



CSO Partnership 
for **Development Effectiveness**



PIANGO

Pacific Islands Association of
Non-governmental Organisations | *Association Des Ongs
Desiles Du Pacifique*

THINK GLOBAL AND ACT LOCAL!

**WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR CSO ACCOUNTABILITY AND
CSO COORDINATION**

[Including consultation on the World Humanitarian Summit]

10TH MARCH, 2015

SALVATION ARMY TRAINING CENTRE, SUVA FIJI

PIANGO in partnership with FCSS

Background and Introduction

The role of Civil society has significantly changed in the spheres of society and politics. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are now major providers of essential services and are also influential advocates for marginalized groups and knowledge advisors on public policy.

Thus CSOs are important players in national and international governance. However with their newfound influence has also come with greater scrutiny of CSO activities. Worldwide, CSOs are facing growing pressure from governments, donors and the public to be more open about their funding sources, to provide evidence of their impact and to clearly demonstrate which groups they represent and how.

While some are asking these questions in an effort to strengthen the sector and reinforce CSOs role in governance, others are manipulating the accountability agenda to undermine and curtail the influence of CSOs. Regardless of the reason these questions are being asked, CSOs need to be proactive in responding to maintain public trust and avoid having frameworks of accountability imposed upon them that are detached from the core values of the sector.

Within the context of this changing political environment for CSOs, PIANGO has been engaged at the global and regional levels for the development of Accountability Toolkits, Charters and Codes of Conduct specifically for the CSO sector including the Istanbul Principles. PIANGO is now championing the development of a code of minimum standards for development effectiveness by Pacific CSOs.

Coupled with concerns around CSO accountability is also the concern about CSO fragmentation, duplication and competition. In context of Fiji, at the November 2014 workshop convened by PIANGO and FCOSS, development partners who came to share about their programmes in Fiji shared their observations that there is a lack of coordination and collaboration amongst CSOs.

This meeting will look specifically at coordination in the areas relating to Disaster Risk Management and Humanitarian Assistance as a lead up to upcoming global meetings which will require a Pacific CSO response.

Convened by the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon and organized by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) the first ever World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) will be held in May 2016 in Istanbul. The Pacific regional consultation will take place in Auckland from 30 June – 2 July 2015 thus voices and inputs of Pacific CSOs is critical. This workshop will provide information about the WHS and the opportunity to provide CSO inputs into this process.

This workshop will bring together a cross section of national and local NGO leaders to sharpen civil society thinking and analysis on topics related to CSO Accountability, CSO Coordination and collaboration to move forward on agreed actions.

The outcomes of this workshop will provide inputs into national, regional and global lobby into related meetings and consultations such as the World Humanitarian Summit and to further research and dialogue on the development of a Code of Minimum Standards for CSO development effectiveness.

Programme

A two-day programme was developed and circulated by PIANGO and FCOSS; with Day One focusing on CSO accountability and Day Two focusing on coordination specifically within the humanitarian response sector. Refer to Annex A for the programme and Annex B for a participant's list.

Day One – CSO Accountability

1. Summary of Discussions

Mr. Sam Ruben, President of FCOSS formally opened the consultation with a word of prayer. In his opening statements participants were encouraged to focus on the people they are meant to serve in the community; focusing on poverty reduction.

The facilitator, Sandra Bernklau led some introductory exercises that enabled participants to share their own experience in accountability mechanisms. The exercise generated key words including: participation, inclusiveness, good governance, legitimacy and transparency.

Executive Director of PIANGO, Ms. Emele Duituturaga provided an opening presentation that set the context and tone for the day's discussions. In her presentation, Ms. Duituturaga stressed:

- the global agenda has been set, and there is a history of support and demand for greater CSO accountability;
- it is imperative that CSOs themselves drive this process; thwarting attempts for accountability mechanisms to be imposed upon them by State and external actors;
- Civil society in its advocacy role is often about holding others accountable, and therefore it must ensure that its own operations are accountable and transparent;
- CSOs are often questioned about their own legitimacy and whether they are truly representative;
- Pushing for self-regulation is critical, and will provide legitimacy to the CSO sector;
- PIANGOs role is one of a coordination mechanism for civil society and its core business is civil society capacity building. As such, PIANGO does not drive the agenda, but will support, facilitate and coordinate CSO strengthening in key areas such as accountability;
- There are 8 Global Principles of CSO Accountability, called the "Istanbul Principles" (Refer to Annex C) –the challenge is to put those principles into organizational operational practice;
- Fiji CSOs must drive the agenda for change, and create for themselves accountability mechanisms such as a Code of Minimum Standards for CSO development effectiveness
- The time to do this is critical as there are plans underway to review or develop legislation pertaining to CSO operations in Fiji.

Refer to *Annex D* for PIANGO's presentation.

2. Panel Discussion

A panel consisting of three speakers shared their experiences in developing and participating in accountability mechanisms for civil society. Akmal Ali of the Pacific Students Association (PSA) presented on the formation of the PSA; including the experience of developing policies and processes that demanded accountability from the student associations around the region. Vuli Gauna of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) presented on the SPHERE project (<http://www.sphereproject.org>), which is the development of accountability standards for organisations and actors engaged in humanitarian responses. Emele shared the experience of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), which is PIANGO's Australian counterpart, and how they developed a set of standards for Australian organisations engaged in international development work.

Key points from the discussion:

- IFRC's example of the SPHERE project highlighted the need for a shared understanding of minimum standards to guide humanitarian responses. These are critical as they set out standards that can be used by all. These standards are non-binding – however many donors and States insist that humanitarian responses comply with these. Therefore, even non-binding and self-regulating standards can be used and enforced.
- PSA's experience was based on history of the USP Student Associations (USPSA) and how these were previously very unaccountable. The PSA worked slowly and consistently to encourage regional standards of operations that complied with the 8 Principles of Good Governance (UNESCAP). The PSA developed policies are endorsed formally within the University system and are binding and are therefore governed through processes that ensure accountability including formal complaints mechanisms as well as disciplinary and investigation procedures.
- ACFID has been around for more than 50 years. Similar to PIANGO, ACFID provides services to civil society. A scandal gave rise to the development of a code of minimum standards of accountability. ACFID members developed the code over a period of years. AusAID (now DFAT) also endorsed the code and will not give aid to any Australian organization engaged in overseas development assistance that is not a signatory to this code.
- ACFID's system is self-regulatory once you have complied with the minimum standards of membership and have signed onto the code. Although it is self-regulatory, there are occasional external reviews as well as assistance provided to develop and maintain the standards of accountability.
- While the Pacific situation is different and there has been no formal demand or "carrot" from donors for the Pacific to develop a code of minimum standards, all donors agree that this is a good idea. PIANGO will be meeting with donors to report on progress towards this.

Issues discussed as per presentation:

- ensuring diversity of voice and inclusivity from all communities: persons with disabilities, LGBTQ communities, rural, youth etc in the development of any code.
- linkage between civil society sustainability and accountability; the lack of funds and resources to progress this work. Often donors will fund projects, but not the development of civil society capacity.

- sustainability and ideas for income generation such as business opportunities
- the need to act urgently as in some countries like the Solomon Islands, draft legislation is being considered which will govern the operations of civil society organisations; the same is being considered in Fiji.

3. Plenary Session – Shared Understanding of Accountability

Participants shared their understanding of the term accountability. This included the following terms: Legitimacy, honesty, responsibility, inclusiveness (access to information), knowledgeable and skills, prudent, ethics, transparency, trustworthy, timeliness, credibility, integrity and ownership.

Participants shared that this is inclusive of the systems / procedures and policies that reflect these terms as well as to compliance (action focused).

Based on this discussion, the participants brainstormed five key areas within civil society operations where these principles are put into practice. These were:

- I. Financial Management
- II. Governance and legal framework
- III. Human Resource Management
- IV. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)
- V. Grant Management and Fundraising

4. World Café Exercise

During this exercise, participants shared methods by which accountability is exercised within each set of civil society operations noted above. For example, under financial management, audits are used. Participants discussed and shared how they ensure accountability within their organisations in each of these areas.

These are summarized as:

I. Financial Management

Audits (internal / external), Tender processes, good accounting procedures, financial policies and manuals, standard operating procedures, disciplinary processes, complaints mechanisms, financial software systems (MYOB), Board responsibility for finances.

II. Governance and legal framework

Constitution, standard operating procedures, bi-laws, policy and procedure manuals, annual and project plans, cooperation agreements and contracts, Board or similar structure, AGMs and Constitutional reviews, volunteer policies, strategic planning, Trustees, compulsory minutes, financial systems with checks and balances, statutory compliance, clear demarcation of roles and responsibilities between Board, management and staff and key policies written, shared and periodically reviewed.

III. Human Resource Management

Written human resource policies are needed to include complaints mechanisms and disciplinary action. Human resource manual to include selection, recruitment, appraisals, termination, clear human resources processes, human rights policies including harassment and discrimination, staff orientation.

IV. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)

Audits (internal and external), consultations with community, staff reviews, reporting (annual, quarterly, donor etc), Board documents, M&E reports, external evaluations, reflection and debriefing, strategic planning, publishing reports and evaluations, staff workshops and reviews, SWOTs and stakeholder reports

V. Grant Management and Fundraising

Annual reports, strategic plans, reporting cycles, audits and reports that are public, strategic planning processes, project planning, implementation and reporting, donor fund acquittals, identification of project proposals, beneficiaries, competition for funds.

5. Plenary – Working Group on Developing a Code of Minimum Standards for CSO Accountability

Participants brainstormed the various actions that they felt a working group should undertake in order to progress the development of a code of minimum standards.

These included:

- wide consultations with all civil society networks, groups; particularly those unable to attend and those who are most vulnerable and diverse;
- producing a desk review of existing documentation, information and resources – including examples of good practice existing;
- set up a mapping of the CSO sector;
- pro-actively advocating with government and donor partners on the standards; and
- the most urgent task being to develop a draft minimum code of standards.

Participants then brainstormed criteria for membership to the Working Group (WG). Some criteria included:

- A small group of– 8-10 persons (task forces can be used for specific tasks like drafting)
- Be reflective of diversity; persons with disability, a range of sectors from gender to environment, LGBTQ groups etc;
- Have representation of essential skills related to accountability including financial, legal, management, operations and human resource skills.

Participants then discussed ownership and process for the WG, this being:

- PIANGO is regional organization whereas FCOSS is the Fiji national partner. Thus PIANGO has funds to progress this work in 5 PICs and will soon have more full time staff to support this.
- PIANGO is the mechanism for coordination and can act as the Secretariat; however civil society must drive the agenda and discussion.
- PIANGO and FCOSS can engage in national level discussions.
- All CSOs should engage with their networks and stakeholders on this – shared responsibility.
- The WG will report to all CSOs via PIANGO as the coordination mechanism.
- Recognizing many actors and clusters – CSOs were encouraged to engage with their cluster (i.e. Gender, disability, humanitarian work) and share information through those networks.

Commitments: Several participants made commitments to this process including:

- FWRM committed to providing legal and policy analysis
- UNV/UNDP committed to providing workshop space for 1 workshop
- PIANGO committed to supporting other 1 day workshops around the country

The following timeline was discussed and agreed by the participants:

March – June 2015

- WG would be formed, and nominations to be received by this Friday – **Friday, March 13th**
- All CSOs to engage within their networks in sharing information on this;
- Other 1 day sessions to be convened by PIANGO / FCOSS;
- WG to be supported with information on good practices and other resources;
- Participants encouraged to use sectoral forums such as the Fiji Women’s Forum to share information;
- Draft minimum code of standards to be developed and circulated
- June 2015 – national meeting to review and provide feedback on the Minimum Code of Standards draft.
- By December of 2015 to have a completed Minimum Code ready.

6. Summary - CSO Accountability -Wrap-Up and Expectations

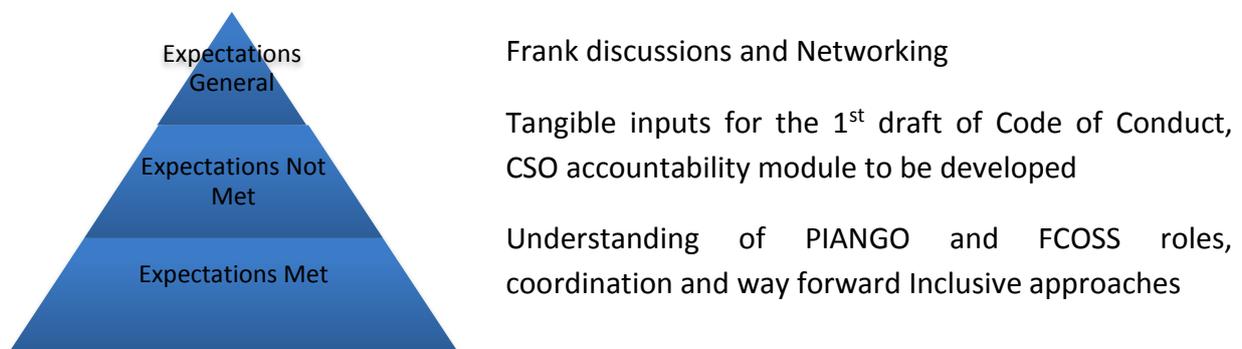
The first day of the workshop provided information and context on the urgent need for Fiji civil society to progress the development of Code of Minimum Standards for CSO development effectiveness. This code will assist civil society in being proactive in establishing guidelines that are in line with good governance principles; thus ensuring community, public, government, donor and other development partners’ confidence in civil society operations. The participants all agreed that this would mutually benefit all of Fiji’s civil society.

Participants also recognized the diversity of Fiji civil society and the need to consult widely on this topic – and to bring all voices into the conversation thus ensuring that any standards developed would be owned by Fiji civil society jointly.

This workshop has progressed agreements made at the November 2014 workshop; providing a clear plan, timeline and strategy for moving this important work forward. PIANGO has limited funding to progress this work, and all CSOs were encouraged to contribute to this mutually beneficial exercise through networking, time contribution or through sharing financial or human resources.

Expectations

Many participants were hoping to develop the minimum standards at the workshop. It was understood that the development of this requires a longer and much more inclusive process. The programme did meet many participants' needs for information sharing, collaboration and networking.



Day 2 - CSO Coordination – Disaster and Humanitarian Response

Day Two began with a word of welcome and prayer from the FCOSS President, Mr. Sam Ruben.

The Executive Director of PIANGO, Ms. Emele Duituturaga provided a background introduction to the day's programme; stressing that alongside accountability, coordination, cooperation and partnership were key features that strengthen civil society's ability to deliver assistance, especially critical in the area of humanitarian and disaster response. This was also the message of the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals - that of forging partnerships to ensure that "no one is left behind". Coordination is critical in avoiding "silos" and competition and in the disaster management sector it demands that civil society put aside competition and differences in order to work more effectively together.

Ms. Duituturaga also emphasized the critical role that civil society has in responding to disasters; specifically as the first responders. It is often the case a village, the community, the Church as well as civil society who are there to respond first – when international or national aid efforts are unable to. In the first 72 hours after a disaster, it is the community's inherent resilience that responds and in the Pacific, the cultural and traditional ties that

provide care and support are the most effective and critical. CSOs role is therefore to help those traditional support systems; helping each other to strengthen resilience.

7. Panel of Speakers on Disaster Risk Management, Climate Resilience and Humanitarian Assistance

Mr. Sune Gudnitz (UN OCHA), Mr. Neil Maharaj (FCOSS), Ms. Julia Edwards (PCC) and Mr. Vuli Gauna (IFRC) discussed their organization's approaches, challenges and priorities in response to coordination of humanitarian assistance.

Mr Sune Gudnitz, Head of Office, provided background to the work of UNOCHA. Key points being:

- UNOCHAs role in the Pacific is coordination and not service or delivery of humanitarian aid.
- Coordination is essential to ensure that there are no gaps, and that no areas are left uncovered.
- He supports the development of community resilience as aid and support is often not on the ground within 72 hours post disaster.
- All too often aid and international assistance does not listen to community need, but develops responses externally. This needs to be reversed so that international aid efforts listen to communities and respond more effectively.
- Coordination is key as many agencies get involved, all with different mandates and skills (water, housing, medical etc) and effective coordination then ensures that the rights assistance goes to the most needed places and that there is a special emphasis on vulnerable groups such as children, persons with disabilities and women.
- Encourages organisations to actively be involved – coordination is a two way street and organisations also need to join into these efforts.
- Government is a key player in the response and it is critical that we support government's efforts in the region. There is a tendency by some groups to not coordinate with government; but this is government's responsibility.
- Capacity building in coordination and planning is key.

Ms. Julia Edwards, Researcher and Mission Partner in Fiji for PCC focused on the role of faith based organisations during disaster. Key Points being:

- Faith groups in the Pacific are the first responders to any disaster and are a key part of Pacific resilience; both at the community level as well as the personal / spiritual level.
- Faith groups mobilize quickly and provide support, coordination, advocacy, the delivery of resources, generate external support and donations and provide hope.
- This is not limited to disasters, but also to "slow moving" events such as climate changes where faith groups are taking the lead in preparing communities for moves away from climate affected areas.

Neil Maharaj, Interim Director of FCOSS, focused on the role of CSOs, and particularly the need for civil society to coordinate together in humanitarian responses. Key Points being:

- Mr. Maharaj recalled the history of FCOSS which was created in 1957 to provide assistance and coordination to civil society in Fiji.
- FCOSS is part of the NDM Act in the role of coordinating civil society responses and reporting to Government.

- There is a great resistance to coordination amongst CSOs in Fiji which can partly be attributed to competition for funding as well as service delivery. This is a problem in disaster response as service delivery needs to be coordinated and competition should not be a barrier.
- Changes around coordination including the introduction of the cluster system mean that the current NDM Act is being reviewed.
- FCOSS has some funding through the EU EDF via SPC to look at the role of civil society and come up with ideas on how this can work through the cluster system.
- While civil society are the first responders and are the ones closest to the ground, there is also concerns about some CSOs who are moving into disaster response work solely because donor funds are there.

Mr. Vuli Gauna of IFRC centred his presentation on a different aspect of coordination, which was on volunteers. Key Points being:

- The World Humanitarian Summit is focusing on hearing the voices of the communities with an emphasis on those first responders such as community leaders and volunteers.
- Volunteers are often the first responders; they are the community members themselves and they are the ones that often do the dangerous and hard work including exposing themselves to the face of tragedy.
- Volunteers are a primary focus for the Red Cross and there is training available for them. IFRC and Red Cross know that volunteers are “free agents” and can volunteer for many causes and that is why it is critical to prioritize capacity building and support to a range of volunteers.

Reflections and questions from participants included questions around accountability and aid getting to the right people, the coordination mandate and training.

Responses from the panel clarified that:

- coordination is a “two way” street and while it is not compulsory, it is important that we make a compelling case to agencies as to the reasons why coordination is essential – and this is also true with Government coordination efforts
- training and support are available, but people have to seek these opportunities out through Red Cross and other agencies
- State of Disaster declaration by a state is a legal declaration that gives special powers to Government focal points. When agencies are not cooperating, government can step in and stop their work

8. World Humanitarian Summit - Elizabeth McLeod of UNOCHA

The background and context of the World Humanitarian Summit was presented by UNOCHA. This summit will be based on gathering information from regional summits that are currently underway, the Pacific one will be held from 30 June – 7 July summit in Auckland; all leading to the World Summit.

The Summit is in response to the changing face of humanitarian assistance due to the increase in the scale and scope of disasters, increased costs of disasters, the increasing number of actors working in humanitarian assistance and new models of assistance and new technologies. Pacific is vulnerable due to its geography, capacity for coordination and responses and in some areas weakening traditional systems.

Everyone is encouraged to feed information into the Summit and today's consultations will gather information for that purpose.

9. World Café Exercise - UNOCHA

UNOCHA and PIANGO jointly led a World Café exercise that looked at civil society's role in humanitarian responses. For full details please refer to *Annex E* fully detailed report by the WHS.

Summary of World Café Exercise

The world café exercise covered a range of aspects related to disaster response. Participants noted the following issues:

- Ensuring that youth, persons with disabilities are involved;
- Responses to human made disasters;
- use of traditional knowledge – and retaining that knowledge;
- better use of technology – GIS systems needed to improve information to and from remote areas;
- “double-dipping” – ensuring good coordination so that aid is received by those who most need it;
- Community information such as where persons with disabilities and the elderly live so that DSS offices can get assistance to them;
- coordination, communication and collaboration – key to getting assistance to the community level – and community level agents need to better coordinate their efforts;

10. The Post-2015 Development Agenda – Alanieta Vakatale

The final session of the two-day consultation concluded with a presentation on the process towards the development of the post-2015 Development Agenda and the finalization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); which will replace the Millennium Development Goals in 2015.

Ms Vakatale took the participants through the process towards the post -2015 Development Agenda; focusing on how the Pacific is being represented in this. The role of civil society is to influence this agenda. There are now 17 SDGs that are now set and the focus of civil society advocacy now is on how Governments will implement and finance these. For Fiji, the focal point is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

There are many ways to influence governments and one way is to ensure civil society voice at the UN General Assembly. PIANGO is currently in the process of getting accredited to

Economic and Social Council of the UN (ECOSOC - <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/>) so that they will have a legitimate seat as observers there. Consultations leading up to the finalization of the SDGs will end in June when final commitments are made.

PIANGO is encouraging everyone to get involved by assisting to lobbying the Government on the post-2015 agenda. Everyone is encouraged to read the Red Flags document on the 3P's – people, planet and participation (see http://www.beyond2015.org/sites/default/files/Webinar%20Presentation_Beyond2015%20Red%20Flags_George%20Ndungu.pdf)

11. Workshop Conclusions

Each day of the consultation came up with issues and action points on how to address the key civil society issues of accountability and sector coordination. It was clear from the consultations that:

- a) More consultations are needed on both issues and that PIANGO alongside FCOSS will be having further discussions and consultations with a wide range of civil society stakeholders over the next three months;
- b) Many civil society organisations feel ill-equipped to address issues around accountability and coordination due to lack of funding and human resources; therefore the link to fundraising and support is critical in addressing barriers faced; and
- c) Civil society organisations themselves have raised these issues and there is genuine commitment to addressing them; understanding that working together as one civil society voice on these issues which benefit all.

The Executive Director of PIANGO thanked the participants for their excellent contributions and participation and ensured the workshop that PIANGO is committed to following up and providing further support, coordination and space for these important and critical discussions on civil society accountability and coordination.

Mr. Sam Ruben, FCOSS President, formally closed the workshop at 3:00 pm.

Annexes: