeting, rarely standing alone. It is especially useful for people who want to see the connection between unplanned urban growth, climate change, and the need to work with a wide variety of organizations. However, it could also be used as part of an effort to recruit people to a coalition or training.

The video assumes that viewers are already concerned about building resilience in their city. It does not use much technical language, and is suitable for people from all sectors, especially those who are not active on disaster management.

Time needed:

5 minutes to watch the video, 10-30 minutes to discuss it

Materials needed:

- Computer or TV capable of playing a short video
- Screen or monitor large enough for everyone to see well
- Sound system strong enough for everyone to hear

Steps:

1. Introduce the video and suggest that there will be time for discussion afterwards.
2. Watch the video as a group.
3. Depending on how you are using the video you may then:
4. Start the coalition building exercises in this manual.
 - a. Open up a discussion about how or if the situation described in the video is true for your area.
 - b. Explore how organizations from various sectors coming together to look for solutions could benefit the interests and goals of the viewers.

Discussion Questions:

1. What were the main messages coming out of the video?
2. What are the similarities between the video and your situation?
3. What was hard to understand in the video?
4. What did you not agree with?
5. Are there coalitions already active in your area in building resilience? Are there other issues where it would be a good idea to start a coalition?

Further Resources

Who can help you

People who are already working with coalitions or other types of collaboration can help describe their experience and advise you on how to get started, or how to improve your existing efforts.

Publications with further information

- IFRC Americas Regional Office, *Handbook: Building City Coalitions*, Panama
- IFRC Americas Regional Office, *Resilient Communities Handbook*, Panama



TIPS FOR TRAINERS:

Video: Better Together

This video is mostly motivational. It will not show you how to build a coalition -- instead, it shows you why coalitions are necessary to handle problems of unplanned urban growth and climate change.

For many people the word “coalition” will be too general. You may suggest that the idea is that any collaboration among multiple organizations can help to tackle tricky problems that are beyond the reach of any individual organization.

Others will say “we are already doing this,” which is excellent. In these cases you may want to explore if there seem to be any stakeholders who should be added to make the coalition even more effective, or if there is need to improve the way the coalition is set up or run to improve its effectiveness.

INSTITUTIONAL AND SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS



Tool: Stakeholder Mapping

What is it, Why do it, What you get:

An institutional and social network analysis identifies key organizations, groups and individuals in a community that are stakeholders for an issue of particular concern. Stakeholders are anyone who is affected by an issue or has a role in making decisions about it. In the case of flooding, people whose houses are flooded are stakeholders, and so are the businesses who work there, emergency responders who help them, the city planners who decide where people can build houses, and the civil society organizations that work with people who live there. The analysis explores the how those stakeholders are related, and who has influence over the issue of concern.

Conducting an institutional and social network analysis will help you identify

- groups or organizations you want to include in your coalition
- gaps in connections between groups where networking is needed
- organizations or individuals that you will need to influence to make your resilience work effective.

Successful completion of this analysis will clarify how you can make your coalition more effective.

This tool assumes that you may be at any stage in the process of building a coalition, and will help you analyze how to make your coalition stronger. You do not need to be at any

particular phase of coalition development to make this tool useful. It helps to be familiar with many aspects of the issue you are worried about, and to have a variety of perspectives on it from government, businesses, civil society organizations, and academics.

Time needed:

1 hour for each issue you are working on

Materials needed:

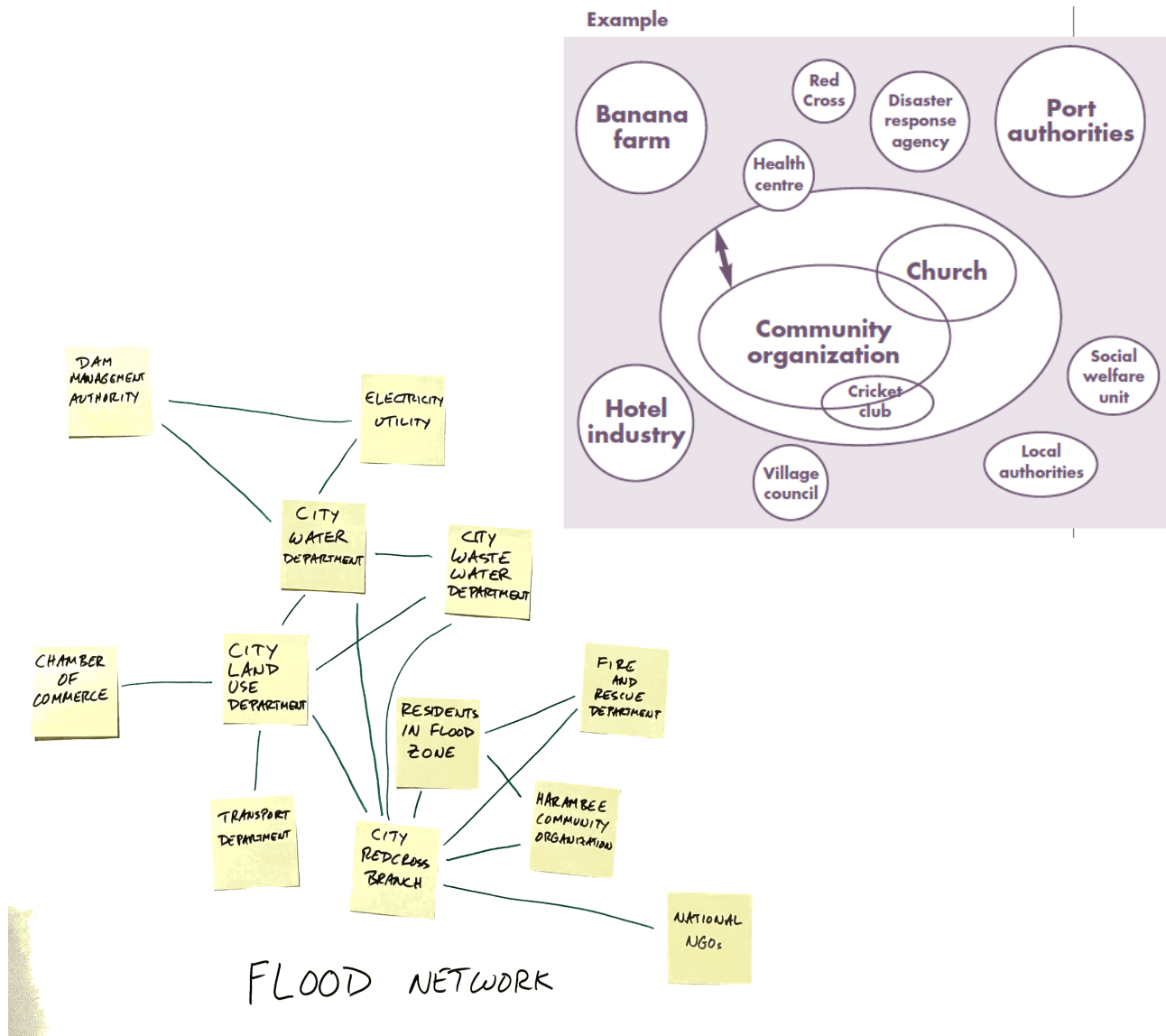
- Flipchart paper
- Markers
- Post-it notes in three colors

Steps:

1. Bring together your coalition members. If you have not yet started building your coalition, bring together a group of people you know are interested in working on it. You may want to do a series of one-on-one meetings with potential partners to generate interest.
2. Define the purpose of your coalition – e.g., Disaster Risk Reduction, Resilience Building, Improved Water and Sanitation, or some other purpose. If you have several issues you are concerned about, do this process for each issue, since different organizations will be involved.
3. Write down the organizations or groups that are important players on the issue you're concerned about (if you're working in a group of more than a few people, you may want to use a large sheet of paper). These may already be members of your coalition, or they may not. Focus on the top 5 to 10 groups that are most important to this issue; you don't need to list everyone. The purpose of this step is to identify people you might want to consult and/or invite to join your coalition.
4. Now you will turn this list into a map. There are a several ways to do this.
 - a. **Option One:** Write each organization or group on a post-it note. Use one color for groups in the room, another for groups not in the room. Put the post-it notes on a sheet of paper or the wall based on their relationships to one another. The distance between the post-its reflects the strength of the relationship between the organizations/groups. Draw lines between organizations to show the main relationships. You do not have to show all possible relationships, just the ones that are most active or most important.

- b. **Option Two:** Write the groups directly on piece of flipchart paper as circles of different sizes (like the example below). Groups with more influence should be written larger than groups with less influence. The location of the groups shows their relationships. You may also want to draw lines between organizations to show strong relationships.

In the example below, the port authorities and the banana farm play important roles. However, they have little relationship with community organizations, as is shown by their distance from the center. Conversely, while the cricket club and church have smaller roles, community members have a much stronger relationship with them.¹



¹ This image is taken from the IFRC Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment toolkit, VCA.

5. Discuss as a group the questions below.
6. Identify next steps based on this information and discussion created by this tool. Record these next steps on the coalition building worksheet.

Discussion Questions:

1. Think of the core urban systems that are heavily affected during hazard events. Are stakeholders for those systems represented in your chart (who is missing)? Discuss and add as needed.
2. Which groups have the most influence related to the goals of the coalition? Do you have relationships with those groups?
3. Which groups are relatively isolated?
4. Which groups are most interested in being part of the coalition?

Further resources

Who can help you

On whatever issue you're dealing with, it is important to cast your net wide to understand who is involved or affected by decisions made around this sector. Ask people from all sectors who is important on your issue. You will often get different answers from government or business or civil society, which means that all those people should be included, if possible. For example, if you're focused on flooding, you want to talk to people who live in at-risk locations, officials who decide where people can build, and others familiar with how flooding affects other sectors such as education, health, and business. All the people involved in these issues and decisions can be good contributors to your coalition.

Publications with further information

- IFRC Americas Regional Office, *Handbook: Building City Coalitions*, Panama
- IFRC Americas Regional Office, *Resilient Communities Handbook*, Panama



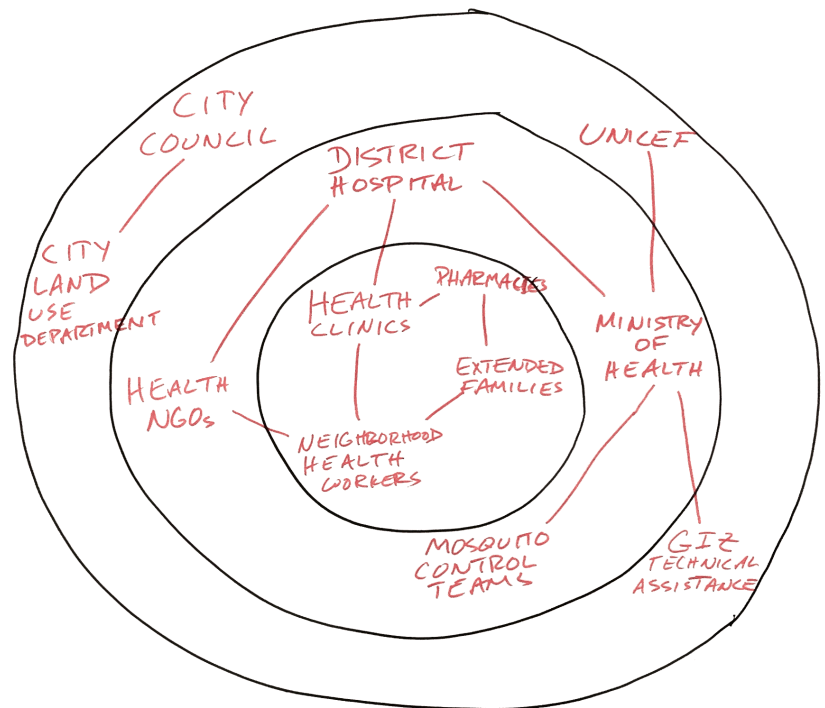
TIPS FOR TRAINERS

Choose one issue and run people through the process. As people make their maps, remind them of how wide the range of stakeholders can be. Emphasize that people should think broadly about who is affected or who makes decisions related to their issue. For example, cell phone providers and the electric company are important players in maintaining livelihoods and economic activities in any shock event.

Getting started on a network map can be intimidating. If people are unsure, have them start with their own organization and the ones they work mostly closely with on this issue. Then help them see how they can expand the network map out to others who are involved in the issue but they perhaps do not work with.

The advantage of using the post-it note method is that they can continually revise the map as they think of new organizations, or deepen their understanding of how groups work together (or do not work together). The advantage of the circles method is that it is easier to see who is most important on the issue just by looking at the size of the circle.

Some people find it easier to think of concentric circles, that is, the closest organizations in an inner circle, those less involved in a second circle outside the first group, and other circles that move progressively farther out. On the right is an example. This method has the advantage of making it easier to see who works together most, though it is a bit harder to see who has the most influence.



MALARIA + DENGUE NETWORK



Tool: Interest vs. Influence²

What is it, Why do it, What you get:

You may have a good idea who all the people and organizations are that have something to do with your issue, but they have different levels of interest in working with you, and different levels of influence over outcomes. This exercise helps you to figure out:

- Who has more influence over the issue than others
- Who is interested in working with your coalition

Knowing these two things can help your coalition plan for action. If there is an organization that is very important for making decisions – such as the electric company is important for making decisions about what to do in case of power cuts – you may want them as part of your coalition. You may need to approach them and recruit them to participate. Or you may want to approach an organization such as a neighborhood group that is directly affected by floods, but has little influence over decisions, so they can join the coalition to increase their influence.

What you get is a coalition that has a better sense of who makes important decisions, and who needs to be approached to draw them into your coalition.

This exercise is useful whether you have an active coalition or are just starting up. It also assumes that you are aware what the important issues are, and who is involved with them. If you don't know, you may want to do two things first:

- Conduct a resilience assessment, using other tools available from IFRC or the One Billion Coalition for Resilience (1BC)
- Consult with others who know about the issue to get ideas from them who is important to solving problems around the issue.

This is also something your coalition can do from time to time as things evolve to make sure you are still effective.

² This exercise is adapted from Ros Tennyson, *The Partnering Toolbook*, The Partnering Initiative, 2011.

Time needed:

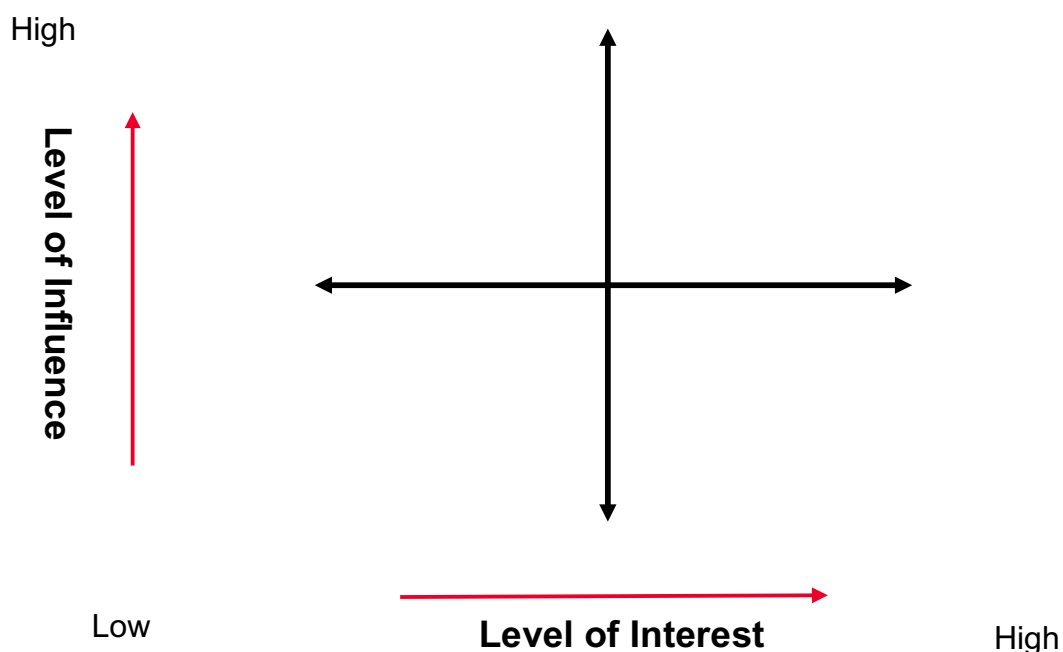
1 hour

Materials needed:

- Flipchart paper
- Markers
- Post-it notes

Steps:

1. Create a large Interest vs. Influence chart, like the example below, on a large sheet of paper.
2. As a group, brainstorm stakeholders who are working to address issues associated with the priority shocks and stresses and vulnerable groups or areas you have already identified.
3. Now, place each of these stakeholders on the chart according to their ability to have an impact on your shocks and stresses, and how much interest they have in working in coalition to do so. If an organization is very influential, but prefers to work independently, then it would go in the top left: strong influence, but little interest in coalition. Another organization which is very interested in collaborating with the coalition, but has little ability to make much of a difference, would go in the lower right: low influence, high interest.



Discussion Questions

1. Who does it make sense to reach out to as you build your initial coalition? Who will be both influential and interested?
2. Who might you get a little later, once the coalition is formed and starting to act?
3. Are there critical players with low interest that you will need to find a way to influence?

Further Resources

Who can help you

People in charge of basic services think about these issues every day, so consulting them can help. Sometimes those will be government officials, or private businesses. In many cases there are civil society groups formed to monitor these services, such as NGOs concerned with waste management and recycling, or health groups concerned about clean drinking water. They will give perspectives that complement the service providers.

If you find that you do not know much about a certain sector, that is a sign that you need to go out and consult those more familiar with it.

Publications with further information

- IFRC Americas Regional Office, *Handbook: Building City Coalitions*, Panama
- Ros Tennyson, *The Partnering Toolkit*, The Partnering Initiative, 2011.
- Robin Katcher, *Unstill Waters: The Fluid Role of Networks in Social Movements*, The Nonprofit Quarterly, Summer 2010.
- Dave Prescott, Katie Fry Hester, Darian Stibbe, *Zambia Partnering Toolkit*, The Partnering Initiative, Oxford, 2015.



TIPS FOR TRAINERS:

Interest vs. Influence

Not everyone important to an issue will be interested in collaborating. This tool will give participants a more realistic sense for who they can work with and how. Opinions will differ – encourage discussion of why people disagree about the importance or interest of any particular organization. These discussions may generate ideas for what you need to do to either engage uninterested groups, or to increase your influence with the participants you have.

This mapping is not precise. The idea is to get an idea where organizations stand in relation to each other.

LEARNING TO SEE SYSTEMS

In order to know who should be in your coalition, it helps to know what urban systems are disrupted most frequently in your area, because these systems are the ones that people will not have available at the time of disaster. At the same time, it helps to have a sense how these systems interact with each other – problems with one can lead to problems with others.

Since this is simply a training exercise, there is no activity for the coalition itself other than learning.



TIPS FOR TRAINERS:

Learning to See Systems³

The goal of this activity is to give participants practice identifying core urban systems in their own location. This is a learning exercise, so it is not necessary for the coalition building process. It can nevertheless be useful for coalition members to develop a shared way of thinking about urban systems and how people use them.

Time needed:

2 hours

Materials needed:

- Work with workshop organizers, facilitators, translators in advance to explain goals, select location.
- If you use the photo option, use the photos from the Workshop in a Box, or photos you have from your own city.

Description:

Option 1: As a group, visit an urban area and identify the critical urban systems that are visible and invisible (food, energy, water, communication, transportation, shelter).

Option 2: Using photographs, perform the same exercise. Below is a sample of how you might use a photo to teach how to pick out the systems in an urban environment.

Facilitators lead a discussion of critical urban systems that can be seen, can't be seen, and/or are missing, how shocks/stresses might impact those systems, and what failure of those systems might do to other systems (cascading failures).

³ This exercise is adapted from Chris Allan, "Learning to See Systems," <http://chrisallan.info/2014/11/learning-to-see-systems/>, November 23, 2014.



TIPS FOR TRAINERS:

Learning to See Systems

Discussion:

1. What systems do you see? Which systems do you NOT see?
2. What systems in this area tend to breakdown? What causes them to break? Who is most affected?
3. How are other systems affected by that disruption?
4. What are possible Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change Adaptation and/or resilience interventions to improve the situation at the local, city, or other scale?
5. Who/what departments or organizations would you need to engage to make those interventions happen?



MANAGING COALITIONS



Tool: Five Questions That All Coalitions Should Answer⁴

What is it, Why do it, What you get:

This exercise helps participants come to a shared understanding on how they are going to work together. The five questions ask coalition participants to agree on what the main purpose of the coalition is and how participants are going to manage the operations of the group. What are our common goals? How do we make decisions? What skills or resources does each member bring to the group? If participants agree on these basic questions, the coalition will work more smoothly, and there will be fewer misunderstandings. Coalitions that do not come to a common view of how they are working together often have trouble agreeing on common activities and decisions.

Participants can change the answers to these questions at any time. In fact it is a good idea to discuss them together from time to time as things change. Each time it is important to come to agreement on them.

⁴ This exercise is adapted from Peter Plastrik and Madeleine Taylor, *NET GAINS: A Handbook for Network Builders Seeking Social Change*, Innovation Network for Communities, 2006.

Coalitions work best when members:

- bring different skills and resources to the group
- agree on basic goals and ways of working
- work efficiently, especially in meetings
- build trust with each other
- have clear decision-making procedures agreed and in place
- make most day-to-day decisions by individuals or small groups on behalf of the coalition.

Time needed:

2-4 hours, depending on how new your coalition is, and how diverse the members are

Materials needed:

- Flipchart paper
- Colored markers

Steps:

Ask the five questions listed below one by one, explaining briefly what is meant by each. For each question, participants volunteer examples of collaboration experiences they have been part of to ensure that everyone understands each question. Participants then answer the question for the coalition. This will require some discussion to come to answers that everyone is comfortable with. Differences of opinion can be very useful for understanding the various perspectives of the members, which in turn is helpful for good functioning of the coalition.

The five questions are:

1. What kind of coalition do you want to build?

Is it just for sharing information? Or for coordinating action that members take independently on the same theme? Or for joint projects where everyone works on a comprehensive plan?

TYPES OF COALITIONS

	Knowledge Sharing	Aligned Action	Integrated Action
Definition	Sharing information and contacts	Develop and spread an identity and collective goals	Joint action for specific outcomes by aligned people
Desired Network Effects	Rapid diffusion of information, ideas, and connections	Adaptive capacity, rapid connections, and diffusion of a common identity	Rapid diffusion of information, ideas, and connections, adaptive capacity, impact beyond members
Key Task	Weaving – help people meet each other and share information	Facilitating – help people explore shared identity and goals	Coordinating – help people to plan and implement collaborative actions



No type is any better than any other. If you only need to know what each are doing, then sharing knowledge and talking about your work with each other may be enough. Or you may find that having some common overall goals -- including people in development plans who are left out because of the language they speak or where they live, for example -- but all organizations approach them on their own while doing their own work. Or your coalition may want to develop a common plan where the members each implement a segment of it, even teaming up certain activities. For example, if your coalition wants to address HIV/AIDS, you may develop a common program with shared goals, activities and budgets. NGOs work together with the public health department to monitor cases, hospitals provide patient care at home in cooperation with community based organizations, businesses provide employment opportunities, and national level health departments provide grant funding.

These three types are simplified -- you may find that sometimes you are just sharing information and other times you are integrating programs. The type of coalition may

change over time as conditions change or as you get to know each other. Whichever you choose, the important thing is that members agree and are aware of how you are working.

2. What is the benefit of the coalition to members?

What are the potential benefits that attract people or organizations to participate in the coalition? While a coalition may have a single purpose – such as doing a resilience assessment – different members will be attracted for different reasons. For example, for government departments, the coalition may be a way for them to consult with civil society in a simple way. For civil society organizations, the coalition may be a good opportunity for them to address policy makers directly. For businesses, it may be the only place they can present their concerns in a trusting atmosphere.

If members do not find that the coalition helps them achieve their goals, they will soon drop out. Most people have too much to do, and will choose those things that work for them, and make other things a lower priority.

And while different members get different things out of participation, they should all be working for the same overall purpose, such as controlling dengue fever, preparing communities for disaster, or changing policy around city land use. It is important that the coalition agree on goals and objectives in order for everyone to be working in the same general direction.

3. What is the initial membership of the coalition? Who needs to be included? How should this evolve as the coalition moves forward?

Coalitions have boundaries and horizons, but their borders may be “soft”—easy to penetrate—or “hard”—impossible to penetrate. You should decide if anyone can participate, or if you want to define who can be in it. Or you may have an open coalition, but a well-defined Steering Committee that sets policy.

How do you decide who should be included? If you have done a resilience assessment, or some other analysis of the problem you are trying to address, you will have a sense of what systems are vulnerable to shocks and stresses. Use the tools included in this Toolkit to figure out who the major stakeholders are and how to invite them into the coalition. Coalitions that have members with different skills and resources are more likely to demonstrate how cooperation can increase the capacity of every member beyond what they can do on their own. So building a coalition that has people who are good at different things like influencing policy, mobilizing people, managing programs, raising funds, or doing communications increases the chances that each member will see value in working together.

Some coalitions prefer to have similar organizations as members, such as all government departments or all NGOs. While this may simplify operations, it reduces the chances that members will bring complementary skills and resources to the group.

4. How should the coalition operate?

- **What are the rules?** Coalitions are self-governing; the members rule. But how will they rule? How are decisions made? Who governs?

Many coalitions start out with informal rules and procedures. This may be fine if members are just getting to know each other, or there is not much need for tight management or sharing funds. Be aware though it is harder to create set rules and procedures once disagreements arise. So you may want to agree on these things and write them down right from the start.

Be careful about having one or two members lead everything. While this arrangement may be more efficient, sharing management and decision making increases the chances that everyone will see the coalition as theirs, and increases their commitment to programs and decisions. Perhaps you have a rotating chair, where each member takes responsibility for organizing and chairing meetings every six or twelve months. Or each member commits to working on at least one subcommittee or task force.

And above all be clear about how the coalition makes decisions. Does the chair decide after open discussion? Do subcommittees make their own decisions and just inform the bigger group? Does an executive committee make day to day decisions, but the whole group must all agree on overall strategy? Is there voting?

- **What structure should the coalition have?** Coalitions have structures or shapes—patterns of connections among their members. Different structures have different impacts on a coalition’s capabilities and operations. Which structure is right for your coalition?

A small coalition may operate all together. But most coalitions are too large for the whole group to discuss, plan, and decide together. Frequently coalitions will create subcommittees, task forces, or other small groups to do the work. These may be permanent subcommittees for regular business -- executive committee, fundraising committee, etc. -- and you may organize temporary task forces to decide on short term questions, like an event coming up.

Also, does the coalition gather members from the whole city, or perhaps even a province or region, or it may even be national or international, depending on your

issue. Even if your coalition is limited to the city, it is often wise to have members from national and international organizations to help with those perspectives and resources.

5. Do some members play roles that make it easier for the group to work?

Who will play the various roles in the coalition, such as coordinator, donor, broker, etc.

The point of having a coalition is to take advantage of the different skills and resources of the members. So it makes sense to discuss what each member brings to the coalition, and recognize different roles. Common useful roles are:

- Coordination
- Fundraising
- Mobilizing volunteers
- Technical or scientific advice
- Conflict mitigation
- Communications

Recognizing which members are better suited to these and other roles can make the coalition more efficient and effective. At the same time, those playing these roles should always remember that they are collaborating, and should not simply dictate how things should be done because they are the “experts.” Coalitions have value when members buy into the actions of the overall group.

This variety of roles also suggests that not all members need to do everything. If only a couple of members are interested in making a brochure, or starting a study group, or getting training on a new skill, that is fine. It does not make sense for all members to develop the same capacities -- the value of the coalition is that members benefit from what others have.

Further Resources:

Who can help you

Most coalitions can answer these questions for themselves. Sometimes members with experience working with groups can lead discussion. If available, outside facilitators can be helpful by guiding discussions and helping resolve unspoken disagreements. The coalition should be able to manage itself, but initial set-up or occasional tune ups can benefit from an outsider.

Publications with further information

- Peter Plastrik and Madeleine Taylor, *NET GAINS: A Handbook for Network Builders Seeking Social Change*, Innovation Network for Communities, 2006.
- Diana Searce, *Catalyzing Networks for Social Change*, Monitor Institute and Grantmakers for Effective Organizations.
- Ros Tennyson, *The Partnering Toolbook*, The Partnering Initiative, 2011.



TIPS FOR TRAINERS:

Five Questions That All Coalitions Should Answer

Successful coalitions have well understood and smooth functioning structures, processes, and procedures. Members need to agree on what kind of collaboration is needed and how it will be governed in the following five areas:

1. Coalition Type
2. Benefits
3. Membership
4. Operations
5. Member Roles

Participants may also discuss how that collaboration may need to evolve over time to effectively address priority risks facing communities in the city.

Ask the five questions one by one, explaining briefly what is meant by each. Participants volunteer examples of experience they have with each one from collaborations they have been part of.

Some people may have little experience in collaborating with other organizations. Or they may have experience, but have not spent much time thinking about what makes collaborations work. So those with more experience may need to explain the five questions, and give examples from their own experience, to make sure that everyone gets it.

Practical examples are very helpful.

Some people will be tempted to say that every member gets the same thing out of participating in the coalition. It is important to point out that members have different needs in coming to the coalition.



Tool: Role-playing Game for Introducing Multi-level Community Resilience Coalitions⁵

This role-playing game introduces participants to coalition-building, specifically to support community resilience. Participants consider the perspective of different stakeholders in a resilience coalition to understand the motivations and interests of different groups.

The game provides an opportunity for participants to learn about the differing roles and perspectives of coalition members and how to manage these differences, what agreements coalitions need to make to function well, and what problems coalitions can run into. This tool is primarily for use in a training workshop. There is no need to do this exercise in the Implementation phase unless members want to use it as a learning tool.

Time needed:

2 hours

Materials needed:

- Flipchart paper
- Colored markers
- Identification badges (to indicate both names of participants and role being played)
- Group roles listed on separate sheets of paper

Description:

This game is designed to be led by the participants. There are no specific messages for the players. Rather, it is designed to share perspectives on the benefits and limitations of coalitions focused on community-based plans of action, as well as the different real-life experiences of the participants.

⁵ This tool was originally developed by Gavin White and Jose Bonilla of the American Red Cross, 2016, and adapted by the Global Disaster Preparedness Center.

Because the game is led by participants, the more diverse the participation, the more diverse the discussions will be. In particular, it is expected that the audience for the game will include at least three of the following sets of stakeholders:

1. Community:
 - Community representatives and / or volunteers and / or staff supporting community-centered activities;
2. City:
 - Red Cross / Red Crescent branch-level representatives;
 - Local government representation;
 - Local civil society representation (non-profit; foundation; private sector);
3. National:
 - Red Cross / Red Crescent national-level representatives;
 - National government representation and / or national civil society representation (non-profit; foundation; private sector);
4. Regional/Global:
 - Red Cross / Red Crescent regional and global staff (IFRC; PNS);
 - Representation from regional bodies and / or regional representation of international organizations.

Preparing the exercise

Organize participants into four groups such as:

Group 1: Residents of “Neighborhood 8”

The roles in the most local group will be composed of local actors such as volunteers from local religious groups or scouts; local football club members; local members of an early warning team; president of the neighborhood water committee; school teacher; etc.

Group 2: “Resilience committee of Southside district”

The roles at district level will include: local authority; local business owner; district representatives; Red Cross representative; journalist from district news channel; etc.

Group 3: “Our resilient city” municipal platform

The roles at city level will include: mayor; Red Cross branch president; Ministry of the Environment representative; local NGO; dean from the local university; head of the local adult training institute; etc.

Group 4: “National resilience platform”

The roles at national level will include: National Director of the Civil Protection system; Secretary General of the National Red Cross Society; JICA representative (Japanese Government Aid); representative of the Chamber of Commerce; representative of corresponding ministries; representative of INGO active in the country; etc.

Adjust the names of roles to fit into the local situation. For each of the groups you may wish to assign the participants to roles significantly different from their current functions. For instance:

- A local volunteer might be asked to play a role on the national platform group;
- The president of a Red Cross branch might be asked to join the neighborhood group;
- A technical staff member from National Society headquarters might be asked to join the neighborhood group.

In this way participants increase their understanding of people in other positions in the coalition.

The list of participants and the group they are assigned to should be finalized before the exercise starts. It is not necessary to assign actual roles to individuals, only divide the participants according to the four groups. Individuals within groups can choose their own roles.

Print out these groups and roles ahead of time, one group per sheet. Give these to each group when the game begins so they know their roles.

Running the exercise:

1. General introduction

The facilitator provides a general overview of recent coalition building, as well as the particular actions taken by the Red Cross / Red Crescent Movement.

2. Organizing the groups

The four groups are assigned different spaces of the meeting room, in a way that each group can discuss their topic without overhearing the neighboring group.

Participants count off by fours to divide themselves into groups. The facilitator hands out roles to each group.

3. First group discussion

The facilitator poses one issue for all groups to consider. Choose an issue appropriate to

the issues participants usually face, and make it one that is manageable for this coalition to tackle. Examples include:

- Propose a new program to help citizens flood-proof their homes
- Make recommendations on a proposed government program to build a sea wall
- Discuss a proposed city ordinance that all citizens must implement earthquake resistant upgrades to their homes
- Discuss a proposed program to remove residents from a flood prone area
- Create a program to promote small businesses in the city
- Discuss the city bid to replace the small-scale recyclers/rag pickers with a municipal incinerator

If possible, choose an issue that has already come up in discussion during the workshop.

As each group receives their roles:

- **Introductions:** Participants will present themselves in their new role to their fellow group members (according to the information in their role sheet).
- **Rapporteur:** Once all members have presented themselves, the group should identify a Note-Taker / Rapporteur who will present back to the other groups;

As the game unfolds, facilitators move around the room encouraging individual participants to practice positive and negative behaviors from their experience that bring out the benefits and challenges of working in groups.

4. Plenary session

Facilitators choose a chair for the coalition to guide the discussion.

All groups to come back together and groups speak in the following order:

- Group 1 (neighborhood);
- Group 2 (district);
- Group 3 (city);
- Group 4 (national).

Each group explains:

- Who the members of the group are (as described on their role sheets);
- Their recommendations on the issue proposed.

- Their possible contributions to the presentations of the other groups.

After all four groups have presented, everyone together attempts to reconcile the various points of view presented by the groups and produce a unified recommendation.

Discussion Questions

1. What kind of coalition was it?
2. What were the benefits for different members to participate?
3. Who was represented in membership? Was anyone important missing?
4. Operations – what were the rules? Who was in charge? How was the coalition set up? Did it have subcommittees? Did everyone have equal status?
5. Member roles – Did some members play roles that made it easier for the group to work?

The facilitator guides the discussion and writes down on flipchart paper the initial conclusions. The facilitator closes the exercise summarizing the points from the participants and thanking them for their contributions.



Tool: Good Practices for Collaboration⁶

This is another training tool for helping coalition members learn about how to manage their coalition. There is no activity for the coalition itself, simply the training exercise.

What is it, Why do it, What you get:

Good intentions to participate in a coalition are not enough to make the coalition a success. Individual behaviors and organizational adaptability to working with other organizations make a big difference in how well a coalition works. This session focuses on individual and organizational practices that increase the chances that collaboration will help advance your goals.

The objective of this exercise is for participants to understand the principles and practices of both individuals and organizations that make coalitions effective. There is no need to do this exercise in the Implementation phase unless members want to use it as a learning tool.

Time needed:

1 hour

Materials needed:

- Flipchart paper
- Colored markers

Steps:

1. **Personal Qualities** — Facilitators solicit responses from participants: “Based on your experience, what are personal qualities that support people working in groups? What personal behaviors get in the way?” Alternatively, participants can use the Role playing game as an example. Facilitators record qualities listed by participants.

⁶ This tool is designed for training purposes, so you do not need to do it in actual implementation building your coalition unless members want to.

If participants have trouble suggesting things, facilitators can prompt for some common positive and negative qualities:

- **Openness** – participants who are open about their own organization’s priorities, resources, and commitments allow others to know how to fit them in the collaboration. It also builds trust.
 - **Contribution** – participants who contribute to the collective effort – by regular attendance at meetings, volunteering for tasks, or following through on promises – promote the collaboration.
 - **Negativity** – participants who find something wrong with every suggestion, or focus on how things do not work versus how to make them work, do not encourage further collaboration.
 - **Domination** – participants who speak frequently in meetings, have difficulty compromising, and are not open to others’ priorities reduce the effectiveness of collaboration.
2. **Role Play** — Facilitators role-play a couple of examples (e.g., controlling members, members who interrupt an agreed on process, etc. Role play demonstrates some of the qualities identified by participants.)
3. **Organizational Practices** — Facilitators solicit responses from participants: “How prepared is your organization to cooperate? Use a past event when your organization collaborated and where things worked and where they didn’t.” Facilitators role-play a couple of examples (e.g., members with inflexible organizational procedures, organizations send different staff to each meeting, staff do not have mandate from their organizations to agree to anything, etc.). As above, if participants have trouble identifying practices, facilitators can suggest some.
- **Flexibility** – organizations that cannot adjust their internal processes – decision making, budgeting, planning, etc. – to accommodate a collaboration will have trouble contributing to a successful joint effort.
 - **Inconsistency** – when a different staff member attends each meeting, and is not properly briefed by previous colleagues, other members can become frustrated at the organization’s inability to be consistent in its contributions and needs.
 - **Lack of management commitment** – if staff find that their agreements and commitments to the coalition are contradicted by their own leadership, the organization will be difficult to collaborate with and trust.
4. **Principles** – Facilitators solicit take away principles and record them on a list. If needed, facilitators can prompt participants with the list below. There is no

definitive list, so the ideas of the participants are the most important thing to bring out.

Personal qualities – People who are successful in collaborations are often:

- Able to read and control their own emotions
- Confident
- Empathic
- Optimist
- Imaginative
- Open
- Modest
- Good at taking initiative.

Organizational qualities – Organizations that are successful in collaborations are often:

- Flexible
- Consistent
- Have support of management
- Devote resources to collaboration, including staff time
- Share the vision of the collaboration

5. **Summing Up:** Facilitators ask the group to come up with a list of principles. Facilitators can prompt the group with a list prepared in advance.

Further resources

Who can help you

Anyone with experience in working with groups can help you here if you are having difficulty. Facilitators with experience in organizational development, strategic planning, or community organizing can all be useful.

Publications with further information

- Ros Tennyson, *The Partnering Toolbook*, The Partnering Initiative, 2011.
- Dave Prescott, Katie Fry Hester, Darian Stibbe, *Zambia Partnering Toolbook*, The Partnering Initiative, Oxford, 2015.
- Peter Plastrik and Madeleine Taylor, *NET GAINS: A Handbook for Network Builders Seeking Social Change*, Innovation Network for Communities, 2006.



TIPS FOR TRAINERS:

Good Practices for Collaboration

Sometimes it can be hard to get started on this exercise since some people have not thought much before about what makes people and organizations easy or hard to work with. Starting with individual qualities can be easier to get people going.

Note that many people will mix up individual and organizational qualities. Pull these apart, to illustrate that even the most cooperative and helpful individuals will have trouble functioning in a coalition when their organizations are rigid or find it difficult to adapt. It can be helpful to encourage suggestions about particular things that organizations do that make it easy for them to work with, and which do not.

Specific examples are very helpful for making this exercise concrete. Be careful that examples are not specific enough to cause offense or place blame on something that has gone wrong in the past. In general these delicate moments can be deflected by asking what positive things can be done to improve on unhelpful behaviors.



Tool: Commitments and Agreements

What is it, Why do it, What you get:

Some coalitions work fine with informal discussions and agreements. Most coalitions do better when people write down their commitments to the cause and the roles they play. In addition to making it clear what everyone will do, it also increases the accountability of each member to do what they promise to do. These agreements are also helpful after the initial flush of enthusiasm for the effort fades, and the long term commitment of each member is tested.

A written agreement can be general or specific, depending on how much detail you want to put down in advance. Remember that this document is designed to make clear who does what, not to be a legal contract. It needs to be specific enough to show what people will do, but allow flexibility for the coalition to change, particularly for things like how often the coalition meets, what committees it will have, or what role members will play.

The examples in the workshop kit show the diversity of approaches that are possible. You will need to make a document that is suitable for your specific situation.

Members can sign as individuals, or as representatives of their organizations. The first is easier, since individuals do not need to get a formal commitment from their board to attend meetings and work on the collaboration. The second is more reliable, since it commits an organization to replace members when an individual leaves the organization, and increases the chances that an organization will provide more administrative support, volunteers, money, or other resources.

These documents must move with the times. If a coalition changes the way it is working, these documents should change too.

Time needed:

1 hour

Materials needed:

- Flipchart paper to record the areas of agreement
- Colored markers

Steps:

Decide what the essential contents of the coalition agreement should be. Consider:

- The purpose of the coalition;
- Whether coalition members are individual, or the organizations those individuals represent;
- The role each member in the coalition is committing to (management, funding, volunteer recruitment, technical advice, etc.);
- Member participation in committees, task forces, working groups, or other groups the coalition may have; and,
- Attendance at meetings (what is expected, what is required, options for participation via phone or in writing, etc.).

Further resources

Who can help you

Anyone who has experience with several organizations working together for a common purpose can help think about what should be in the agreements.

Publications with further information

- Ros Tennyson, *The Partnering Toolbook*, The Partnering Initiative, 2011.
- In the Workshop in a Box there are some sample documents which can serve this function. Some are written as charters for the overall effort, others as agreements among members.



TIPS FOR TRAINERS:

Commitments and Agreements

Many people think either that a coalition does not need a written agreement, or that it needs a very tight contract. While both are sometimes true, most need something in between: a short, clear statement of why people are working together, and who will do what. The important thing is that people speak openly about what is needed for their situation. Some factors they may want to consider are:

- Have members worked with each other before;
- Are some members far more committed to the effort than others;
- Do some members find it difficult to attend regularly or do the things they commit to;
- Is it important to restrict membership to certain groups at first to ensure smooth functioning; and,
- Is there a large difference in the capacities of different members.



Tool: Monitoring Performance of the Coalition

What is it, Why do it, What you get:

The usual principles of planning and managing your own organization apply to managing coalitions as well. Planning should set out clear goals and objectives that members agree on, and there should be at least a general schedule of when things will happen and who will do them. This kind of planning can be informal or formal, depending on how closely integrated the members want to be. Members may just want to share information, in which case little planning is needed. Or at the other extreme members may want to implement a common program with shared resources, in which case the planning needs to be tighter. Most coalitions are somewhere between these two extremes.

But managing coalitions introduces one element that may be different from managing your own organization. Since members come together freely, members are unlikely to want to be actively managed to detailed plans and schedules. Members want a coalition to help them expand their capacity beyond what they can do themselves. But they do not give up their own organizational procedures and priorities, and so are less likely to want to be tightly managed by a committee or coordinator.

This looser management style means that coalitions keep going because the members see that it adds value for their own work. Meetings must be productive, joint activities must advance the agendas of each member, and coalition priorities must align with member priorities. No member will be interested in everything the coalition does, so there must be variation in how different members can be involved.

Setting up management for a coalition is thus a bit different than for member organizations. If members spend the time needed to agree on a management structure and style that suits their purposes by using the Five Questions for coalitions, then there will already be a set of structure and procedures. There may be committees, a regular meeting time, fundraising, etc. It is helpful to review these arrangements from time to time to ensure that they are still working for members as needs change.

In assessing how the coalition is doing, there are three distinct areas that members may want to consider:

- Achievement of goals externally
- Value added to members of the coalition
- Effective functioning of the coalition

Time needed:

2-3 hours, depending on the size of your coalition

Materials needed:

- Flipchart paper
- Colored markers

Steps:

1. Achievement of goals externally

Review the goals and objectives of the coalition. In small groups, list out the achievements of the coalition under each one. If members do not have enough information to say what has been achieved, they should create questions that members can answer later after looking into past activities more closely.

Groups report back to the main group. Discuss what all groups agreed on, and where they saw achievements differently. Discussion of these differences of opinion can help members understand each other better and clarify goals and ways of working together.

2. Value added to members of the coalition

Individual members write down 2-3 achievements of the coalition that are valuable for the/their organization in particular.

The group writes them all on flip chart paper. Group them, putting similar points together. Create a list for the whole coalition of members to find valuable. If time allows, compare these achievements with the original goals and objectives. If they are different, discuss if the goals of the coalition have evolved, and if the goals of individual organizations have shifted as a result of collaboration.

3. Effective functioning of the coalition

The Five Questions that you used to help set the coalition up can also be useful for assessing how well it is functioning. In small groups answer the questions again, and note any differences of opinion. These differences of opinion are valuable, because they show that more work is needed to create a coalition that addresses what its members want.

The questions are adapted a bit to make the review easier:

1. What kind of coalition did you want to build? What kind do you actually have?
2. What are the different benefits of the coalition to members? Are you actually getting that benefit?
3. What was the initial membership of the coalition? Who needs to be included who is not? How has membership evolved as the coalition moves forward?
4. How should the coalition operate?
 - a. What are the rules? Do we follow them?
 - b. What structure does the coalition have? Do committees and working groups do what they are meant to?
5. Do some members play roles that make it easier for the group to work? Are there roles that need more attention, such as fundraising, planning, etc.?

Come together as a whole group and take the responses of the small groups one by one. Record the points of agreement and the points that will need more discussion in the future.

Further resources

Who can help you

Normally you can do this assessment by yourself, and you should at least once a year. At times you will want a more in-depth look at your coalition. A professional evaluator or organizational development specialist can give you advice on how to pose these and other questions, and how to guide discussions, especially when there are disagreements.

Publications with further information

- Peter Plastrik and Madeleine Taylor, *NET GAINS: A Handbook for Network Builders Seeking Social Change*, Innovation Network for Communities, 2006.
- Ros Tennyson, *The Partnering Toolbook*, The Partnering Initiative, 2011.



TIPS FOR TRAINERS:

Monitoring Performance of the Coalition

Coalitions vary widely in how they are set up and what they are trying to do. As a result, there will be a wide variety of questions to be asked to assess their performance. This framework is a general one that can serve for most situations. But your context may suggest different questions, or different ways to approach them. The important thing is to decide what you want to know and how to find out. Keep it simple – you are not asking everything that would be nice to know about your work. Instead, you are asking the basic questions you need to know how effective you are.

One simple variation of this method is to have a small group of 1-3 people take charge of the exercise, and conduct interviews with individual members of the coalition to get their sense of how things are going. Even better is to interview knowledgeable people *outside* your coalition to find out what others think of the effectiveness of your efforts.

This framework is simple so that anyone can do it. If you have time or resources, professional evaluators can help you think of more elaborate frameworks or methods to assess how you are doing.