# Annex 1 Status of Horizontal Networking

**ENGAGE**
**Enhance Non-Governmental Actors**
**and Grassroots Engagement**

**Re: Status of Encouraging and Building Horizontal Networks**
**From:** USAID/ENGAGE
**To:** Interested parties
**Date:** March 19, 2019

## Memo Overview

The purpose of this memo is to assess:
- How well ENGAGE encouraging and building horizontal networks?
  - Has ENGAGE provided new connections to organizations?
  - How are CSOs managing constituency bases?
- How well have horizontal networks increase awareness of and engagement in (reforms specifically)

The data sources consulted for this memo include:
- Data from grantee survey: an online survey sent to all grantees.
  - The survey had a high response rate: 81 out of 114 grantees who were sent the survey responded (71% response rate). Still, the survey responses in this report will be reported as numbers and not percentages so as to not distort that this is data from the entire pool of grantees.
- Outcome Harvesting data from core partners
- Key informant interview (KII) data: interviews with 4 ENGAGE staff on curricula networks, anti-corruption, core partners, regional/local networks
- ONA data/maps of activists from September 2018 "Engage partners' Network Assessment" memo
- ONA data/maps of Issue-Based Reform Coalitions from October 2018 memo

The memo will cover:
  I. ENGAGE program's approach to encouraging and building horizontal networks
      a. Overview of baseline ONA data on ENGAGE-related networks
      b. The status of grantees' engagement in networks and coalitions
  II. Grantees' assessment of ENGAGE's support to encouraging and building horizontal networks
  III. Conclusions and Recommendations

## Overview of ENGAGE Network Support and Grantees' Involvement in Networks and Coalitions

Objective 2 of the ENGAGE program aims to: *Foster relationships, networks, and coalitions at the local, regional, and national levels*. The strategy for achieving this objective is detailed under Activity 2.5 in the ENGAGE workplans and states:

"*ENGAGE's horizontal network building approach will be centered around Pact's staff mentoring and coaching with sub-awardee partners, including applying its network strengthening methodology to partners supported via sectoral subawards, as well as Pact's leadership in convening networking events.*"

In the first years of the project, ENGAGE has supported both national networks and local coalitions and networks. To date, ENGAGE has supported 8 coalitions, 6 networks and 1 civic education cohort.

ENGAGE's approach has been to be a convener and to foster an environment of collaboration; the project does not give money to Secretariats but rather give grants to each organization and uncovers common agendas and encourages them to share and collaborate even before applying for grants. By Year 3 of ENGAGE, the project was already learning from past success: the project asked core partners for feedback and noticed common tasks and encouraged them to work on these tasks together (Examples include Cost of the State campaign and curriculum network).

The main tool used to assess network strength has been Pact's Organizational Network Analysis (ONA). Baseline ONA mapping was conducted for ENGAGE-supported networks and follow-up ONA data will be analyzed in detail to look at changes over time (not yet available at the time of writing this memo).

To date, most networks do not have long-term visions, but some do—ENGAGE asks in applications to state how their grant is part of a long-term strategy, but many grantees have difficult in thinking beyond grant period goals. Issue-based coalitions collaborate for certain time period for a goal.

*Network Support Achievements to Date:*
- As of March 2019, 12 policy changes have occurred as a result of the 7 ENGAGE-supported local coalitions influence on government. Centre UA in particular has strong regional advocacy groups with an additional 6 policy changes so far.
- Centre UA is not applying for next round of funding with the goal of diversifying. This may be an indication of sustainability of this organization after the end of ENGAGE.
- We have started to see collaboration beyond grants: for example, Kolo fellow festival connected grantee with Dyvovishni in the city of Bar for over 360 people to increase CSO visibility and direct engagement of citizens.
- ENGAGE is the main project funding local coalitions through the Reanimation Package of Reforms (RPR)—supporting this window of opportunity to come together-convince them of benefits of joining networks and help think beyond project.
- Curriculum partners have been found to have a broad network and consult each other as experts now—the adoption of curriculum at national level is considered a large success.

*Summary of Grassroots Issue-based Coalitions ONA Data*
The baseline ONA for ENGAGE's support to the grassroots issue-based coalitions measured information exchange, work related cooperation, advocacy centers, centers of expertise, informal communication, level of participation in networks. The October 2018 Grassroots Issue-Based Coalitions memo classified different types of coalitions (based on the ONA handbook) and gave a baseline of their strength on the above items and recommendations for how to strengthen. Overall, various types of networks were uncovered with some having a strong Secretariat holding the network together—an ENGAGE key informant acknowledge the importance of somebody being the driving force to keep networks going (such as a pro bono activist) but were cautioned to not become a bottleneck or gatekeeper. The Learning Network of Rivine City was found to be a "headliner" among other community coalitions and they have opportunities to share their best practices with others at joint events organized by RPR, like the upcoming June 2019 forum. The October 2018 ONA for 16 community coalitions showed they did not have a connected network, but as of March 2019 as a result of the RPR regional policy and ENGAGE support, local coalitions have started to connect.

*Summary of SNA Data and ONA Data from Events*

The September 2018 memo summarizing ONA and Social Network Analysis (SNA) data from four ENGAGE events also contained some actionable conclusions:

SNA data:

- Certain topics have similar influencers and overlap like anti-corruption (AC) and social mobilization, human rights and inclusion—therefore showing opportunity for leveraging these networks. ENGAGE has not yet connected groups of people working on these paired issues but could.
- Facebook is the most common platform for sharing information.
- Strategies vary between posting frequently to more people (quantity) and less frequently to targeted people (quality)—both preliminarily seem to be effective.
- SNA and ONA maps do not overlap except for one individual from AntAc who could be used as a dissemination point for wider audience beyond just AC information.

*Summary of Integrity and Unity Event ONA data:*

- ENGAGE partners have a higher connection density than other CD forum participants alluding to ENGAGE's role in fostering these relationships.
- One outlier organization was found—it was connected to other organizations and the ENGAGE core but was not further engaged after the event.
- Most organizations reported widely sharing information but fewer share resources (confirmed with the grantee survey data presented below).

ISAR CD Event ONA data:

- Half of networks have no connections at all OR are clustered together in closed networks with no connected to others. ENGAGE did not try to address this because ISAR event has newcomers every year
- Centre UA (a core partner that conducts work in the regions) is also part of periphery center of common initiatives
- Some ENGAGE-supported organizations share the same audience: the main shared audience is youth at 18%. In light of external evaluation findings, this can be an opportunity for better reaching youth.
- Students Fraternity was found to be a main "donor" of their audience to other organizations. ENGAGE could study how this organization has continued to share its audience over time.
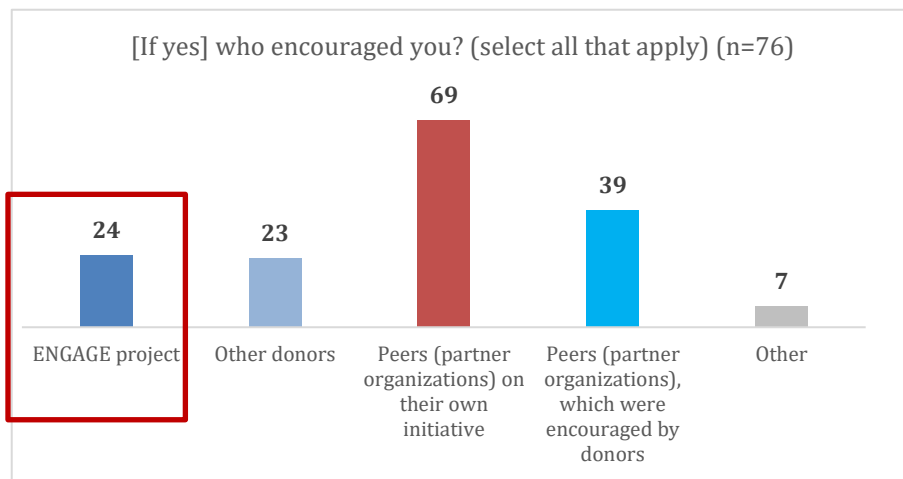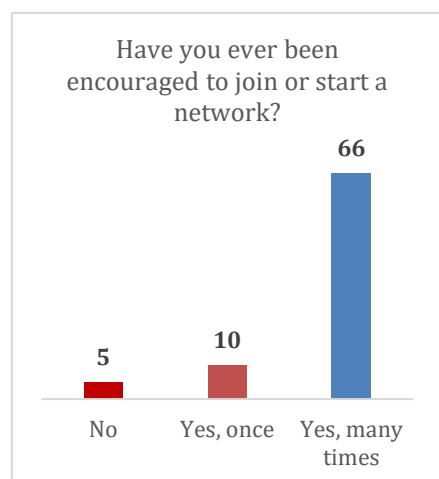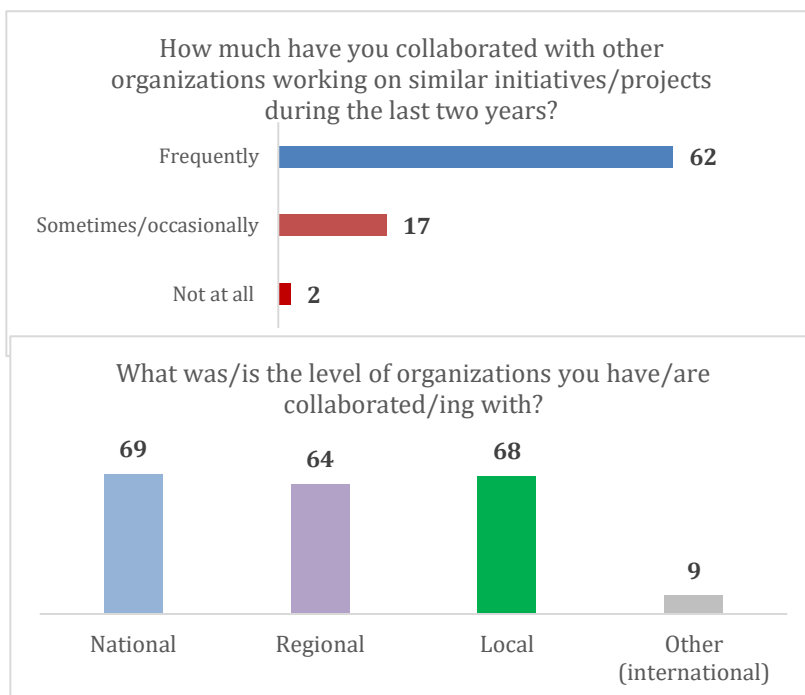
## Status of Network and Coalition Building Amongst ENGAGE Grantees

To supplement the above-cited ONA data, the next sections will include data from a survey of grantees administered in February 2019 and data from key informant interviews of 4 ENGAGE staff.

*Most grantees collaborate with other organizations at national, regional and local levels and most have been encouraged to join a network*
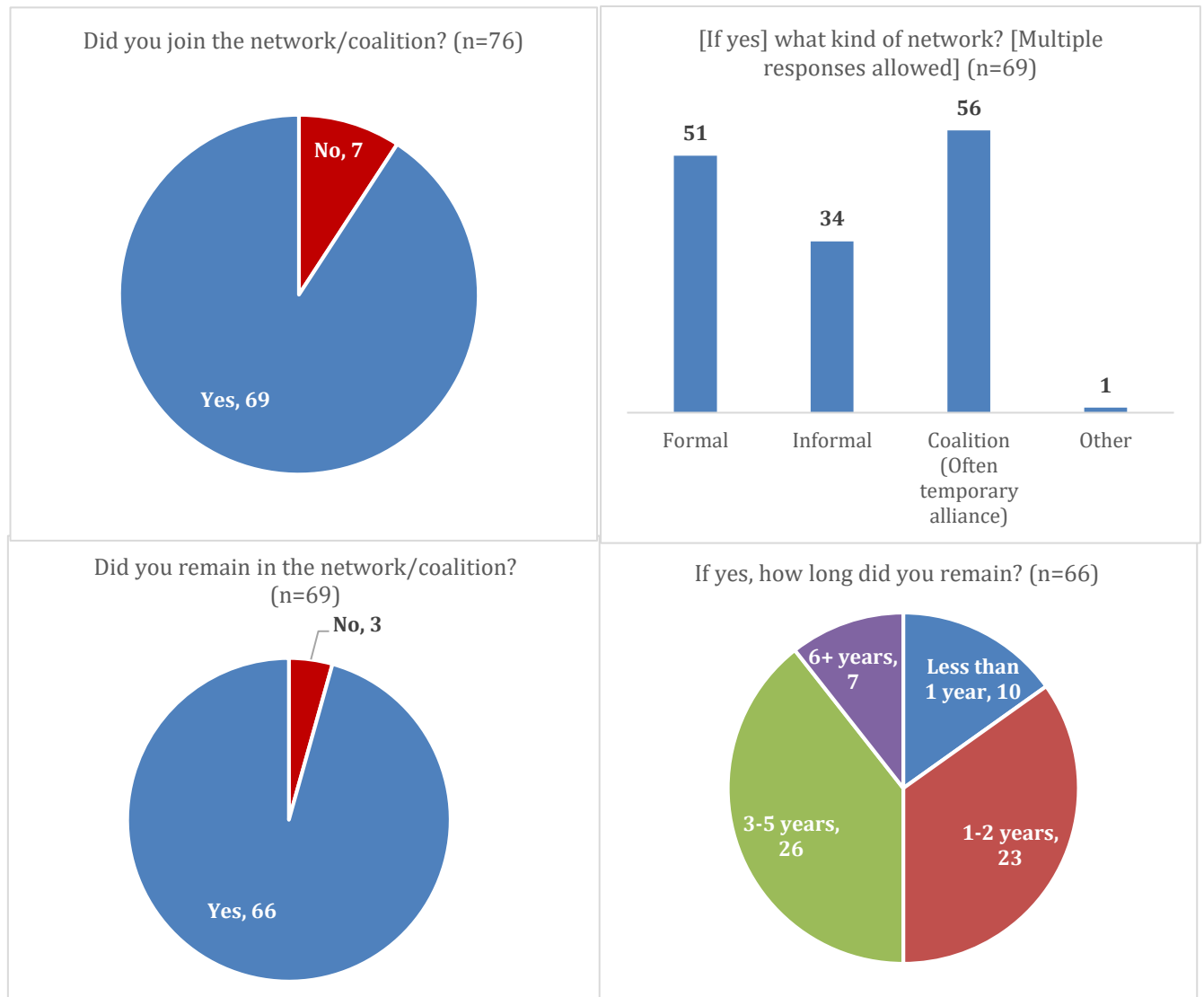
In the survey of grantees, respondents were asked to describe the nature, frequency and success of their collaborations with other organizations. Most grantees reported frequently collaborating with other organizations at local, regional and national levels in almost equal numbers. KII data and ONA data confirm some information exchange but less resource exchange.

The vast majority of organizations report having been encouraged multiple times or at least once to join or start a network and only 5 said they had not. Most organizations were encouraged by donors including ENGAGE or peers via donors (86) but a sizeable portion were also encouraged by peers of their own initiative (69).



How much have you collaborated with other organizations working on similar initiatives/projects during the last two years?

| | |
|---|---|
| Frequently | 62 |
| Sometimes/occasionally | 17 |
| Not at all | 2 |

What was/is the level of organizations you have/are collaborated/ing with?

| National | Regional | Local | Other (international) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 69 | 64 | 68 | 9 |



Have you ever been encouraged to join or start a network?

| No | Yes, once | Yes, many times |
|---|---|---|
| 5 | 10 | 66 |

[If yes] who encouraged you? (select all that apply) (n=76)

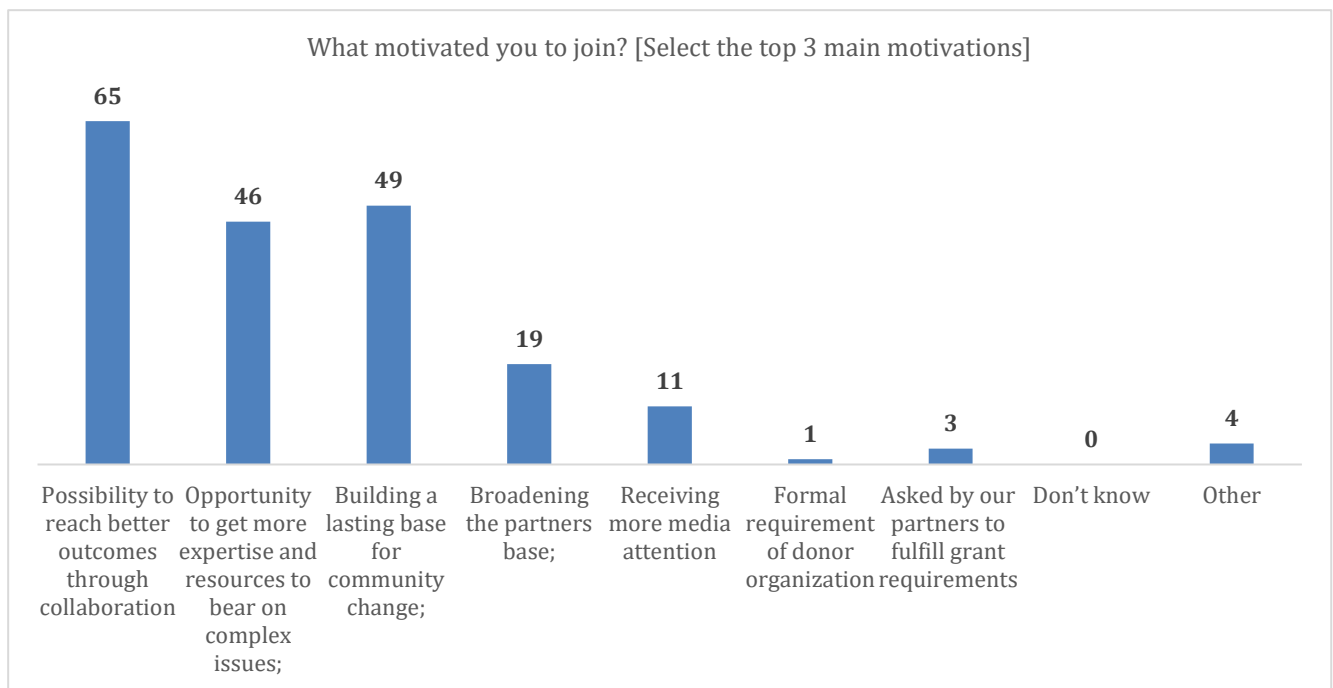| ENGAGE project | Other donors | Peers (partner organizations) on their own initiative | Peers (partner organizations), which were encouraged by donors | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 24 | 23 | 69 | 39 | 7 |

*Most Join Coalitions or Formal Networks After Encouragement, but Few Remain Long-term*
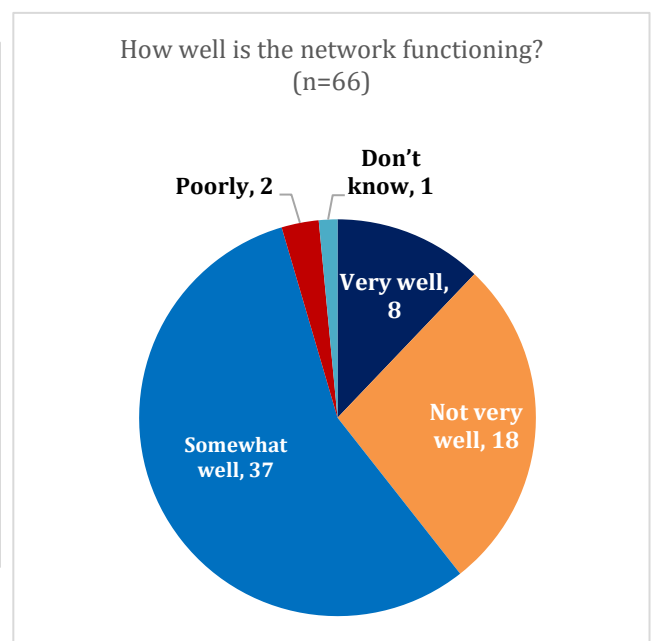
The vast majority of grantees who were encouraged to join the network—most citing either coalitions or formal network). Nearly all who joined remain in the network but most only remain 2 or less years (33) or 3-5 years (26).

| Did you join the network/coalition? (n=76) | [If yes] what kind of network? [Multiple responses allowed] (n=69) |
|---|---|
| No, 7 / Yes, 69 | Formal 51, Informal 34, Coalition (Often temporary alliance) 56, Other 1 |

| Did you remain in the network/coalition? (n=69) | If yes, how long did you remain? (n=66) |
|---|---|
| No, 3 / Yes, 66 | 6+ years, 7; Less than 1 year, 10; 3-5 years, 26; 1-2 years, 23 |

The top 3 main motivations to join networks/coalitions are: the promise of reaching better outcomes, obtaining more expertise and resources, and the potential for building a lasting base for community change.
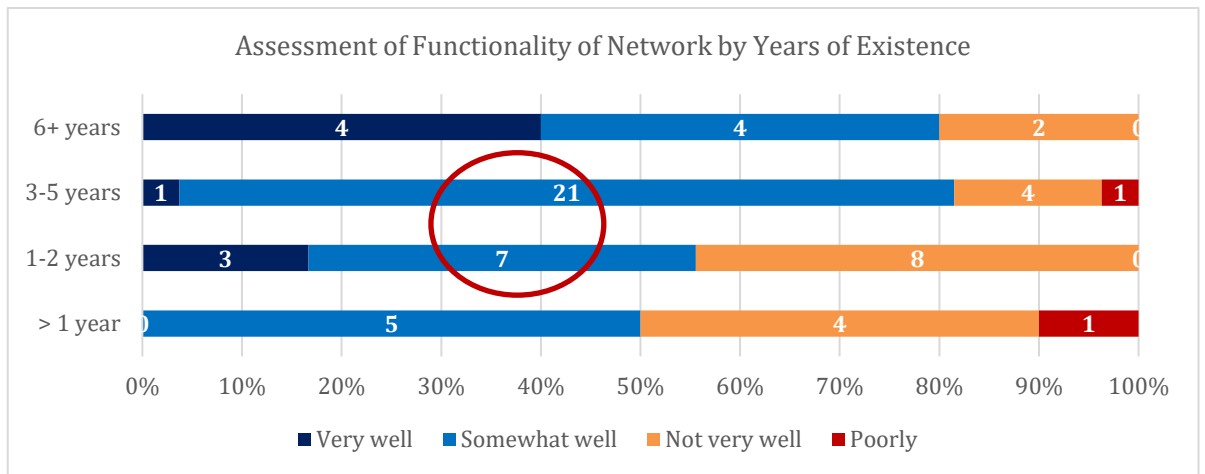
**What motivated you to join? [Select the top 3 main motivations]**

| Motivation | Count |
|---|---|
| Possibility to reach better outcomes through collaboration | 65 |
| Opportunity to get more expertise and resources to bear on complex issues; | 46 |
| Building a lasting base for community change; | 49 |
| Broadening the partners base; | 19 |
| Receiving more media attention | 11 |
| Formal requirement of donor organization | 1 |
| Asked by our partners to fulfill grant requirements | 3 |
| Don't know | 0 |
| Other | 4 |

Most networks the grantees joined have been functioning 5 years or less and the majority of grantees report the networks are functioning well.

**How many years has the network been functioning? (n=66)**

| Years | Count |
|---|---|
| 1-2 years | 18 |
| 3-5 years | 28 |
| 6+ years | 10 |
| Less than 1 year | 10 |

**How well is the network functioning? (n=66)**

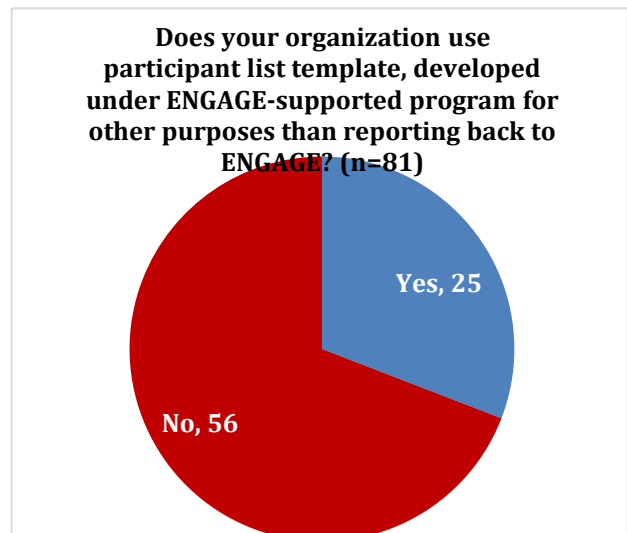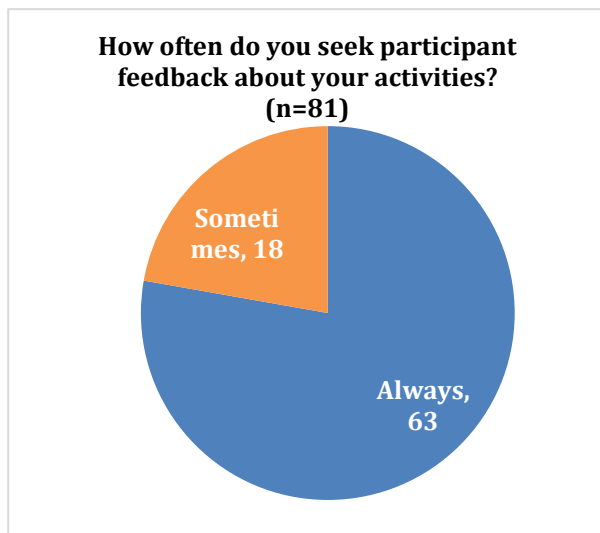| Rating | Count |
|---|---|
| Poorly | 2 |
| Don't know | 1 |
| Very well | 8 |
| Not very well | 18 |
| Somewhat well | 37 |
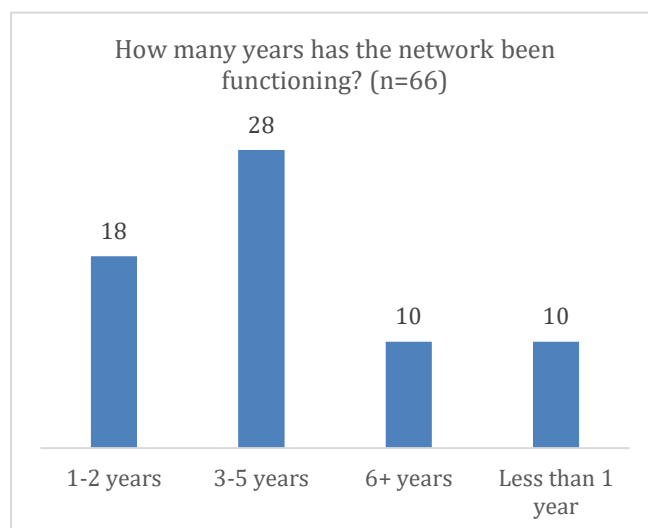
When comparing how long a network has been operating and how well it is assessed to be functioning, the data shows networks are perceived to function better the longer they are in operation, with networks functioning at least 1-2 years being scored as functioning somewhat well.

**Assessment of Functionality of Network by Years of Existence**

| Years | Very well | Somewhat well | Not very well | Poorly |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6+ years | 4 | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| 3-5 years | 1 | 21 | 4 | 1 |
| 1-2 years | 3 | 7 | 8 | 0 |
| > 1 year | 0 | 5 | 4 | 1 |

Legend: ■ Very well ■ Somewhat well ■ Not very well ■ Poorly

(x-axis: 0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%)
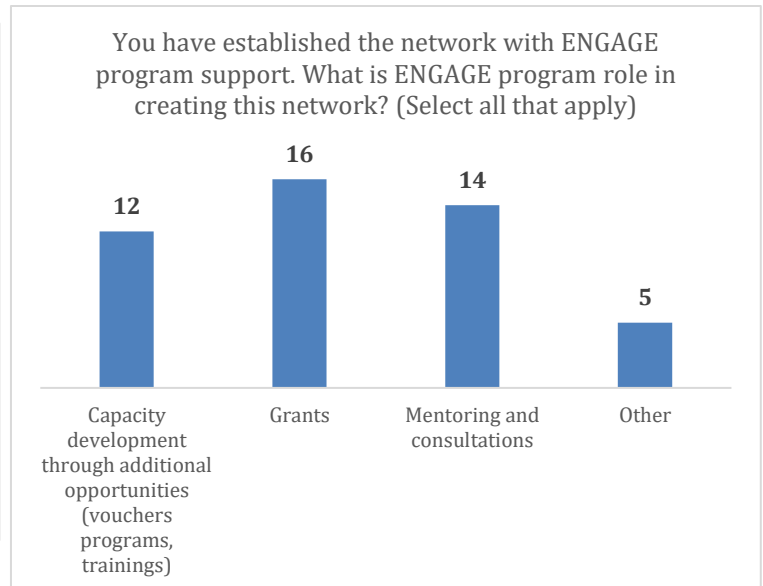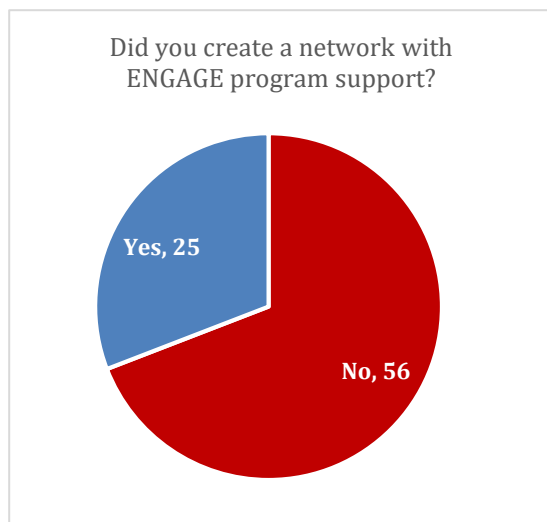
**Grantee Management of Constituency Bases**

One part of building horizontal networks is cultivating and managing constituency bases. Most grantees say they conduct primary research by consulting beneficiaries to determine their areas of focus. Most grantees also say they always or sometimes seek participant feedback about activities, but few are using participant lists developed by ENGAGE for any other purposes other than reporting to ENGAGE.
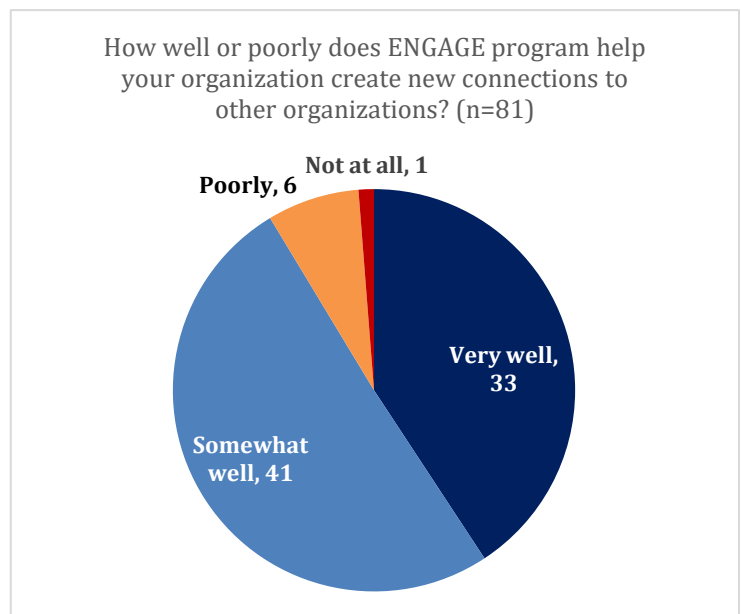
**How often do you seek participant feedback about your activities? (n=81)**

- Always, 63
- Sometimes, 18

**Does your organization use participant list template, developed under ENGAGE-supported program for other purposes than reporting back to ENGAGE? (n=81)**

- Yes, 25
- No, 56

# Assessment of ENGAGE's support to encouraging and building networks

When follow-up ONA data is obtained, comparison of network strength from baseline to after ENGAGE support can be made—the data is not yet available at the time of this memo. Still, grantee survey data and Outcome Harvesting data provide insight into how well ENGAGE is encouraging and building horizontal networks.

Slightly more than a quarter of grantee respondents created networks with ENGAGE support—either through grants, mentoring/consultations, or other capacity development support.

**Did you create a network with ENGAGE program support?**

Yes, 25
No, 56

**You have established the network with ENGAGE program support. What is ENGAGE program role in creating this network? (Select all that apply)**

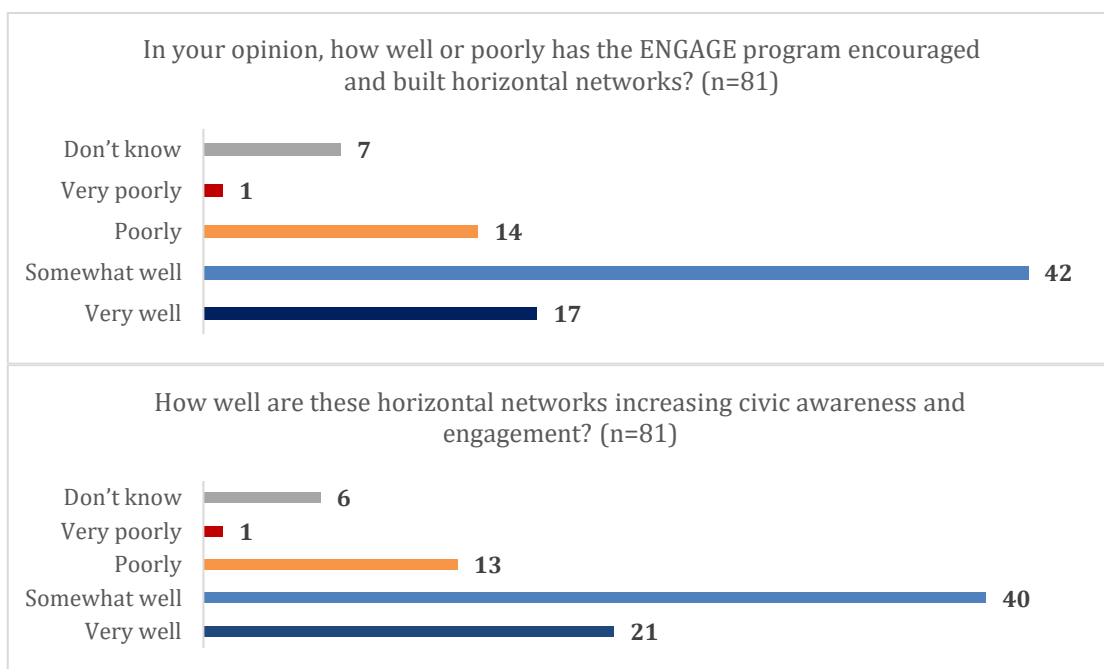| Capacity development through additional opportunities (vouchers programs, trainings) | Grants | Mentoring and consultations | Other |
|---|---|---|---|
| 12 | 16 | 14 | 5 |

Most respondents say ENGAGE did a somewhat well (41) job in helping them make connections to other organizations with fewer saying very well (33). KII data reveal while some organizations applied to work as 'networks' their applications were more like separate projects—ENGAGE had to work with grantees to bring applications together into cohesive projects. Key informants also noted poor levels of trust between regional networks and national level, resulting in difficult efforts encouraging them to exchange information—RPR is working on this with the ENGAGE grant.

**How well or poorly does ENGAGE program help your organization create new connections to other organizations? (n=81)**

Not at all, 1
Poorly, 6
Very well, 33
Somewhat well, 41

Overwhelmingly respondents say joint projects activities were the most effective way of helping organizations make new connections, followed by information exchange, and joint events.

| **"In your opinion, what has been the most effective ways helping your organization create new connections?"** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Theme** | **responses** | **Sample of open-ended responses** |
| Joint projects/activities | 33 | *"Implementation of joint projects, participation in joint events and campaigns."*<br><br>*"Common goals, joint projects implementation, coalition, project financing."*<br><br>*"Inviting representatives of other NGOs to participate in the organization's activities, joint projects and actions."*<br><br>*"The opportunity of cooperation with the NGO, which we have provided services to, had strengthened our cooperation with them."*<br><br>*"Participation in joint programs with the representatives of various civil society organizations through dialogue, training program, discussions, conferences."*<br><br>*"Organization of cross-sectoral activities/events - platforms for the exchange of information about projects and activities"* |
| Info Exchange | 13 | *"Sharing of best practices, joint projects."*<br><br>*"Conducting formal and informal meetings of organizations working in similar directions."* |
| Joint events | 10 | *"Organization of regional events. Cooperation within joint projects implementation."*<br><br>*"Joint events, conferences of civic society organizations, participation in hubs of civil society institutions."*<br><br>*"Conducting of joint topic-based meetings."* |
| Joint funding | 5 | *"Provide resource support to organizations for taking joint action with partners."* |
| Training/CD | 4 | *"Improvement of organizational capacity and quality of work"*<br><br>*"Conducting joint training, which may become the result of new ideas and projects developed by organizations."* |

Organizations reported that ENGAGE helped to create new connections to other organizations either somewhat well (42) or very well (17). Respondents similarly assessed how well these horizontal networks are in fact increasing civic awareness positively but lukewarm: most say somewhat well (40) or well (13).

**In your opinion, how well or poorly has the ENGAGE program encouraged and built horizontal networks? (n=81)**

| | |
|---|---|
| Don't know | 7 |
| Very poorly | 1 |
| Poorly | 14 |
| Somewhat well | 42 |
| Very well | 17 |

**How well are these horizontal networks increasing civic awareness and engagement? (n=81)**

| | |
|---|---|
| Don't know | 6 |
| Very poorly | 1 |
| Poorly | 13 |
| Somewhat well | 40 |
| Very well | 21 |

Indeed, examples of successful network building as a result of ENGAGE were uncovered during an Outcome Harvesting exercise with core partners in October 2018: **5 of the 8 outcome statement achievements** gathered from partners during this process were related to network/coalition strengthening (see "Core Partners Outcome Harvesting memo" for more details). According to the Outcome Harvesting data:

- Core partners provided systemic solutions and built sustainable network platforms for ensuring productive and long-lasting dialogue of regional think tanks with local authorities in the areas of reforms promotion, anti-corruption, local community development etc. The establishment of Public Law and Administration Network (UPLAN Network) by CPLR is the most notable example in this regard. This network of regional think tanks with offices in Kyiv, Lviv, Odesa, Kharkiv and Dnipro contributes to the enhancement of regional CSOs' capacities to participate in local agenda setting and policies implementation's oversight in effective and permanent manner.

- At least two out of seven ENGAGE core partners were successful in empowering communities to systematically advocate for more changes, including policy changes and services, on the local level while becoming more resilient, influential and self-sufficient. For example, representatives of the CPLR network UPLAN advocated for the Dnipro City Council's decision facilitating establishment of community associations namely condominium associations, street, block or district communities aimed at solving socially important issues of betterment, housing, facilities, usually without involvement of the municipal authorities. As another example, following public consultations in Zaporizhzhia organized by Center UA, local civic sector and authorities started to draft the Civil Society Development Program in Zaporizhzhya city, which implies obligatory involvement of citizens in decision-making through public consultations with municipalities.

- Core partners' activities also contributed to the strengthening the grassroot civic initiatives and common actions provided by CSOs jointly with other interested parties. For instance, Centre UA and AntAC reacted promptly to the emerging systemic threat to the safety of civic activists in Ukraine. Thus, they took part and actively participated in the initiative toward protection of Ukrainian civil society called "Activists are not Targets."

In order to identify areas for improved support, respondents in the grantee survey were asked what is needed to improve networks ability to increase citizen awareness and engagement in civic activities, most responses were related to: continuing to facilitate awareness raising via CD and events, helping improve communication strategies (especially widely sharing success stories), and providing long-term institutional support.

| "What is needed to improve these networks' ability to increase citizen awareness and engagement in civic activities?" | | |
|---|---|---|
| Theme | # responses | Sample of open-ended responses |
| Continue to facilitate awareness raising via capacity development and events | 21 | *"Seminars, trainings, other educational events and activities for best practice exchange."*<br><br>*"Continue work on organizational and institutional development of partners."*<br><br>*"Organization of various non-standard but effective events, with the participation of various NGOs ("1000 Actors Performance" type)."* |
| Help improve communication strategies for communities/media (better communication of success stories) | 16 | *"Better communication with media, budget forecasting for the dissemination of information."*<br><br>*"Open and transparent communication with the community, mutually beneficial cooperation with state authorities."*<br><br>*"Somewhat more successful stories, that motivate and inspire trust in social activity."* |
| Long-term, institutional support—Funding | 10 | *"Permanent, but not one-off support."*<br><br>*"This is a problematic issue - in fact each organization is primarily thinking about its survival. If it is strong and can have confidence in the future - then such organization and network shares resources. Actually most of the organizations are lacking resources and have survival problems."* |
| More information on improving citizen engagement in coalitions—wider engagement | 8 | *"Information and advocacy campaigns on important issues for citizens."*<br><br>*"Conducting comprehensive and simple information campaigns for citizens."*<br><br>*"Understanding of the community's demand for qualitative changes."* |
| Work on fostering partnership/stopping perception of competition (through common agenda) | 7 | *"Specification of common values and building closer ties."*<br><br>*"To unite in partnership to achieve a common goal, rather than perceive each other as competitors."* |

Key informant interviews with ENGAGE staff confirm much of what grantees reported in the survey in terms of what has worked well and challenges that need addressing:

- Workshops, common events to discuss common areas—including an educational component—have worked well
- There is a need to be proactive beyond granting—continue encouraging grantees about benefits of networks and teaching them about their function.
- The mindset of organizations can be too donor-driven and it is hard to get reform networks to think beyond issue-based cooperation
- More success stories need to be gathered and packaged to continue motivation for networks and coalitions.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

- ENGAGE-supported networks have seen some successes—such as 42 policy changes achieved to date—but challenges remain.
- Core partners exchange information, but few share resources.
- Grantees report frequently collaborating with other organizations at national, regional and local levels but key informants confirm there has been difficulty connecting local and national networks.
- Some collaboration beyond grants has been seen, but most collaboration remains part of grants.
- Grantees report ONA data is helpful in visualizing the networks they are in and how they can be strengthened. The project can consider training networks how to conduct their own ONAs as a sustainable management tool.
- Follow-up ONAs will show how networks are changing over time and any additional support they may need. Future ONA data can examine whether certain approaches are corelating to improved performance.
- ONA data from events revealed some overlapping thematic topics, organizations and people which can be leveraged—some of which the project has started leveraging, but others it has not. For example, ISAR CD Event data showed some ENGAGE supported organizations share the same audience: the main shared audience is youth at 18%. In light of an external evaluation critique, this can be an opportunity for better reaching youth.
- Most grantees also say they always or sometimes seek participant feedback about activities, but few are using participant lists developed by ENGAGE for any other purposes other than reporting to ENGAGE. Grantees could be further capacitated and encouraged to use this list to enhance their constituency management.
- Most grantees have been encouraged to and have joined coalitions and formal networks, but few remain long-term. In fact, most networks themselves have been functioning less than 5 years.
- Most networks the grantees join are not functioning well. Grantees report the main ways to improve networks ability to increase citizen awareness and engagement is to facilitate awareness via CD and events and with improved communication strategies specifically highlighting success stories of networks. To facilitate improved CD, a key informant noted the need for more step-by-step mentoring and a manual on horizontal network formation in Ukrainian because no such manual currently exists.
- Grantees' main motivations to join networks are the promise to reach better outcomes, build a lasting base for community change and obtain more expertise and resources. KIIs confirm grantees need continuous motivation for joining and remaining in networks and highlighting these benefits could be an effective way for encouragement.
- Most grantees report ENGAGE did a somewhat well job encouraging them to make new connections, with fewer saying the project did very well showing room for improvement. Overwhelmingly respondents say joint projects activities were the most

effective way of helping organizations make new connections, followed by information exchange, and joint events.

- Most organizations were encouraged by donors including ENGAGE or peers via donors (86) but a sizeable portion were also encouraged by peers of their own initiative (69). KII data corroborates that grantees remain donor-driven regarding network participation.